



Personal Jesus

July 10, 2022

John 20:24-29 (NRSV)

Connect

- Depeche Mode's *Personal Jesus* was the Broadway member submitted song of focus to launch the series, "*Then Sings My Soul: Finding Sacred Hope in Secular Music.*" If you have familiarity with the song, speak to your memories of it. Pull up the song on the streaming source of your choosing and play it for the group. Share initial impressions.

Engage

- Read *John 20:24-29*. This is one of the favorite and famed passages of Jesus showing up post-resurrection. It's where we get Thomas' nickname for all time: *Doubting Thomas*. Is that fair? Why? Why not?
- On a surface reading of this passage, what of it speaks to you most clearly at this point in your life?
- Thomas is depleted from the grief of losing Jesus and missing every appearance he has made after his death so far. He's grumpy, tired, cynical and uncooperative. Our society is depleted right now too from living through the trauma of these pandemic'd years. How have you noticed this depletion in yourself and/or those around you?
- What does having a personal Jesus mean to you? Discuss.
- Depeche Mode seems to suggest what an old quote was getting after: "*You may be the only Jesus some people ever meet. You may be the only Bible some people ever read.*" Describe this reality. Have you had this experience? Who is making Jesus personal for you right now?
- Discuss your experience or knowledge of 12-step programs. The first three steps, simple stated, may be worth owning right now as we reconnect with Jesus in close and personal relationship. "*I need help. I can't deliver myself. Jesus I believe you can. I turn my will over to yours.*" What does this mean to you?

Next Steps

- Download *Personal Jesus* and/or find other versions of the song as offered by Def Leppard and Johnny Cash. Pull out phrases as you hear them and reflect further on what is being sung. Feel the music and discern what it does to your mood.
- Train yourself to sit quietly for at least three silent minutes and listen for God. You may feel silly at first, be consumed by distractions, or wonder what difference it makes. Continue the discipline daily and as comfortable, expand your silent time over the course of weeks. Take note of what you hear in the silence.

Pray

"The sacred and secular dance together at all times, God. Thank you for moving through a lyric or a riff in a way that gets right to our souls. Music is so often the direct beat of our spirits. Keep us leaning in and living eyes and ears forward. You are everywhere, Lord. Amen."