

All in how you look at it

There's a story about a teenager in library period at school coming across a book called the Holy Bible. Out of curiosity he leafed through the book and came across the name Jesus. Being as he hardly knew anything about Jesus he began reading. He became so captivated he shared what he had read with his friends who likewise knew nothing of Jesus.

Intrigued they began a search in the weeks that followed to know more about Jesus. What was it about the story of Jesus that held the attention of a group of teenagers for so long?

The Jesus story is filled with how he interacted with people everyday, doing miracles, healing the afflicted and more. He provoked people to consider living their days abundantly. You see his tenderness of heart and his way of looking at the world engaged people to move beyond the boundaries they had set for their life. Jesus pointed out that our perceptions can hold us captive to be less than we can be. Yet he didn't point a finger to say we're not measuring up. From what we read his way of relating to us clearly accepts us as we are. This doesn't come without challenging us to understand more about who we are and who God is.

Life has a way of bringing us around to revisit our staid opinions about ourselves and God. Sometimes through questions. Why did this happen? Who am I really? Why am I doing this? Where's God in all this?

You might be surprised to learn God helps out. The search seems to fall into place, almost like it's made-to-measure. Out of the blue someone, maybe the one you thought was too "religious" to even make sense, brings a word that feels timely. Regardless of how coincidental it might feel you'll eventually come face to face with an invitation to do life together with God.

You don't have to be good enough to accept the invitation. Jesus was known for hanging around crowds who didn't have it all together and he's perfectly fine with you coming as you are.

When you come you might be rocked to hear God say, "Hey there, I know you. Did you know I love you more than you can imagine?"

Chances are you might have thought or hoped or wished that God could actually love you.

He's crazy about you

Jesus was insistent that God, His Father is crazy with love and can scarcely bear to be without you.

Jesus expresses His Father's love in a story about a father and two sons. The younger son decides he would like to have his share of his father's estate now. His father grants his wish and the son leaves town for the bright lights. As it turns out what he did wasn't so bright. He squandered his money on riotous living, prostitutes and fast friends till it ran out.

Destitute, he works for a farmer feeding pigs, eating what they ate to stay alive. "Here I am dying of hunger and my father's workers are eating better than I am." He comes to his senses. "I will go home to my father and ask if I can work as a worker." As he makes his way home he probably rehearsed some heart felt things he wanted to say to his father about the mess he had made of his life.

It's not likely what he wanted to express came out the way he rehearsed it because his father did something unexpected. "While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him."

Some what bewildered, all the younger son could say was, "Father I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I'm no longer worthy of being called your son." The words were barely out of his mouth. In a flash, his father tells his servants, "Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring on his finger and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we've been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for my son was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found." So the party began.

Outrageous! Is God really like that?

Wouldn't God be more dignified, or at least show more restraint?

Maybe you think that because it's not how you pictured him.

Jesus said what I'm doing and what I'm saying is really what God, our Father is like. Could it be that easy? To know who God is by looking into the life of Jesus?

What's most amazing is God lavished His love on us. His heart was to rescue everyone from what entraps us like in the story of the father's love for his son. Our life stories may or may not be like the younger son but regardless God the Father does want a relationship with us.

He's made a way to welcome us into His family that has nothing to do with our merits or earning our way to be part of it. Even if we feel we are not deserving of anyone's love because of what we've done it isn't the end of the story with God.

God would say, "This is something you can't take care of on your own. I made a way through my son, Jesus Christ to resolve what has come between us. With all my love,

more than you can imagine, I did this to set you free."

In this act of sacrifice, Jesus Christ took upon himself our sins that keep us separated from God. Like the younger son confessing as he returns home, our heart can tug on us to return to our Father.

It's OK if you're struggling with how to put what you feel into words. He knows your heart.

Talk to Him about coming home. Just be yourself. Confess. Invite him to be a part of your life.

You might not know everything about God's rescue plan. For now it's enough to confess you want to do life differently. Making it right with God is accepting His amazing love to help you do life with Him.

If you would like to explore this more contact us at 20 Church.

And if you would like to know more about what the rescue plan was all about click this link.