The Gospel of John

**1.9—GOD SEES YOU– JOHN 1:45-51**

Have you ever wondered if God sees you? Not in the general sense, we know God sees everything, but in the personal sense. Does He see you when you’re really trying to do right, but when life does not respond in kind? When you do your best to make right decisions but seem to be rewarded with discouraging consequences? Does He see you when you call out to Him but hear no response, and when you come to Him by faith but don’t feel His presence? Does He see you when you’ve sinned … again … and feel embarrassed to request forgiveness? Can He see that, despite your disobedience and weaknesses, you really do want to please Him? Does He see you still standing on His promises when the circumstances seem hopeless?

As much as we suffer these thoughts and emotions, the Jewish people in Jesus’ day suffered them much more. Their treasured Scriptures promised that they were a special people to God, and that He would send a Messiah to deliver them. But by this time they had been living under the dominion of foreign powers for over six centuries. Prayer after prayer had been prayed, but it seemed to them that heaven was closed above them.

In this final lesson on John chapter 1, I want us to see Jesus address the very heart of this matter. He addresses it on a human level that will affect the entire world, but He also addresses it on a personal level, which speaks to each of us as individuals.

The title of this message is: “God Sees You”

**John 1:43–51 (ESV)** The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” **44** Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. **45** Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” **46** Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” **47** Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” **48** Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” **49** Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” **50** Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” **51** And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

Vv45–46 – “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

* When Nathanael heard that Jesus was from Nazareth, he was skeptical to say the least
* It’s also obvious that Nazareth was not a place where great leaders would typically come from
* Nazareth was in the Galilee, but about 18 miles away from the Sea of Galilee… it’s a good 40-minute bus ride
* The guides at “Nazareth Village” in Israel say that based on their studies and the excavations done in that area, they believe that Nazareth in the days of Jesus consisted of about 40 families.
* Nathanael’s question also tells us that Jesus was not famous at that point

Vv47–48 – “when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”

* Though Jesus was indeed God, He could not at that point see everyone in the world 24/7… He must have seen Nathanael by the Holy Spirit, likely in a vision

V49 – “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

* Jesus statement about seeing him under the fig tree so impacted Nathanael, that he instantly did an about face and declared Jesus to be both the Son of God and the King of Israel.
* SO, WHAT EXACTLY WAS GOING ON UNDER THE FIG TREE? (We’ll come back to that)

V50 – “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.”

* Jesus is saying, “Is that all it took to convince you? You haven’t seen anything yet.”

V51.1 – “Truly, truly” = Amen, amen.

V51.2 – “you” and “you” are both plural in verse 51, though both are singular in verse 50

V51.3 – will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

* Of all the things Jesus could have forecasted, what an interesting choice He made
* Jesus was clearly referencing an event that happened in Genesis 28

**Genesis 28:10–15 (ESV)** Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. **11** And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. **12** And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! **13** And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, “I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. **14** Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. **15** Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

* + “ladder” is probably better translated by the NIV, NLT, CSB and several other translations as a “stairway.”
  + “angels of God were ascending and descending” freely and constantly = free access to and communication with heaven
  + “I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you” = I’m going to finish what I promised to you

V51.3 – “you will see heaven opened”

* “you will see” = something is going to happen in the future
* “heaven opened” = Jesus is not saying, “you will see that heaven is already open,” but rather “you will see that heaven, which has seemed closed and unresponsive, has been opened again”

V51.4 – “you will see … the angels of God ascending and descending” = free flowing communication to and from God in heaven

V51.5 – “on the Son of Man” = Jesus is the stairway / the access / the means by which the communication happens

**John 14:6 (ESV)** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

**JESUS WAS SAYING TO NATHANAEL, “THE SMALL MIRACULOUS SIGN THAT CONVINCED YOU THAT I AM THE SON OF GOD IS NOTHING COMPARED TO WHAT YOU (PLURAL) ARE GOING TO SEE ... YOU’RE GOING TO SEE HEAVEN OPEN UP AGAIN TO MANKIND … YOU’RE GOING TO SEE JACOB’S VISION COME TO PASS … AND YOU’RE GOING TO SEE THAT I AM THE STAIRWAY BY WHICH ANGELS—AND PEOPLE—WILL HAVE CONSTANT ACCESS TO GOD IN HEAVEN.”**

**THE FACT THAT JESUS WAS TELLING NATHANAEL THAT HE (AND OTHER DISCIPLES) WOULD SEE JESUS FULFILL JACOB’S DREAM SHOULD CAUSE US TO REVISIT THE FIRST EXCHANGE BETWEEN JESUS AND NATHANAEL AGAIN.**

**SO LET’S LOOK AGAIN AT VERSE 47–49:**

**John 1:47–49 (ESV)** Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” **48** Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” **49** Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

V49 – Why does Nathanael call Jesus “the Son of God” and “the King of Israel?

* He likely called Him “the King of Israel” because of what Jesus said to him in V47

V47 – “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!”

* “an Israelite”
  + This is the only recorded time Jesus used this term
  + It’s used less than 10 times in the whole NT, though “Jews” is used nearly 200 times
  + It literally means “a descendant of Israel, who is “Jacob”
  + How did Jacob get the name, “Israel?”

**Genesis 32:24–30 (ESV)** And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. **25** When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob’s hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. **26** Then he said, “Let me go, for the day has broken.” But Jacob said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” **27** And he said to him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Jacob.” **28** Then he said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.” **29** Then Jacob asked him, “Please tell me your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And there he blessed him. **30** So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.”

* “an Israelite indeed” = likely, he’s truly like Jacob … he’s like Jacob, in that he earnestly desires to be blessed by God … so much so that he wrestles tenaciously with God to receive His blessing
* “in whom there is no deceit”
  + Jacob was known as a deceiver

**Genesis 25:24–26 (ESV)** When her **[Rebekah’s]** days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. **25** The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak, so they called his name Esau. **26** Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau’s heel, so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

* + - “Jacob” means “he takes by the heel,” OR “he cheats”

**Genesis 27:35–36 (ESV)** But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing.” **36** Esau said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has cheated me these two times. He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing.”

* “in whom there is no deceit” = he’s like Jacob, in that he wrestles with God to receive His blessing, but he is not like Jacob in that he does not want to acquire anything deceitfully, or by cheating. He wants God to do it.

**Romans 5:1–2 (ESV)** Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **2** Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

V49 – It seems that Nathanael is calling Jesus “the Son of God” because he was under the fig tree wresting with God is prayer about something. He may have even said, “God, do you even see me?” And then later that day, Jesus said, “I saw you.”

**IS ANYONE WRESTLING WITH GOD OVER A SITUATION?**

**ARE THERE PROMISES LEFT UNFULFILLED?**

**IS BLESSING DESPERATELY NEEDED?**

**Genesis 28:15** “… I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

**BY WHAT MEANS HAVE YOU PURSUED SOLUTIONS? BY WRESTLING WITH GOD IN PRAYER AND WITH HIS WORD, THE PROMISES, OR BY DECEIVING, LYING AND CHEATING?**

**EX – I am contending with God for a debt-free campus … God told Kimberly and me not to borrow money, so we haven’t … and we stand for God’s blessing.**

**EX – Pastor Jack Hayford told me one time, “What’s happening at The Rock reminds me of the blessing that was on The Church on the Way back in the 70’s and 80’s. You will see many opportunities in front of you. Don’t grasp for anything … let God put in your hand what He wants you to have.”**

**I HAVE SAID TO THE LORD:**

* **“Whatever You won’t give me, may I never have it”**
* **“Wherever You won’t take me, may I never get there”**
* **“Whatever You won’t do, let it remain undone”**

**GOD WILL GIVE ME MUCH MORE THAN I COULD EVER ACQUIRE FOR MYSELF**

**GOD WILL TAKE ME MUCH FARTHER THAN I COULD EVER TAKE MYSELF**

**GOD WILL DO MUCH MORE THAN I COULD EVER BRING ABOUT MYSELF**

**IF I WOULD SIMPLY SEEK HIM … FOLLOW HIM … TRUST HIM…AND BELIEVE HIM**

## **WILL GOD SAY ABOUT YOU:**

## **“Behold, an Israelite indeed” … one who wrestles with God to find God’s will … God’ purposes … God’s blessings … but who will not cheat, lie or compromise to make it happen.**