

# A Bridal Relationship - Part 1

by Zac Poonen

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*Jesus asks us to reflect on our motivations for following Him and to understand what we are seeking in our relationship with Him, emphasizing the importance of a strong connection with God.*

**Duration:** 9:42

**Topics:** "Seeking God", "Divine Forgiveness"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the profound question Jesus asked at the beginning of his ministry and after his resurrection: 'What do you seek?' or 'Whom are you seeking?' It explores the depth of our connection with God, emphasizing the importance of seeking Him from the depths of our hearts, just as Mary Magdalene sought Jesus with a heart full of gratitude for forgiveness. The sermon highlights the varying degrees of realization of God's forgiveness and the impact it has on our love for Him.

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## Transcript

I want to turn to John's Gospel in Chapter 1. This was just after Jesus' baptism, when he began his ministry. John the Baptist had just said about him, verse 36, John 1, 36, Behold the Lamb of God. And two of John's disciples heard John speak and they followed Jesus.

And Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, What do you seek? Now, I don't know when this took place. It's probably, if Jesus went into the wilderness immediately after his water baptism, this probably took place after that one day when John said this. He says the next day, John, this is after his baptism.

And the first question, one of the first questions that Jesus asked anybody at the beginning of his ministry was this question. It's a very good question for us to think about. In John Chapter 1 and verse 38, What do you seek? He asked this not of every Tom, Dick and Harry that was around there.

He asked this of two disciples who wanted to follow him. And I trust most of us sitting here are like those disciples, wanting to follow him. But Jesus knows that people can follow him for various reasons.

And so whenever he sees people following him, he says, What do you seek? When he sees you come to this meeting, he says, What do you seek? And when he sees that you choose a particular church over the many other churches that you have an option to choose, he asks you, What do you seek by coming to this church? And you have to give an answer to him. It's the Lord who comes seeking after us. Jesus taught

that in the story of the lost sheep that all we like sheep have gone astray and the Lord as a good shepherd comes seeking for that lost sheep.

But there has to be a seeking on our part. There is a verse in Psalm 42 which says, Deep calls unto deep. And I understand that to mean that something deep within God's heart calls to something deep within my heart.

And if there's something deep within my heart that cries out to God, then we have a connection. But if God from the depths of his heart calls out to us and we don't have a response from the depth of our heart, then there is no connection. The thing I have observed with many Christians is their connection with God is very superficial.

It's like a very thin string holding up something very heavy and you don't know when it will break. That's how many people's connection is. Because it's so thin, it's breaking all the time and they've got to tie it up again and it breaks again and breaks again.

And some people are satisfied with that type of a Christian life where the string breaks, the connection with God is gone, you tie it up again. It breaks again and you tie it up again. But God's will is that we should have a very strong connection with him and his deep calls unto our deep and we must respond.

So, the question he asks is, what do you seek? And we must have an answer for that. At the end of John's Gospel, this is the beginning, when you come to the end of John's Gospel and you see after his resurrection, this is the beginning of his ministry, and after his resurrection is another new beginning because it's a new creation. There he had just come out of the waters and the temptation.

Here he's come out of the grave in John chapter 20. And this time he finds Mary Magdalene waiting around in that garden near the tomb when all the other disciples had come and looked and gone away. It says in verse 10, John 20, 10, the disciples went away again to their own home because it was pretty early in the morning and their sleep was disturbed.

I don't know, they got up at four o'clock in the morning or something and they said, we better go back to sleep. We can't find Jesus, I don't know what's happened. But Mary also had got up early and she was not going to go home to sleep because if Jesus was laid in that tomb and somebody had taken him away, that's what she thought, she didn't know he was raised from the dead, even though he said that many times they didn't believe it.

She thought somebody had taken his body away and she was determined to find it. And there was something in her heart, even though she had been a demon-possessed woman with seven demons inside her and probably because of those demons lived an immoral life, I don't know. But there was when she was converted and she saw how much the Lord had forgiven her, her sinful life.

I often think that if the thief on the cross had been taken down from the cross and he had been released at the last minute and he had lived, I think he would have lived a very home-hearted life because he was forgiven so much. And Jesus says, the one who is forgiven much loves much. The one who realizes he has been forgiven much.

We have all been forgiven much. Is anybody here who has been forgiven little? Nobody. But the realization of how much we have been forgiven varies within all of us.

It varies tremendously. And that's why there is a different degree of love for Christ. There is a different degree of something coming out of the depths of our heart to the Lord.

Because we are not so sure how much we have been forgiven. And so there is nothing crying out from our depths. Mary Magdalene had been forgiven a tremendous lot.

She was something like that thief on the cross, a sinner who had been forgiven. And so she couldn't just go away and sleep like the other disciples. Maybe they were not, you know, I don't think Peter, James and John were such criminals or lived an immoral life.

They probably lived an upright life. They were forgiven but they didn't have that awareness of being forgiven so much like Mary Magdalene. And so she stayed there.

And Jesus comes to her with the same question in verse 15 with a slight change. Not what are you seeking? But John 20 verse 15. Whom are you seeking? See that's how the Gospel of John begins and ends.

What are you seeking? Whom are you seeking? As soon as he is resurrected from the dead, as soon as he begins his ministry, he says to ask people, what do you seek? As soon as he is raised from the dead, he again asks that one person who is looking for him, whom are you seeking? God seeks for us but he cannot have a close connection with us unless there is something in us from the depth of our heart that reaches out to him and says, Lord, your face I will seek. You said to me to seek you and your face I will seek. So we see here, that is what Mary was seeking.

She was seeking Jesus. She wasn't seeking anything else.

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