



IMAGINE – BEING WITH HIM

October 2016

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

Philippians 2:1-2

A few years ago an Iranian man told me, “I’m not very religious, but I have a soft spot in my heart for Jesus.”

What was it that made Jesus appealing to him?

In *Speaking of Jesus: The Art of Not-Evangelism*, author Carl Medearis who teaches Muslims about Jesus, tells how excited some are to hear stories about Jesus. Muslims don’t accept Jesus as God, instead believing Him to be a prophet. But many of them, though not believing in Christ the way we as His followers do, still love and admire Him as an amazing person. They see Him as a folk hero of sorts, a person who humbly did wonderful things for people in need.

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It's this humility and love that I also appreciate most about Jesus. As a follower of Christ, it's this nature I would most like to emulate. In Philippians 2:4 Paul tells us: *"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."* Can we do that?

As you read this, why not imagine the Jesus we worship today as the living and breathing person He was, joining us in our world? Could you imagine what it would be to spend time with Him as He did His ministry—as one of His disciples perhaps?

To truly know Jesus, it would help if we could picture Him in human form—human, though God. While in the world He was as one of us, having needs like we have: feeling hunger, tiredness, pain and grief. Trying to see Him like this would help us truly appreciate Him. It would enrich our understanding and intensify our love for Him.

What would it have been like to talk with Him, to eat meals with Him, to walk from town to town with Him? Imagine hearing Him tell His parables firsthand. How would His voice have sounded? Authoritative? . . . Perhaps. I suspect, gentle at other times.

What would He have said to you as you walked side by side with Him? He would most likely be a good listener when you had troubling things to talk over. Would He, like a close friend, have put His arm over your shoulder?

Around the fire at night might you and the other disciples join with Jesus to relax for fun and laughter? Surely, Jesus, as one of us, would have laughed. What did Jesus' laughter sound like? Was it the contagious kind, Him starting, and joyousness spreading throughout the group? How delightful it would have been to be part of that!

. . . Or at other times, might the evenings around the fire have been time for quiet talk—about life and how we felt about it . . . About what Jesus had come into the world to do?

Imagine standing next to Jesus as He healed the blind, the crippled, the lepers. Imagine being there to see how well He treated those the world looked down on and stigmatized. He could have shown us how to care about them and respect them.

Remember how Jesus joined with those who were grieving the death of Lazarus? Jesus felt their pain and had compassion. He wept alongside them. If you were to spend such time with Jesus you too would witness the great love and compassion He has for hurting people . . . for people like you and me.

I'm wondering how spending time with Jesus two thousand years ago might have changed me . . . How I would have loved to learn His kind of love and humility first-hand!

But He *can* still teach us—even now. We *can* still spend time with Jesus—even today. He can *always* be our friend.

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