

Conversations with Jesus

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[0 : 00] This is a sermon from King's Church West London.

One of the... Oh, well, absolutely. Thank you very much for reminding me, Donna. Appreciate that. So, I am... I'm excited about today because we're actually starting a new teaching series today.

And this teaching series is called Conversations with Jesus. So, we are going to be looking over the next seven or eight weeks over...

with individuals which totally changed their life. Now, Jesus, as you probably know, was an amazing public speaker.

It's said that the crowds who listened to him were amazed at his teaching... because he taught with authority. So, Jesus, if he was put before a crowd of 5,000...

[1 : 23] you know, not only would he feed them, no problem... but he would also give them some outstanding teaching. He would knock it out of the park every time. Every time. But the thing about Jesus is, as you know if you've read the Gospels...

you know that Jesus didn't just... it isn't just a recording of, like, all the sermons that he preached... it's punctuated by the fact that Jesus regularly left crowds of thousands...

to go and seek out one individual... and speak to them personally. And, in fact, it's actually the case that some of Jesus' most memorable sayings...

wasn't just spoken to crowds of many thousands of people... was actually spoken just to single people. I'll just read a few that I just gleaned this week as I was preparing.

These are things that he said to individuals, not to crowds, to individuals. He says to Nicodemus... To Nicodemus, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born again. He said to Martha, sister of Lazarus and Mary...

[2 : 28] I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies. He said to the Samaritan woman... True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

He said to Simon the Pharisee... All who exalt themselves will be humbled... and all who humble themselves will be exalted. He said to Zacchaeus... Today's salvation has come to this house.

And he said to Jairus... Don't be afraid. Just believe. There's many other examples of amazing things that Jesus said to individual people. But why are we doing this particular teaching series now over these few weeks?

Well, two reasons, really. The first is that God really cares about individuals. That means he really cares about you. And it might just be a little fun thought experiment for you.

Even right now, if you like. If you were having a one-to-one conversation with Jesus... What would that be like? Put yourself in a place you love to talk to people. It might be a cafe or a pub.

[3 : 32] It might be on a bus. It might be taking a walk. For me, it would probably be driving along in my van. And picture yourself with Jesus. And think to yourself... What would you talk about?

Now, in some ways, it probably depends who was kind of leading the conversation. If you were asking Jesus questions... You might ask him about creation. You might ask him about what it was like to create the stars.

Does he really know them all by name? You might ask him... When he came as a child, as a tiny baby. I'd love to ask him... Did he know then and there that he was the Messiah?

Or is that something that he worked out later on as he went? But of course, Jesus might ask you some questions as well. And I wonder... Just think to yourself... What kind of question might Jesus ask you?

Do you think he would encourage you? Do you think he might rebuke you? Do you think he might have some good advice for you? I suspect that the first thing that pops into your mind...

[4 : 32] Might well be the thing that Jesus would talk to you about. But there's another reason... Why we want to do this teaching series over these weeks. And it's for this reason. Jesus spoke to individuals...

Because he was bringing a new kingdom. And he wanted to bring individuals into that kingdom... So that they might go and expand the kingdom...

By having conversations with other people. One of the things we want to do... Is to help us... To help equip us... To learn from Jesus... And how he...

Interacted with the Holy Spirit... How he... How he... Encouraged the people in their faith... Sometimes rebuking them... Sometimes encouraging them... Sometimes forgiving them...

And how he did all those things... And then eventually... Led them to... In many cases... Completely turn their lives around. You see the thing is... That because...

[5 : 27] Each one of us here... Are individuals that Jesus love... He has or is in the process... Of speaking to us individually... So that we in turn... Might be able... Able and equipped...

To speak to others... About him. So does that sound okay? So... We're just gonna... I'm just gonna start off with some... General stuff today. We're not gonna look at one of these conversations today...

I'll refer to a few... As we go... But... But I won't... We won't look in depth... At any single one of those conversations... But I can assure you... Over these next weeks...

We really will start to look at some of them... In depth... So... Yeah... So... The first thing to say is that... Is that... Although none of us will ever...

Like Jesus... You know... None of us will ever speak to... Crowds in the way that... He did... All of us can hope to emulate Jesus... And learn from him...

[6 : 22] When speaking one to one... Because all of us have an opportunity... We've been put in a time... And a certain place... With... A family... With certain friends... Work colleagues... Whatever it might be...

Nobody's in the exact same position... That you are in... In terms of the people that you live among... So you... Are uniquely positioned... By God... I would say... To...

Bring the gospel... And speak to... To your friends... Colleagues... Neighbors... Even the strangers... Who you might come across as you go... About Jesus... And... And who he is...

And... Jesus wants to involve us... In that process... Now... Just to give a little bit of personal testimony... I became a Christian...

When I was 15 years old... And as... Donna has rightly pointed out... That was a few years ago now... And... And... And... And... The thing is that...

[7 : 16] I... I... When I became a Christian... I didn't really know any Christians... Apart from... The two youth leaders... That were in the youth group... That I wear along to... I didn't really know any Christians... So it was very obvious to me... That if this was true...

That people... Needed to know... That Jesus... Was real... That he was the Messiah... That we need to put our trust in him... That he had the keys... To eternal life...

And... And partly for that reason... What I wanted to be... When I became a Christian... Was an evangelist... Right... So an evangelist is basically... Somebody who tells people... About Jesus and who he is...

Now that was one part of the reason... The other part of the reason... And possibly the bigger part of the reason... If I'm going to be completely honest... Is that... In those days... And maybe even still today... Who knows... The evangelists were kind of like...

The rock stars of the Christian world... They were the... They were kind of famous... They were on a stage... People listened to them... And... And... You know they would... It was just the kind of person...

[8 : 11] That I thought... That's who I want to be... But at the age of 15... Even then... I was self-aware enough... To realise that... Nobody was going to put me... On a stage...

In front of thousands of people... Yet... And as it's turned out... Nobody has done since either... But that's by the by... I realised that... If I wanted to speak to many people...

About Jesus... I also had to learn to speak to... Individuals... About Jesus... And... Over the course of... Over a couple of years... I... And through... I would say...

The infilling of the Holy Spirit... I was able to speak to... Many people that I knew... Friends... And sometimes even strangers... About Jesus... And who He was...

And I found out... I found that it was the most thrilling thing... Of the Christian life... It was so exciting... Because the thing was... That... Although... You know... Not probably many...

[9 : 04] Or even any necessarily... Would go all the way to becoming a Christian... There and then... Many would maybe take a little bit of a step closer... Or they would become curious about faith...

In a way that they maybe hadn't been... So I could see that I was kind of part of a process... That maybe... Was leading some of these people to faith... And I found that... Really, really exciting...

And... And I think... What I... What happened... Now I look back on it... I think I... What I stumbled upon... Was... Was something... Of a pattern...

That I think... Jesus followed... When He went and spoke to individuals... About... Well... Just about His kingdom... And who He was... So...

I'm going to... Just pull three... Three things... And refer to a number... Of... Of stories in the Bible... And hopefully... If you've... If you know your Bible recently... Well... You'll know what I'm talking about... If you don't then...

[9 : 57] Then that's fine... Hopefully there's enough in there... For you just to... Get a hold of... But of course you can go away... And maybe refer to some of these stories... This week... The first thing that...

That Jesus did... When He spoke to individuals... About His kingdom... About who He was... Was that He interacted... With the Holy Spirit... Okay... He interacted with the Holy Spirit...

Now... How He did that... Is a little bit of a mystery... It doesn't record... If beforehand... Jesus would... Would pray... For somebody... And say... Right... I'm going to...

Today I'm going to meet a lady... Called Kristen... And... And... And... And... You know... Downloading some information... From the Holy Spirit... And this is what we need to say to Kristen... It doesn't say if He did that or not... He might have done that...

And... Well... He might not have done that... But... He certainly interacted with the Holy Spirit... At times... To... To... To... To bring information... That He couldn't possibly have known about...

[10 : 49] Which was the key to that person's heart... So... A really good example of that... Is the interaction that Jesus had... With... With the woman... At the well... If you know that story... It's in John... Chapter 4...

So... So the woman at the well... And... Jesus... He just asked her for a drink of water... But He does that... He already... He knows that something's going to happen here... And... And this woman... She's surprised that Jesus asked him for a drink of water...

Because... Because He's a Jew... And she's a Samaritan... And they were historical enemies... But also... He was a man... And she was a woman... And it would be socially unacceptable... For... For a man to speak to a woman...

In that... In that time... In public... And so they... They get into this conversation... And it turns out that... That this woman... Has actually been married... Six... Was it six times?

Five times... Sorry... Five times... I really should read it again... Five... Five times... And... And... But of course... Jesus couldn't possibly have known that... In His own power and strength...

[11 : 44] But He has interacted with the Holy Spirit... To get that little piece of information... And that gives the key to... Opening up... A conversation to... To her... And also as it turns out...

To the whole Samaritan village... Into which she belonged... Now... Now... If you are somebody... I think people have... Let's say different levels of...

Is gifting the right word... Where... By which we... We hear the Holy Spirit... I think gifting probably is the right word... A prophecy... I suppose you'd call it... Some people hear the Holy Spirit...

And have prophetic give... Very very clearly... So... You know... They might hear... From the Holy Spirit... You know... You need to speak to... Oh this is true about this person here... Now... For me... I can't honestly say that...

That I've ever heard the Holy Spirit... Say... Kristen's been married five times... Because... Kristen hasn't been married five times... But you know what I'm saying... I've never really received... That kind of supernatural information...

[12 : 40] But what happens to me... Quite a lot of the time... Is I will... I'll be speaking to somebody... I'll be having a conversation... Somebody who's not yet a Christian... I'll be talking to them... Just about... Just about anything... And I'm...

And I'm actually praying... On the inside... I'm kind of interacting... With the Holy Spirit in that way... And I'm saying... God... Would you... Would you give me... The key to this... Just to open up this conversation...

That it... That we could start to speak about faith... And I could speak to this person... Tell them about... Tell them about who Jesus is... And all the good things... That he's done for me... And... And as I say...

One of the reasons why I... I imagine myself... If I ever have a conversation... With Jesus is... Driving a van... Is because I quite often... Drive my van with... With people I work with... And usually young men...

And I'm driving along... And I'm talking to them... About their life... And whatever it is... I'm just asking God... Will you just give me the key... To speak to this person... And... And so often... So often he does... We'll just...

[13 : 35] I might just... Hear a voice him... Saying... You know... Ask him about his... Ask him about his kids... Or ask him about the school... That he went to... And... And... All of a sudden... The conversation will just open up...

And we'll start to speak about... About faith... And... So... So that's... Oh I've got... Yeah... So sometimes that's... That's kind of how it works... And...

And you know... And... Sometimes the Holy Spirit... Just uses the words... That we say...

In that way... So... That's the first thing... Interacting... With the Holy Spirit... And the second thing... That Jesus does... Is he always brings... A personal challenge...

Of faith... Specific... To that person... Now... I know it's January... So we're kind of in... New Year's resolution zones... And I imagine... That one or two of you... And I'm not going to look at...

[14 : 27] Anybody in particular... One or two of you... Might have thought to yourself... Do you know what... I think I might need to lose... A few pounds... In the new year... Okay... I'm not looking at anybody... I'm speaking about myself... Why not...

And... Now... And you might think... Right... I'll do a little Google... And think... What's the best way... To lose weight... And you'll probably get... Some good advice... Eat less... Exercise more... That kind of thing...

But if you really want to get... Into really good shape... You need a bespoke... Fitness regime... Just for you... Don't you? You need something... Which is like... Looks at your life... Your diet...

Your... I don't know... Your blood sugar levels... All that kind of carry on... Saying this is the things... That you really need... To get in shape... Now Jesus... Would give the spiritual equivalent...

Of these bespoke fitness plans... To the people... That he met... So... So again... We talked about the Samaritan woman there... What was the thing...

[15 : 20] That the Samaritan woman... Really needed to hear... Which would bring her on in faith... That would give her understanding... About who Jesus is... It was really just that God saw her...

That he cared about her... That he saw the things that she'd done... That she'd sinned... That she'd been sinned against... And he still loved her... And he still wanted good things for her...

Yeah... That's what she needed to hear... And Jesus brought that... Supernaturally... Now... There are other... Great conversations Jesus has... The story of... Where Jesus... When he talks to the rich ruler...

Remember that guy... The rich young man... Who there... He's there with his top hat... And his monocle... And he says... Lord... What do I have to do... To inherit eternal life? And...

And the... And Jesus says... Well... You know the commandments... And you can see him... Sort of snorting to himself... Yes... Well I know... You know... That's what... Everybody else has to do... But what... Obviously I'm a bit special...

[16 : 12] What do I have to do? And so Jesus... Says to him... Well... If you... Really want to know... You should sell all that you have... And then you'll have treasures in heaven...

And of course the guy is completely blindsided by this... But that was the key to his heart... And actually in that one... Jesus... If you could say... Jesus failed to bring him on...

To the next level of faith... Because... Of course he didn't sell all he had... He walked away sad... Because... He had great wealth... And he would not do it... But that was his bespoke...

Spiritual fitness plan... Wasn't it? Or another story... A little bit less well known... But a story that I love... The story of Simon... The Pharisee... Who hosts Jesus...

At a dinner... And when a... A woman who was... Well a prostitute... Came in... And she washed Jesus' feet... With her tears...

[17 : 06] Simon is thinking to himself... If this man were a prophet... He would know what kind of wicked woman... This is... But Jesus... Is totally in control of the situation...

And he knows that the real thing... That needs to be addressed here... Isn't this woman's wickedness... Because clearly she has repented... And she's shown... How much she loves Jesus... Instead the thing that needs to be addressed...

Is Simon's hard heart... His self-righteousness... That thinks he is so much better... Now if Jesus had turned around... And said God sees you... God loves you... God cares about you... Simon would say...

Yeah I know... Why wouldn't he? I'm great... But of course... He doesn't... He says... Simon... You have little love... And so you've been forgiven little...

Everyone has their own... Bespoke spiritual fitness plan... That they need... Now... Again for me... I do speak to... Lots of young men...

[18 : 04] In the construction industry... And often... I find that... The things that they're concerned about... It usually depends where they're at in life... If they're single...

Or they haven't yet settled down... Usually the thing that they're concerned about is... Is how great they can be... How much impact they can have in the world... And so I might ask them about their plans...

What they plan to do with their work... Or things like that... And usually they're... You know... They're kind of Billy Big Boots... You know... They think they've got a lot to give...

And so often I'll say to them... You know... All these things sound great... That you're talking about... But... You know... I believe that you can... You can actually have a...

A greater impact... That doesn't just last in... In this life... With your work... Or your family... Or whatever it might be... You can actually have an impact... In eternity... Because... Because God says that...

[18 : 56] If you will come into his... Put your faith in him... And come into his kingdom... Then not only can you live forever... But you can... You can impact the world... In which we live forever...

And sometimes... You know... You know... Again... You know... This starts off... A really interesting conversation... About who Jesus is... What he's done for us... And... And how we can get involved with that...

Other times... Guys that are maybe a little bit older... Maybe have a... A wife or a partner... And some kids... And generally... When I speak to these guys... The things that they're most concerned about... Is how on earth...

They're going to afford to get through this life... They are very, very aware of the... The cost of living... It's... It's so difficult... Paying for rent... Paying for... Stuff for the kids... School uniforms... Whatever else it might be...

And... Of course... Many of us will have... Those exact same questions... And... I mean... I don't have all the answers... By any means... But... But what I often speak to others...

[19 : 50] Is well... You know... It is... It is difficult... But... One of the things that... That encourages me... When... When I meet challenges... Is that... I...

I know God... And... And ultimately... He is... In control of all things... And he is... It says in the Bible... He's our great provider... He does provide us with everything... That we need... And...

And again... You know... This... This... Just starts... Good... Good conversations... With... With people who don't yet know him... So... So... So yeah...

I mean... I was... I was speaking to somebody recently... He's kind of a... A... What would I call him? I suppose... Oh he would probably call himself... A spiritual sort of person...

Not a Christian... And... And he was telling me about the things that... That he thinks the universe... Is... Is... How do you put it? How... Is kind of leading him in... Giving him...

[20 : 46] How the... What the universe is doing... Right now... And... And... And I remember saying to him... You know... What... Like... When... Does the universe say anything to you?

Does the universe speak to you? And he sort of said... Well... No... And he said... Well... The universe is just... It's just a... It's just an inanimate force... It's not something that speaks to us...

But you know... When we look at... When we read the Bible... The Bible is... It gives us the words of God... Even if you just look at the words of Jesus... The words of our creator are there... You might...

Think about what the universe is leading you towards... But the... But... But the... The Bible gives us something much more... It gives us the very words... Of the creator... Of the universe...

So that's... Anyway... So that's the... First of all you have... Interaction with the Holy Spirit... Secondly... You have the personal challenge... Of faith... And the last thing... The pattern that Jesus follows...

[21 : 40] When he speaks to people... And in some ways... I find this the most impressive... Is that he is willing... To just... Then just leave it... To God... What I mean by that... So... With the exception of the...

The conversations that Jesus had... With his disciples... His... His 12... Closest friends that he... He led... Jesus would have a conversation... He'd have this amazing... Interaction of faith...

Where the Holy Spirit would speak to them... About that person... He would give them a challenge of faith... And then... He would usually... Just leave them to get on with it... That's quite surprising...

Isn't it? You think that... Jesus would... Given that he said... Make disciples... Of all... Creation... You think he would want to follow them up... But actually... He very rarely does...

The most he ever really says... Is something like... If somebody who was healed... For example... He might say... Go to the temple... And do the sacrifices... That Moses required... In our context... That might be something like...

[22 : 34] Get yourself along to a local church... But he wouldn't really check up on them... Particularly... So why does he do that? Well... I think... That the reason is because... He... He's got faith in God...

That actually God will... Will follow up... On that person... God will bring the next person... Into... Into their life... And lead them on to the next stage... Of faith...

I would love... To know... In some of these people... That we spoke to about... What happened next to them? What happened to the Samaritan woman? What happened to... The rich ruler?

What happened to Simon the Pharisee? And these other ones... That we've looked at... Did they come to faith? We don't... Often times... We don't really know... Sometimes we have little hints... In the New Testament... But we don't really know...

It would be fascinating to find out... Wouldn't it? Now... You know... In my life...

[23 : 30] I was kind of thinking about this... As I prepared this talk... I was thinking about... Have I... The people that I've led to faith... And I have led... You know... A few people to faith... But I was actually really struggling...

To remember... Who those people were... And then it dawned on me... The reason why... Is because... Often the times... When I've had the opportunity... To lead people to faith... It's usually... It's usually been...

Well... Always been at the end of that process... Do you see? So I've happened to have been there... When that person's ready... To become a Christian... And I've maybe prayed with them... Or talked to them about that... And then they've...

Kind of gone their own way... Gone to their church... Whatever it might be... But I haven't been in there... In the beginning... I haven't led that person... Right the way through... Because other people have done that... And I just happen to have been there...

At the end... To lead that person through... To faith... But... Of course... I've also been there... At the beginning... And maybe led somebody through... The first step... Or the second... Or the third step... Now most of the time...

[24 : 23] Most of those people... Haven't yet become Christians... They haven't yet come to know the Lord... Hopefully one day they will... And it will probably be... A complete stranger... Somebody who I've never met...

Who leads them through to faith... And I'm absolutely fine with that... I'm cool with that... Because ultimately... It's certainly not about... Me or... Or... The opportunities that I have...

Or you... It's about God... Leading that person through... And if... If... If God chooses to use... Me for one step... And Sue for another... And Jill for another...

And... And some other... Complete strangers to me... That's... That's absolutely fine... Because ultimately... It's not my kingdom... Or your kingdom... It is God's kingdom...

That he's building... So... One of the things I want us to... Have a little bit of faith for... One of the reasons why we're doing... This teaching series... Is that...

[25 : 15] We get to play a role... In... The process of helping other people... Come to faith... And we might never ever... See the... The fruits of that...

But it says... Jesus says that... One sows... And another reaps... And here's the really... Amazing thing... Is that he says that... God is the Lord of the harvest...

And we are just the workers... That he sends out... Into the harvest field... So the... The thing is... Folk... And I'll just finish on this... We don't need to worry... Too much... About... You know...

Our friends... Our relatives... Our neighbours... The people that we know... And care about... Because God is the Lord of the harvest... He has put us... As workers... As people who follow him...

Into a place where we can witness... Where we can have conversations... About who Jesus is... He's put us into that place... And that's all we have to do... Sure we can pray for them...

[26 : 13] We can... Hope that God leads them on... But ultimately... That is not our responsibility... And I want us to be... Have a sense of freedom... That actually... What God is inviting us into...

Isn't another job... It isn't something that... You have to do... And it is quite a scary thing to do... To share your faith with somebody... But actually... We have an opportunity...

To get involved in something... That God is already doing... I can guarantee you... However much you... Long for your... Your mum or your dad... Or your children... Or your friend... Or whoever it might be... To come to faith...

I can guarantee you... That God cares more than you do... And he has put you in a position... Where you can witness to them... Even if it's just by living... A faithful life... In and around them...

So I want to encourage us... That this isn't another... Another thing you have to do... It's something you get... To be involved with... Does that sound... Does that sound good? Well look... I'm going to finish up there... I'm just going to pray...

[27 : 12] I'd love to pray for us... And as we pray... I would love to... I would love to ask you... Just to... Maybe you might think about... Somebody who you know...

Who you think... Would love to come to know the Lord... And maybe somebody you've been praying for... And even just ask God... That he would help you... To tell that person about Jesus...

In whatever... Whether it's sharing your... Sure about how you came to faith... Or just examples of his faithfulness... In your life... Lord Jesus... I thank you that...

That you are the Lord of the harvest... And you send our workers... Into the harvest field... And you've sent us out... And wherever we are... In all our different... Unique locations...

In our different... Jobs... Neighbors... Neighbors... Schools... Family... Whatever it is... Nobody is placed exactly where I am... Nobody is placed exactly where you are...

[28 : 08] And you choose to use us in that place... And I pray you would do so... And Lord... I lift up all the names... And all the faces that have popped into... My friends' minds here...

And I say... Lord would you... Give us the opportunity... To share... Who you are... With these individuals... Even this week...

Would you give us the opportunity... Just to share you... And to see that person... Just move along a step... Into coming to know you... Lord we thank you for your goodness...

We thank you that you are indeed... Worth knowing... Because you... Give those who follow you... Eternal life... You give us freedom from sin... You bless us in everything...

That we do... And we thank you for your goodness... Hallelujah... Amen...