

ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

Part II.

Post Resurrection Encounters With Jesus

Study #1 for (date)

Greetings and Opening Prayer

Introduction:

Today we begin a new 6 week study course which is Part II of **Encounters With Jesus**. In some ways we may be able to relate more closely to these happenings because they could well be similar to encounters we have experienced.

A. Peter Explains the Happenings of Pentecost

Read **Acts 2:14-41**

1. What had just happened and why did Peter feel a need to explain to the crowd what they had just experienced?

2. How did Peter’s encounter at Pentecost change his life and what was the challenge he gave to the people? How did they respond?

B. Peter & John Obey God & Defend their Actions

Read: **Acts 4:1-22**

3. What did Peter & John do and what were they teaching which caused them to be thrown into prison?

4. How did Peter & John know that Jesus was with them?

C. Responding to Encounters With Jesus

(Small groups) Discuss how Peter & John responded to their encounter with Jesus & their challenge by men.

Share an encounter with Jesus in which you failed to rise to the challenge of what He was asking of you.

Pray for each other in pairs or triads. Pray specifically asking for a fresh touch of His Spirit and a willingness to let go of past failures and embrace His loving acceptance of you.

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Study #2 for

Greetings and Opening Prayer

Introduction:

Sometimes we think being filled with the Spirit is only for pastors and leaders who pray for the sick and speak powerfully to the masses. Daphne is someone who was bright light in our group. I can't help but see her as a Stephen like person when it comes to waiting on tables and having a servant heart for ministry. Her face always shone with a willingness to serve others in a truly Spirit filled way. Now she serves in the courts of heaven!

A. Stephen is Chosen for Service

Read **Acts 6:1-6**.

1. What do we know about Stephen? How was it that he was chosen and thrust into the task of taking care of food distribution to widows?

2. How was his daily life of service a unique encounter with God?

B. Stephen Enters his final Encounter

Read: Acts 6:8-15, 54-60

3. Stephen has been brought before the Sanhedrin. What were the charges? What did the people see when they looked at Stephen?

4. What did Stephen do when he was asked if these charges were true?

C. The Final Earthly Encounter with Jesus

(Small groups) Discuss how Stephen rose to the challenge of his final encounter. How was he like Jesus in his death?

Pray for each other especially for the difficult challenges we face when we step and take a stand for our faith.

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Study #3 for

Greetings and Opening Prayer

Introduction: Plans and preparations don't always go according to our blueprint. There were a number of changes made in our plans as we moved toward our March Forth luncheon. God was very mindful of our circumstances and brought the details together and in the process the Holy Spirit was able to work in our lives.

A. Encounters Are Initiated by God

An Angel speaks to Cornelius in a vision:
Read **Acts 10:1-8**.

1. If you were a friend of Cornelius how would you introduce him to our group?

2. Why do you think he was chosen by God to see a vision of an angel with a message for him?

3. What vision did Peter have which helped to prepare him for this encounter with Cornelius? (see Acts 10:9-20)

B. Peter Responds to His message from God

Read: **Acts 10:30-48**.

4. What question did Peter ask when he first came to the house of Cornelius? (Read Acts 10:27-29)

5. What was the message Peter brought to the household of Cornelius?

C. The Encounter with Jesus

(Small groups) Discuss the super natural encounter with the Holy Spirit. How did the presence of Jesus manifest itself?

Share an encounter that you have experienced which you know originated with God and the Holy Spirit was giving you a message.

Spend time praying together especially for clarification of encounters you don't understand.

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Study #4 for

Greetings and Opening Prayer

Introduction: Have you ever heard a prophetic word given to yourself or someone you know? In the early church the work and direction of the Holy Spirit was given much consideration and credit. Words of spiritual leaders and prophets were also taken seriously. I wonder what we would experience if we would follow more fully some of the practices of the early church.

A. A Calling to Ministry is an Encounter with God

Paul & Barnabas are chosen for a specific Ministry:
Read **Acts 13:1-12**.

1. What steps were taken in choosing Paul & Barnabas to be sent out on the first missionary journey?

2. Trace the work of the Holy Spirit. How did He direct the leaders of the early church?

3. What procedure is taken today when someone is called into public ministry? (A pastor, evangelist or missionary)

B. Paul & Barnabas Experience a Unique Encounter

Re-read: **Acts 13:4-12**.

4. What did they do when they arrived on the Island of Cyprus? Who was with them?

5. What was it that prepared Paul to confront Elymas the sorcerer? What was happening here behind the scenes?

6. What tools are available to us for the benefit of our daily journey? Discuss

C. Preparing for Encounters with Jesus

(Small groups) Discuss guidelines we can use to encourage encounters and to combat the tricks of the evil one to keep us from hearing from the Holy Spirit.

Spend time praying together. Pray for each other, targeting areas of struggle. Listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying and share what you feel He might be saying to you or to the group. Close by thanking God for meeting us in this encounter.

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Study #5 for

Greetings and Opening Prayer

Introduction: The Holy Spirit is at work. At times He shows up in powerful encounters moving us to tears of repentance or joy. More often He works quietly behind the scenes preparing hearts and minds for obedience. Why do you think we don't see more evidence of His work around us? Discuss.

A. Paul Encounters the "Spirit of Jesus"

Paul & his company continue in ministry:
Read **Acts 16:1-5**.

1. How does God lead Paul in choosing Timothy to join his group in the traveling\encouraging ministry?

2. How do you know God is at work in your life when you don't see any evidence of His work in your daily life?

B. Paul's Encounter and Change of Plans

Read: **Acts 16:6-15**.

3. Look at the map to see where they wanted to go and where they went. How do you think the "Spirit of Jesus" or the Holy Spirit worked to keep them from going?

4. What was happening in Macedonia in preparation for Paul and his group to come and preach the gospel?

5. You have just met Lydia. She has already had an encounter with Jesus. How would you introduce her to this group?

6. What natural or spiritual gifts does Lydia possess and how does she use her gifts? How do you use your gifts?

C. Sharing our Encounters as we use our Gifts

(Small groups) Discuss how the Spirit of Jesus has used your natural gifts to further His Kingdom purposes.

Spend time praying for each other. Pray that the Holy Spirit will give freedom to identify and use the gifts He has given. Thank God for today's encounter.

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Study #6 for

Greetings and Opening Prayer

Introduction:

When we first enter a new place or experience we draw upon our past and our family. We also may be a little more open to what God wants to teach us till we feel more at home in our new environment.

A. Paul Experiences New Encounters in Corinth

Read **Acts 18:1-8**.

1. What were the circumstances around Paul being in Corinth alone?

2. What do you think attracted Paul to a Jewish couple from Rome and what was their work? What clues to we get to show us that Gods desire is for believers to work together?

B. Paul's Encounter with Acceptance and Opposition

Read: **Acts 18:9-18**.

3. Paul may well have been discouraged but the Lord spoke to him in a vision. Why? What was God's message and how did Paul respond?

4. What do we know about the believers in Corinth? How long was Paul's stay and how have we benefited?

5. When we are afraid and God speaks how might our response change our plans? (discuss)

C. Encounters Affect our Actions

(Small groups)

Last week we talked about using our gifts. What natural gifts did we see used today? What spiritual gifts?

Review how the Spirit of God speaks and discuss how we ought to respond.

Pray together as the Lord leads allowing His Spirit to direct. Spend some time in praise and thanksgiving for the many ways God still speaks.
