

The Awe of Jesus

by John Maisel



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*Happy the soul that has been awed
by a view of God's majesty.*

Arthur W. Pink

*Let all the earth fear the LORD;
let all the inhabitants of the world
stand in awe of him!*

Psalm 33:8

***Awe:** an overwhelming feeling of reverential respect mixed with fear and wonder that leads to a loss of words.*

Today many of us live in a great struggle. In the midst of all that we experience—prosperity and poverty, success and failure, joy and sorrow, sickness and health—there remains a profound emptiness in the heart of mankind. It is a longing that scholars and experts in human studies label in many different ways.

At the core of this human struggle is the need to know God. Not to just know about God—but to know God personally.

Mankind has referred to it as a search of meaning, a need for a transcendent purpose, or a knowledge of destiny. God calls it a place for His coming. It is eternity that He has set in the heart of man, that continual longing or desire to find the answer to the question of life's purpose. No abundance of anything, any other person, or any accomplishment can fill this inexpressible longing except God alone.

I hope the following thoughts will allow you to see God and come home to Him no matter where you've been or what you've become or what you've done. God desires you to “come” that He might satisfy this sense of

eternity—the longing that gives completeness to life that lasts for eternity.

This longing for the transcendent purpose that your heart seeks is the answer to all your who, what, where, when, and why of life's deepest questions.

If we are honest with ourselves, we will admit that ...

- Everyone is Empty
- Everyone is Lonely
- Everyone is Guilty
- Everyone is Afraid to Die

And everyone is looking for a way to resolve these four issues. The answer to resolving these four struggles we all face is found in our connection to God. In fact, our disconnection with God is what keeps us disconnected with our true selves.

As surely as birds were made to fly and fish were made to swim, you and I were made for God. In some mysterious way, even our deepest desire, when followed to its source, is no more than a hunger to know God.

It is my desire that all you have hoped for and all you seek and desperately yearn for will be found as you think about these words. They will point you to the only place you will have all those questions answered, and to the

One who longs to give you what you so desperately desire and seek.

THE SETTING

Let us consider one short section of Scripture that involves a dialogue between Jesus and Peter. Peter might have asked himself, “*Could I walk with Jesus?*” when Jesus was supernaturally walking on the water. Jesus had one word for Peter and only one word for you and me—come. When Peter came he had a supernatural experience with God and God’s power. The following is the story of Peter’s experience when he responded to Jesus’ command to “come”:

Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

“Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”

“Come,” he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Matthew 14:25-33

Who is this God-Man called the Son of God that's worshipped by men, supernaturally walks on water, and tells people like us to "come" to him?

One anonymous writer has described Jesus in the following way:

*"Jesus of Nazareth without money or arms
Conquered more millions than Alexander,
Caesar, Mohammed and Napoleon.*

*Without science or learning, he shed more
Light on things human and divine than all
The philosophers and scholars combined.*

*Without the eloquence of the school, he
Spoke words of life such as were never
Spoken before or since and produced effects
Which lie beyond the reach of orator
Or poet.*

*Without writing a single line, he has
Set more pens in motion and furnished
Themes for more sermons, orations, discussions,
Works of art, learning volumes and songs
Than the whole army of great men
Of ancient and modern times.
Born in a manger and crucified as a
Malefactor, he now controls the destinies
Of the civilized world.”*

You know His Name—the One we call the Incarnation of God. It is Jesus.

His birthplace was Bethlehem. His city was Nazareth. His trade was a carpenter. His calling was unique. His words were profound. His destiny was death.

In some ways He was like us.

Here was a man born of a peasant woman who grew up in a typical family, never wrote a book, possessed neither wealth nor influence, and never ran for political office.

But it was obvious that He was different from us.

He came from heaven to be a servant. He came from a throne to carry a Cross. He laid aside majesty to bear the wounds of those He loves.

In infancy He startled kings. In childhood He puzzled religious leaders. In manhood He ruled the course of nature and hushed the sea.

James Stewart—the Scottish Divine—speaks about his unique contrast as he describes His personality:

“He was also the meekest and lowest of all the sons of men, yet He spoke of coming in the clouds of heaven with the glory of God. He was so gentle and approachable that children loved to play with Him and the little ones nestled in His arms. His attitude of gaiety at the village wedding was like the sunshine. No one had a heart so kind and compassionate to sinners yet no one ever spoke such scorching words about sin. A bruised reed He would not break. His whole life was love, yet on one occasion He challenged the self-righteous on how they expected to escape the devastation of their hypocrisy. He was the servant who washed the disciples’ feet, yet as He walked into the temple, the hustlers and money changers fell over their feet to get away from the fire they saw blazing in His eyes. While on His Cross, ‘He saved others, yet Himself He could not save,’ cried out His accusers.”

The author concludes by saying . . .

“There is nothing in history like the union of contrast

that confronts us in the mystery of Jesus—the mystery of Jesus is the mystery of Divine Personality.”

He has been referred to as the greatest Man who ever lived and has been called many things by those who say Him, including Almighty God, Emmanuel, The Christ.

He calls himself ...

- The Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25)
- The Light of the World (John 8:12, 9:5)
- The Bread of Life (John 6:35)
- The River of Living Water (John 7:38)

His power is unlimited because He calls the stars by name and forms our DNA. He allows no sparrow to fall to the ground without His permission. He knows the thoughts you think before you know them consciously. He controls the atoms by the words of His mouth. He formed the light and created the darkness.

But even with all of this power and all of His uniqueness and the mystery of His personality, mankind has been in opposition to His claims of deity. From the time of His birth, Jesus' enemies have tried to destroy Him.

The self-righteous Pharisees were threatened by Him. Pontius Pilate sentenced Him to death because of pressure from the Pharisees. Roman guards beat Him. The same

ones that followed Him crucified Him. The demons of darkness laughed and danced as He hung upon the Cross and they contemplated their victory.

Some refer to Him as insane and claim His history was that of a bastard. Ever since Jesus clothed Himself in humanity the forces of evil have tried to conquer Him. Ever since pure light pierced the darkness of this world and perfect righteousness challenged the relative righteousness of mankind, His enemies have tried to destroy Him or deny Him.

And finally, He was betrayed by His followers. Here's what happened in the last few years of Christ's life:

- He became an itinerant preacher
- The tide of public opinion turned against
- He was betrayed by one of His closest friends
- He was arrested for disturbing the status quo
- All of His followers deserted Him
- The 1st Century loved Him and killed Him

Today, some of these reactions to Jesus continue:

- The 21st Century acknowledged Him and ignores Him
- We think of Him on Sunday and forget Him on Monday
- His name is used as a curse word by some and a cry of hope by others

- When He gives us the air we breathe, we praise Him, yet we reject Him with the same breath whenever some want is not met

Yet today He lives and is the centerpiece of human history. His Cross—which represents the greatest crime that mankind has committed—has become the hope of all who know and embrace Him.

Why would He leave a throne to carry a Cross and die a tragic death?

This question must be asked. Jesus' answer to the question is that He needed to suffer your death so that you might live eternally.

- Jesus carried His Cross on your behalf
- He knows your first and last sin, but considered your life so valuable that He died in your place
- He had no sin in Him until He took your sins on Himself
- He qualified for no punishment, but He took your punishment
- He took your punishment so you would not be punished
- He had no guilt, but bore your guilt
- He took your guilt so you would be declared not guilty
- He took your shame so you would not be full of shame before God Almighty

- He deserved no pain as Creator, but He took your pain

And if you are full of rebellion, sin, shame, and guilt today and decide to take Him as your Savior—just as you are—He will say, *“What sin? What shame? What guilt?”*

Because His compassion reaches to the heights of humanity and to the lowest of the needy, He bids you to come to Him and drink freely of the water that gives life.

No matter who you are or where you have been, this Jesus knows the feelings of your pain, rejection, hurt, and sorrow.

He bore your hurt to fill your void. He satisfies your longing for hope, for life, for strength. And most of all, he fulfills your longing for love.

No matter what you have done, or what you have become, you are welcome, if only you COME. That is why He says to all of us who have experienced these emotions—COME—so that He might satisfy your longing for eternity and give you eternal life.

This coming is to Jesus, not to an organization.

You come to Jesus, not to rules or standards or duty.

Only to Jesus does God bid you to come as Jesus bid

Peter to come. You come to the Jesus who said ...

- To the lepers: *"I will make you clean"* (Matthew 8:3)
- To the blind: *"I will give you sight"* (John 9:1-12)
- To the lame: *"Take up your bed and walk"* (Mark 2:11)
- To the dead: *"Arise!"* (Mark 5:41)

His offer to you involves an everlasting experience.

- He does not offer you fame, but forgiveness
- He does not offer you wealth, but peace
- He does not offer you success, but life
- And if you are lonely today, He will overshadow you
- And if you are broken, He will heal you

If you take His forgiveness, He gives you the significance you seek. If you receive Him, He gives you His peace for which you long. If you experience His life, you succeed in life. His touch will bring healing to your broken heart.

This begs a second question. *Why would He walk such a difficult path for you and me?*

He makes the answer very clear because of His love for us. It is a love that the world has never seen or experienced. It is a love that is so pure you have never felt it or seen it until Jesus comes into your life at your request. His love that is offered to you far exceeds your ability to conceive it.

We try to describe it by saying it is higher than the heavens, deeper than the oceans, and broader than the cosmos.

But nothing can describe this love.

We try to compare it to a mother with her nursing child, a groom and his bride, and a father with his son or daughter.

But how do you compare or measure something that has never been seen or experienced? How do you understand that which is incomprehensible? How do you understand what has been hidden in the heart of God for all eternity, His loving desire for you and me?

His love is so amazing and so divine. It is a love that has never entered into the hearts of human history without His love first reaching to human hearts.

It is a love so real that God became a man, so that man might become a son or daughter of God. No one could explain, no one could conceive, no one could fathom that God would so love the world that He would become a man. God alone knew that:

- Jesus could conquer the grave
- Jesus could raise the dead
- Jesus could bring new life

This love is so deeply rooted in forgiveness that the vilest of the vile, the worst of the wicked, the meanest of the murderers, the proudest of the self-righteous, and the most arrogant of the atheists might know and taste the pure, lovely freedom of forgiveness.

It is a forgiveness that reaches the broken heart, resurrects the broken spirit, and renews the shattered mind. This Jesus that loves you will meet you where you are, He will be your Savior from all fears. He will be your Salvation from all regrets. He will be your Lord and God for all eternity.

If you come to Him, He will give you forgiveness, He will give you deliverance, and He will give you new life.

Do you know this love and forgiveness that only God can give?

I don't know your particular need, but whatever it is He will meet it.

- If you need gentleness, *He is the Lamb of God (John 1:29)*
- If you are thirsty, *He is the Water of Life (John 4:14)*
- If you are blind, *He is the Light of Life (John 8:12)*
- If you are depressed, *He is the Hope of Life (Titus 3:4-7)*
- If you are lonely, *He is the Ever-Present One (Deuteronomy 31:8)*

- If you need courage, *He is the Lion of Judah*
(Revelation 5:5)

His love alone brings you unconditional acceptance, undeserved love, unmatched kindness, and the everlasting hope you crave.

Jesus' desires for you are pure and noble because He desires only what is the highest good for you and the best for your heart. He is the only one who has no agenda to get something from you.

Jesus does not say to you, "*come, follow Me*" because He is on some ego trip and trying to build up a great organization. He does not want you to come to Him because He will get some sense of accomplishment by having you.

No, Jesus does not need you, but you need Jesus. And Jesus desires that you have all of Him. When you come to Jesus, you come to the completeness you seek, the "yes" you so deeply desire, and you surrender to the life you were created to experience.

Now we must all ask ourselves the question, "*Who needs Him?*"

We all need this encounter with Him! The one who needs

new life needs to come to Jesus. That includes...

- Those religious people who acknowledge God need to know Him
- Those Christians who are defeated need to be renewed by Him
- Those who have lost all hope
- Those who feel the emptiness and the pain of life apart from God
- Those with full houses, closets, portfolios, and garages, but have empty hearts
- Those who call Jesus King but have ascended to their own thrones
- Those who offer Him a superficial kiss but have never embraced Him
- Those who acknowledge Him intellectually but have never given Him their lives

“Come” is His request of you so that you may have His life, His peace, and His joy.

Do you want to be free? Do you want to be whole? Do you want to know why you were created by God? Do you want to drink of a cup that really satisfies?

You must come to Jesus who alone can set us free to be what we were made to be for God.

Only this supernatural love can explain why a man or woman who knows the love and forgiveness of this God-Man would ...

- Abandon themselves to a God they cannot see
- Trust this Jesus hanging on a Cross—condemned as a common criminal
- Become gracious enough to give their money to a cause that recruits liars, cheaters, murderers, and hypocrites into its service
- Be willing to leave the comforts of their home, friends, and society to go and live with the poor, weep with the hurting, and serve the orphans

Only an encounter with God and the touch of His love can explain the freedom of ...

- Having more joy in the giving than the receiving
- Serving rather than being served
- Forgiving rather than condemning
- Loving while being rejected

If this unseen God possesses all power, and this rejected Jew has all authority in heaven and earth, coming to Him will bring freedom that makes our lives free and joyful. This makes us complete and free to be what we were made to be.

Think about it ...

- You have everything, but without Him you have nothing
- You have nothing, but with Him you have everything
- There is no lasting hope apart from Him
- There is no lasting peace apart from Him
- There is no lasting purpose apart from Him
- Yes, temporary hope, if we win the game or work the deal
- Yes, temporary peace, if we marry who we want or gain what we seek
- Yes, temporary purpose, if we accomplish our goals and achieve our promotion

But, only Jesus gives lasting peace, eternal hope, and complete fulfillment.

If you understand and want to say, “yes” to what we are talking about, your heart is open and your soul thirsty. Jesus is knocking. He is seeking you. Yes, *you* personally.

If your ways have left you “*empty*” and your feelings have left you “*incomplete*,” then *come*. It is God who draws you to Himself.

If you *come*, He does not promise you a pain-free existence, but He promises to be there with you. No matter what your circumstances, you will know His peace. No matter

what your pain or sorrow, you will know His presence.
No matter what your regrets, you will know a new beginning.

He can't promise a sorrow-free life or a first place finish in everything, but He does promise to use your sorrows for your good and your broken dreams for your greater gain.

There will be no sinless perfection, and future failures will cause disappointments, but He knows what is in your future now and still bids you to *come* to Him. Once you come, He says, "*I will never leave you*" (Hebrews 13:5). When pain and sorrow touch your life, His touch of love, peace, and compassion will fill your heart. Come to Him ... now.

ONE DAY

You must stand before the living God, and He will ask only one question: *What did you do with Jesus—who loves you, seeks you, and pursues you—when He asked you to come to Him?*

There will be a day when every knee shall bow and say, "yes" to this Jesus (Philippians 2:9-11). This includes ...

- The knees of the religious
- The knees of the non-religious
- The knees of Kings and Queens and of Presidents and Princes

- The knees of Generals and Governors
- The knees of the rich and famous
- The knees of the poor and downtrodden
- The knees of all who walk upon the earth will fall in His presence one day

THAT DAY – HIS DAY

This One who gave you life asks that He might give you His life. This One who created the beginning and closes the end asks you to take Him as your new beginning so that there will be no end to your life. One day there will be no more sorrow, no more pain, no more failures, and no more disappointments (Revelation 21:4). One day—when you see Him face to face, touch to touch, smile to smile—you will understand and be free, free indeed.

Some of you who read this will die soon, others are too young to even think about death. Some are educated with degrees, others are not. Some of you have large bank accounts; others of you do not know where your next meal will come from.

Regardless, Jesus says to you, “Wherever you are, whatever you’ve done, whatever you think you are—I love you!”

He wants to give you everything you need, not everything you want, but everything you have ultimately hoped for.

ACCEPTING OR REJECTING

As you consider this truth about whether you will come or not, remember what you are accepting or rejecting. Think of who He is:

- The Apostle Peter said, *"You are the Christ."* (Matthew 16:16)
- John the Baptist said, *"Behold the Lamb of God, ..."* (John 1:29)
- Doubting Thomas said, *"My Lord and my God!"* (John 20:28)
- To the hurting He is a *"Man of Sorrows."* (Isaiah 53:3)
- To the rich *"A Giver of all good things."* (James 1:17)
- To the homeless He says, *"... the Son of Man has no place to lay His head."* (Matthew 8:20)
- To the guilty, *"I am your advocate."* (1 John 2:1)
- To the fearful, *"Fear not for I am with you."* (Isaiah 41:10)
- To the thirsty, *"Come to Me and drink freely."* (Isaiah 55:1, John 4:14)
- To the bitter, *"Forgive as I have forgiven you."* (Ephesians 4:32)

This Jesus who gave you life says to you, come to My life, that you may know your purpose. Come to My light, that you may begin to see clearly. Come to My freedom, that you may know why you were made. Come, that I may be yours and you may be mine.

Jesus' love and work for you is a masterpiece—a finished work (Philippians 1:6).

Imagine how insane it would be for you to take a felt-tipped pen and try to add a few strokes to the *Mona Lisa*. Or take a hammer and chisel on Michelangelo's *David*. These are finished masterpieces. Completed works of genius. Any additions would only ruin and diminish the value.

The greatest work this world has ever seen was Christ's work on the Cross for you and me. His work of salvation is a masterpiece beyond comparison, a finished work—perfect and complete. There is nothing that you can or need to add to improve its merit. Christ loves you. He suffered and died for you. He offers to you the merit of His finished work and the power of His resurrection.

If you come. If you believe. If you receive.

Nothing needs to be added to His finished work.

Not your good works. Not our human efforts.

Nothing. You can't improve His masterpiece.

But you can come to Him by praying words like this to Him that come from your heart ...

“Lord Jesus, come to me, I come to You to receive Your forgiveness. I trust Your love for me. Come, Jesus as my Savior and Lord. Give me your forgiveness and make me new. Thank You for dying for me. Thank You for paying my debt of sin to God.

I believe You died and rose again for me and now I receive you as my Lord and Savior.”

If you prayed this prayer in simple faith, trusting Jesus to do for you what you cannot do for yourself, God has given you your request. Moving forward, your experience of God will be built upon the foundation of four eternal truths:

- You are forgiven (John 1:9)
- You have eternal life (John 3:16)
- You have become a child of God (John 1:12)
- You now have a new life with a new beginning (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Whoever you are, He is there for you.

Since Jesus says, “*whosoever will can come*,” (Revelation 22:17) and you have come, no matter what you do or call yourself, He will be with you and He will be unique to you.

Are you an architect? *He is the chief cornerstone*

(Ephesians 2:20).

Are you an astronomer? *He's the bright and morning star (Revelation 22:16).*

Are you a baker? *He is the living bread (John 6:51).*

Are you a builder? *He is the sure foundation (Isaiah 28:16).*

Are you an educator? *He is the greatest teacher (John 3:2).*

Are you a farmer? *He is the Lord of the harvest (Luke 10:2, Matthew 9:38).*

Are you a geologist? *He is the rock of ages (Isaiah 26:4).*

Are you a judge? *He is the righteous judge (Psalm 7:11).*

Are you a lawyer? *He is the counselor, the lawgiver, the advocate (Isaiah 9:6).*

Are you a philosopher? *He is the wisdom of God (Romans 11:33).*

Are you a statesman? *He is the desire of all nations (Haggai 2:7).*

Are you a laborer? *He is the great rest (Matthew 11:28).*

If you prayed that prayer, He has become your Savior, Redeemer, and Lord.

And to all of us who are sinners and trust His death for us and the love that He offers to us, He is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

Thank you for allowing me to introduce Jesus to you and your consideration. May God bless each of you who read this and turn to the Prince of all Peace.

“...truth is in Jesus...”

Ephesians 4:21



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