



ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Encounters with Jesus

Date: Sunday 9th January

Speaker: Andrew McNeil (City Centre), Jeff Stamps (South Site)

Key Verses: John 1:40-50, John 20:31

Talk Summary:

- In today's passage we see three things: Jesus does what we can't do, Jesus transforms who we are because Jesus knows us like no one else.
- Jesus does what we can't do:35-39. Earlier in this chapter John the Baptist identifies Jesus as, "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!". Timothy Keller "Every other religion and philosophy says you have to do something to connect to God; but Christianity says no, Jesus Christ came to do for you what you couldn't do for yourself."
- The doorway to encounters with Jesus, is recognising we need what he has done, that he can do what we can't for ourselves. "We are declared right with God not once we begin to get our act together but once we collapse into honest acknowledgment that we never will." Dane C. Ortlund, Gentle and Lowly
- When Jesus realises two of John disciples are following him, he asks: What do you want or what are you seeking? They never answer Jesus's question about what they are looking for, instead, they try to figure out how to stay in his presence. "Rabbi where are you staying?"
- Jesus transforms who we are:40-42. After spending a day with Jesus Andrew immediately runs off to tell his brother that he has found the Messiah. Jesus has the authority to change our identity and determine our destiny. Jesus changed Simon's name to Peter which means rock.
- What Jesus is doing to Simon, is calling out his destiny. "Rock" does not describe his temperament but's who Peter becomes by transformation.
- Jesus lifts us into our destiny. We don't simply experience transformation by effort but by encounters with Jesus. When we follow Jesus, we listen, he leads and his word has life giving creative power in us. He declares us holy, we learn to live holy. He speaks value, purpose, freedom, hope, destiny.

- Eventually every one of us has to come to grips with the big questions in life. Why are we here, what's wrong with the world? Questions of purpose identity and meaning. Ultimately, we answer those questions either in ourselves or in the presence of Jesus.
- When we look at the gospels and you see how Jesus Christ addresses these big questions, Jesus doesn't present philosophical arguments. He presents himself. He doesn't come to tell us what the answers are. He comes to be the answer to the questions of life.
- Jesus Knows us like no one else:43–50. Jesus knows what's happening in you and what's around you. Jesus saw into Nathaniel heart and it convinced him that he was Son of God.
- You will never be in a situation where Jesus is not fully aware of what's going on around you or inside you. Jesus sees our fear, our doubts, our pains and our prayers.
- Jesus extends the very hand of God to us and lifts us into his presence, into our destiny and purpose. Jesus calls us by name and we can recognise his voice so like those first followers, let's figure out how to stay in his presence.

Worship

Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.

(Small group worship resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship)

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? *(Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it)*

Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)

1. Encountering Jesus is a choice, a choice to prioritise His presence and seek him. Some encounters with Jesus are dramatic others are simply a choice to be present to him. Do we value one over the other? Do you think Jesus values one over the other?
2. What are some spiritual practices that help you remain present to Jesus? As a group why don't you list as many as you can in 5 minutes (for example silence, worship, breath prayer, the daily examine, fasting, scripture meditation or memorisation, creative prayer). Also what apps, web sites and other resources help you as you actually spend time with Jesus? Reflect and see if one of those above may be a new way for you to be in the presence of Jesus this year.
3. Re read the passages in John's gospel. It includes two accounts of people heading off to tell friends about Jesus. (v41-42 and 45-46). Who do we know that needs Jesus? Are they aware they need Him? If you cast your mind back to before you followed Jesus would you have looks spiritually open or hungry to others? (it's easy for us to be the judge of someone's openness!)
4. What was your response to the painting "the hand of God"? (search Yongsung Kim - the hand of God)

Witness - *How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?*

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invitation to?
 - Upcoming Events (*go to bvc.so/whats-on for details*)
 - Encounter Night, 29th January
 - Loving Your Marriage, Starts 31st January