

Day 4 | BELIEVE. WHAT NOW?

While there is so much more evidence from the remainder of the New Testament, this devotional resource was designed for you to consider the words (and testimony) straight from Jesus. *“Who do the people say I am? Who do you say I am?”* Who does Jesus say he is?

The testimony becomes very clear. Jesus is God, the Son of God, who is also our teacher, pastor, prophet, friend, King, Savior, Messiah, way-truth-life, and so much more. The deity of Jesus, the reality of his God-ness, flows into and fills everything else about Jesus and every other role of Jesus.

Once you know that Jesus is God, then you are ready for the next most important question: What now? What shall I do with this Jesus? That is exactly what the first crowd asked the disciples after they preached the Good News of Jesus to the large audience. *“Brothers, what shall we do?”* (Acts 2:37).

Here are words that tell us what to do with Jesus the Son of God:

**Believe—Accept—Receive—Connect—Encounter—Experience
Know—Love—Trust—Obey—Follow—Serve—Worship**

We use the language *“When did Jesus become REAL to you?”* For someone to be real means you relate to and with that person.

To know if the Real Jesus (God Jesus) is real to you, think about how you relate to Jesus. The more the above verbs define your relationship, the more likely it is that Jesus is real for you and you are really his.



PRAY: Take several minutes and pray to Jesus. Use as many of those words as you can. Try a new word in each sentence and talk to Jesus about the kind of relationship you want with him. Do this every day and you will find that Jesus becomes exceedingly real and powerful and beautiful and lovely.

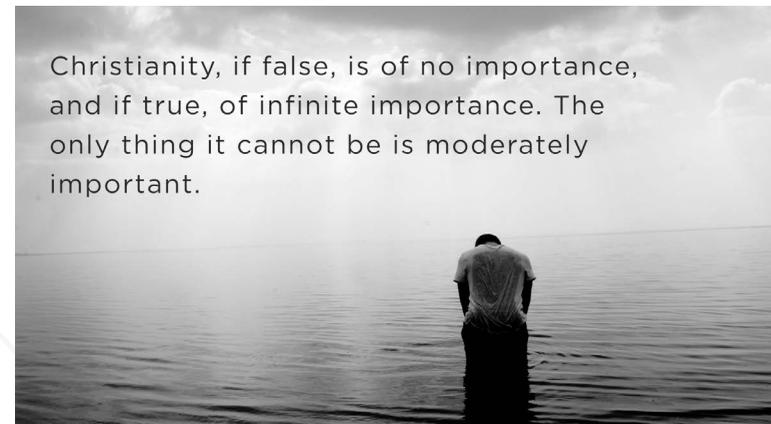
Day 5 | JESUS IS REAL. WHAT'S NEXT?

In one word: everything! Everything is next. Everything changes. All things become new. Impossible things become possible. You have forgiveness, freedom, power, wisdom, vision, mission, love, hope, joy, peace, purpose... the list goes on and on and on.

Of course, you will grow into these things. You don't experience everything as fully as you one day will, but you are on the way. You are walking the Way of Jesus. The longer you walk with Jesus on his Way, the more transformation you will enjoy.

That does not mean everything is easy. It is not. Much of life will be challenging. There will be hurdles. Opposition. Resistance. But Jesus is with you. So is Living Word. We are here to help. We are here to help you go far and deep in relationship with Jesus.

Years ago I came across this statement. It is so true.



Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.

Jesus cannot be moderately important to you. That is not Christianity. That is not the way to flourishing. If Jesus is God, then he must be supremely important. He is persistent and he is patient, but do not be mistaken, Jesus wants to be the greatest reality in your life, and he will not rest until he is.

Jesus wants to turn your world right-side up.
Jesus wants to bring substance and brilliance into your life.
Jesus wants to saturate your life with meaning and purpose.
Jesus wants to ignite your full humanity so it burns bright.
And Jesus will complete the good work he has started.

So, take some time and pray, worship, and enjoy your God, Jesus Christ, Risen Lord of Life, Savior, and Friend.

chosen you. If the world hate you.

Living Word
COMMUNITY CHURCH

all things, never I
fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.
17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

RE Jesus

STORIES, WORDS, ENCOUNTERS

JESUS IS GOD
PASTOR BRIAN RICE
FEBRUARY 24, 2019

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
John 20:31

Day 1 THE MYSTERY OF DEITY

When you read the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), two things become clear. First, Jesus never actually says, “I am God.”

Second, Matthew, Mark, and Luke are more careful about the deity of Jesus, while John is more direct. John begins his gospel with direct statements about the deity of Jesus: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God... In him was life, and that life was the light of men... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us... No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known”* (John 1:1-18).

John wants his readers to know that Jesus is the Son of God, and that through Jesus they will have life. But the other gospels show that Jesus was quite careful about this. Why?

Why was Jesus cautious about saying, “I am God?” Simply because it was dangerous to do so. In fact, it was deadly to do so. The world at that time had no categories to understand Jesus’ claim. The categories they did have could only mean Jesus was insane, crazy, or deluded. Or deceptive. Lying. Faking it. So, ignore him. Pity him. Or put an end to his blasphemous nonsense!

In the first century, there were two categories. First, the Romans (and everyone else) had god(s). Plural. Multiple. Small gods. Weak gods. Dysfunctional gods. Angry gods. (g)ods more like big humans with extra powers. Jesus made sure that people would not think he was claiming to be one more small god.

Second, the Jews were fiercely monotheistic. One God. One really Great God. Only One God and all else were rivals, idols. Pretenders. But alternatives to the One True God. The single most important phrase in the Jewish mindset is called the Shema. It is found in Deuteronomy 6:4. *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.”*

It then continues and gives the great command in verse 5: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”* One chapter earlier you have the Ten Commandment and, in particular, Deuteronomy 5:6-10. No other gods. Worship only the True God, no idols.

That is the context in which Jesus, the Son of God, came on a mission of salvation, healing, and restoration. He had to dance very carefully through his early years of ministry, or else they would have killed him before he could say, “It is finished” and “I have completed the work you gave me to do.” That is why Jesus is careful and cautious. But the signs of deity are everywhere.

Day 2 THE CLAIMS OF JESUS IN MATTHEW, MARK, & LUKE

While Jesus was careful about claims to being God, in many ways, words, and actions he sure hinted strongly that he was God. He pushed the categories and, eventually, his enemies got the message. Jesus was claiming to be God. Now they could kill him.

Here is the evidence in the various passages. See for yourself the story of Jesus, the Son of God, the Word made Flesh. Today you will look at the first three gospels. Tomorrow you will scan through the Gospel of John. Pay attention to which stories and claims speak most powerfully to you.

1. Jesus says he will send his angels to do his will. But angels belong to God and God alone (Matthew 13:41; Luke 12:8-9; 15:10).
2. Jesus says the Kingdom is his kingdom, yet the Kingdom is always the Kingdom of God (Matthew 13:41).
3. Jesus says he can forgive sins, but that capacity belonged to God alone (Mark 2:1-12). His enemies got this right away!
4. Jesus says he will judge the world, but there is only one just judge of all the earth, and that is God (Matthew 25:31-46).



5. Jesus says he is the Lord of the Sabbath and the one who can define the Sabbath, but the Sabbath belongs to God (Mark 2:27-3:6).
6. Demons (evil spirits) know who Jesus is and call him the Son of God (Mark 3:11-12). Jesus commands them to be quiet on this.
7. At his baptism, a voice from heaven says to Jesus, “You are my Son” (Luke 3:21-22).
8. In the temptation of Jesus, the tempter-devil knows Jesus is the Son of God (Luke 4:1-13).

Day 3 THE CLAIMS OF JESUS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

9. Jesus says he is from heaven and can speak on the things of heaven (John 3:13).
10. Jesus claims to be the Son of God sent into the world to save the world (John 3:16-18).
11. Jesus claims to do the same work of his Father, calls God his Father, and makes himself equal with God, all of which angers his enemies (John 5:16-26).
12. Jesus claims to have the power of life and death, as the Father has (John 5:24-30). Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life.” “I am the way, truth, and life” (John 11:25; 14:6). God is life and Jesus claims to have that same status.
13. Jesus says he has been in the Father’s presence (John 8:38).
14. Jesus uses “I Am” language many times. This is a direct allusion to God’s self-description, *“I am who I am”* (Exodus 3:14-15).
15. Jesus claims pre-existence or to be forever (John 8:58).
16. The Jews want to stone Jesus for blasphemy (John 8:59). Heresy is bad doctrine. Blasphemy is much worse. Blasphemy is the desecration of God’s name and person.
17. Jesus claims to be *“one with the Father”* (John 10:30-39; 14:10-11)—a blatant claim with the immediate response, *“Stone him for blasphemy.”* While Jesus never says, “I am God,” Jesus does say, “I am the Son of God” in such a way that he means he possesses all the qualities and essence of the One God.
18. Jesus says that he along with the Father will make their home within people (John 14:23).

Remember why John wrote his gospel? It’s on the front cover. It is to believe Jesus is the Son of God, and that you then find life.

REFLECT: Do you believe these things? Why or why not?

How strongly do you believe these things?

What will help you believe more strongly?