

LOOK, LISTEN, LEARN

When Holy Curiosity becomes flesh and blood.

I've written extensively about *Kingdom Reconnaissance* and *Holy Curiosity*.

Kingdom Reconnaissance is about paying attention to what is already happening around us. We look for clues, patterns, tensions, questions, and those little things that make us wonder if something more might be going on.



Holy Curiosity is how we approach what we find. We resist the urge to explain everything too quickly. We ask questions. We wonder. We stay curious about what Jesus might be doing that we haven't noticed yet.

But eventually the what and the how have to become practical.

That's where *Look, Listen, Learn* comes in.

And the more I've thought about those three words, the more I've realized the verbs may not be the most important part.

The adverbs are.

LOOK CLOSELY.

It is surprisingly easy to look without really seeing.

We walk through the same places, spend time with the same people, hear the same kinds of conversations, and eventually we stop noticing things. We see what we expect to see.

Looking closely means paying enough attention to notice what doesn't quite fit. A person who keeps showing up. A question that keeps surfacing. An unexpected openness. A tension nobody seems to be talking about. Something happening that doesn't fit the story we have already told ourselves about these people or this place.

Jesus did this constantly.

He noticed Zacchaeus sitting in a tree.

He noticed a widow putting two small coins into an offering.

In the middle of a crowd pressing against Him, He noticed the touch of one woman.

Again and again, Jesus saw people others seemed to miss.

Looking closely requires us to at least consider the possibility that I might be missing something.

That's a pretty important possibility if we really believe the Kingdom is near and the harvest is plentiful.

There may be far more happening around us than we have learned to see.

LISTEN *DEEPLY*.

I'm not sure we can look closely without eventually wanting to listen deeply.

And listening deeply is different from simply hearing what someone says. It means listening long enough to understand the person behind the words.

What matters to them? What are they afraid of? What are they hoping for? What makes them come alive? What disappoints them? What words do they use to describe what is happening in their own lives?

That last one matters.

It is easy to listen to someone and quietly translate everything they say into our language. We hear their story and start fitting it into categories we already understand.

But Jesus asked people questions.

"What do you want me to do for you?"

"Who do you say I am?"

"What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

Obviously Jesus wasn't asking because He needed more information. He gave people room to speak.

That means listening deeply requires another possibility: *You might know something I don't.*

I like what that does to the relationship.

The person in front of me isn't someone I need to figure out. They are someone I want to know.

LEARN *HUMBLY*.

This may be the hardest one for me.

Because it is entirely possible to look closely and listen deeply and still walk away believing exactly what I believed when I arrived.

We can become very good at finding evidence for things we have already decided are true.

Learning humbly means I have to leave room for what I see and hear to mess with some of my assumptions.

I might have started with the wrong question. I might have misunderstood what people actually care about. Something I assumed wasn't working might be more fruitful than I realized. Something I thought was important might not matter nearly as much as I thought it did.

And Jesus might be doing something I never thought to look for.

That requires me to consider a third possibility: *What I discover might need to change me.*

That is where Kingdom Reconnaissance gets really interesting.

The harvest isn't simply something we study so we can become better at reaching people. The harvest can also become one of the places where Jesus teaches us.

People ask questions that send us back to Jesus with questions of our own. Their stories expose assumptions we didn't know we carried. Sometimes they see things we have stopped seeing. Sometimes what Jesus is doing in their lives challenges what we thought He was supposed to be doing.

Of course, we enter the harvest with something incredibly good to share.

Jesus.

But that doesn't mean we enter with nothing to learn.

That's what Holy Curiosity begins to look like when it moves out of our heads and becomes flesh and blood.

We look closely enough to notice.

We listen deeply enough to understand.

And we learn humbly enough to be changed.