

First Wednesday-??? {If you need me to announce ...??}
Series graphic

{Come up one at a time ...}

Greatest things that can happen to us ...??

To be in the presence of God without fear of judgement but with the joy of being perfectly loved.

Psalm 16:11

You reveal the path of life to me; in Your presence is **abundant joy**; at Your right hand are **eternal pleasures**.

{come up one at a time; same slide}

Problems with God's Presence:

- **Doubt His existence**
- **Unsure of His presence**
 - **Fear**
 - **In the here and now**
- **Lack of awareness**

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created ...

Hebrews 11:6

Now without faith it is impossible to please God, since the one who **draws near** to Him must believe that He exists and that He **rewards** those who seek Him.

Acts 17:26-27

From one man He has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live. ²⁷ He did this so that they might **seek God**, and **perhaps** they might reach out and find Him, though He is **not far from each one of us**.

"Did you see Jesus today?"

--Mother Theresa

{one at a time; same slide}

And yet we often miss God

... and so did people in the Bible!

Mark 8:27-28

Jesus went out with His disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the road he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?”²⁸ They answered Him, “John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets.”

Mark 8:29

“But you,” He asked them, “who do you say that I am?” Peter answered Him, “You are the **Messiah**.”

“Messiah”

- **Anointed One** **Davidic king**
 - **Historical King**
 - **Ultimate King**

Jesus/God wants to be **recognized** ... to be fully & truly known.

What if the problem is our **awareness or perception**?

Mark 8:30

And He **strictly warned** them to tell no one about him.

Mark 8:31-32a

Then He began to teach them that it was necessary for the Son of Man **to suffer** many things and **be rejected** by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, **be killed, and rise** after three days.³² He spoke openly about this.

Mark 8:32b

Peter took Him aside and began **to rebuke** Him.

Jesus/God wants to “show up” but **we tell Him how He has to do it.**

- God’s presence now becomes His absence.**

In this case of “Missing Jesus,” Jesus did not meet Peter’s **expectation** and contradicted Peter’s **agenda**.

Nationalism:

Putting love of nation and associated self-interests over love of God.

Christian Nationalism in America:

Seeing America as crucial and essential to God’s kingdom

Seeking to tie the Gospel to a specific society, political party, and government

Acts 10:34-35

Peter began to speak: “Now I truly understand that God doesn’t show favoritism,³⁵ but in **every nation** the person who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

Mark 8:33

But turning around and looking at His disciples, He **rebuked** Peter and said, “Get behind me, **Satan!** You are not thinking about God’s concerns but **human concerns.**”

{all together on one slide; keep formatting}

When awareness of God increases so too does satanic activity.

1: Masquerading as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14)

2: Roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8)

Jesus’ rebuke of Peter explains why Jesus told the disciples not to tell people Who He was.

They were not ready to be His witnesses!

{one slide}

We are often blind to the strategic, “big picture” ways of God.

Our view, our hopes, and our preferences are often way **too narrow & small!**

Mark 8:34-37

Calling the crowd along with His disciples, he said to them, “If anyone wants **to follow** after Me, let him **deny himself, take up his cross**, and follow Me.³⁵ For whoever wants to save his life will **lose it**, but whoever loses his life because of Me and the gospel will save it.³⁶ For what does it benefit someone to gain the whole world and yet lose his life?³⁷ What can anyone give in exchange for his life?³⁸ For whoever is **ashamed of Me and My words** in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

{one slide}

Good News: Jesus does not **go anyway.**

God is still omnipresent (he’s here), longing for us to be with Him (Follow Me!).

{come up one at a time; keep the underlined header up for all 5 bullet points; can be on more than one slide as needed to fit and for clarity}

How Jesus is Present in this Story (and ours!) But Missed:

1) Jesus is **the King!**

2) He is present through **unanswered prayer and unmet expectations.**

3) He is present in *how* He loves us.

Romans 5:8

But God **shows His love** for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ **died for us**.

4) He is present through **discipline**.

5) He is present through invitations to **self-denial**.

{one slide for Exegesis and one slide for Eisegesis}

How we read & teach the Bible:

Exegesis: *discovering the inspired biblical author's meaning & timeless principles*

Eisegesis: *reading meaning into the Bible, usually based on one's preferences and biases*

{come up one at a time}

2 Selves:

Denied Self = self that prefers its own way, its own kingdom

Denying Self = self that prefers Jesus

"Only when we love Him enough to prefer His way to ours, His language to ours, and His will to ours ... only then will we discover Him."

--David Benner