ENCOUNTERS: Road to Emmaus

Pastor Derek Sanford

April 21, 2019

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Thinking back on this week’s sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. During the sermon we heard that “a misunderstanding of the resurrection binds us to a life of boredom, triviality and a purposeless drifting through life in this world as we wait for heaven. Most people live lives that are flat-out boring and empty as we try to fill the void with junk that just doesn't satisfy. “ How have you seen that to be true? Read **Romans 6:4**.
3. How have you seen this verse to be true?
4. The same God who encountered people in the Bible is the God who encounters us. How have you encountered the resurrected Lord in the last few months?
5. Read **Luke 24:13-24**. Jesus pursued the two men on the road and he is still pursuing people today. Who in your life have you struggled to share Christ with you are resting in the truth that Jesus is also pursuing them.
6. Read **Luke 24:28-31**. When was the last time God gave you a moment of clarity about who he is or what he is doing in your life?
7. Read **Luke 24:33-35**. After this Easter weekend identity someone with whom you will share the good news of the resurrection.
8. **Optional:** Watch the Road to Emmaus on Right Now Media and then discuss the questions at <https://www.visionvideo.com/files/emmausdiscussiongde.pdf>

**Next Steps:** We were challenged by Derek to discover how the resurrection will make a difference in our lives. Now discuss how the resurrection can make a difference in your group in the coming weeks. Who will your group serve with the power of the resurrection? [\***OPTIONAL**: LG Leader, consider asking different members of the group to share their own *encounter* stories each week of this series. How have you encountered Jesus in your life?]

**Prayer Thought:**

* **ADORATION:** Praise God for revealing to you the power of the resurrection.
* **CONFESSION:**  Confess your failure at times to be open to Jesus working around you.
* **THANKSGIVING:** Thank God for the lent season.
* **SUPPLICATION:** Ask Jesus to reveal his resurrection to your 3 that you pray for every day.

**Memory Verse: 1 Peter 1:3** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

ENCOUNTERS: Saul And A Come-To-Jesus Moment

Derek Sanford

April 28, 2019

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Thinking back on this week’s sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. **Read Acts 7:54-8:2 & Luke 23:32-34**. Saul was present when Stephen was martyred and heard Stephen, like Jesus, pray for forgiveness for those who were killing him. How do you think this affected Saul’s life?
3. **Read Acts 9:1-9 and Acts 22:3-11.**  Saul was persecuting and murdering Christians before he met Jesus in a physical way and later called himself “chief of sinners.” How does this help you see God’s grace not only in Saul’s life but in your own life? How does this give you hope as you pray for those you love who seem so far from Jesus?
4. **Read Acts 9:11-16 and Acts 22:12-15**  How do you think Ananias felt about this mission from God? What risks did it involve? What would Ananias have missed if he had not obeyed? Share a time when God called you (or is calling you now) to do something risky for Him. How did it work out? If there’s something He’s calling you to do now, share it with your group so they can support you.
5. **Read Acts 9:17-19**. What were the steps for healing of Saul’s physical and spiritual blindness? Jesus doesn’t usually appear to us in a physical way as He did to Saul but He does orchestrate events in our lives to allow us to meet Him. What are some ways Jesus works in your life to help you encounter Him?
6. Derek gave 6 steps to an encounter with Jesus: 1) Begin with obedience; 2) Recognize the depth of your sin; 3) Accept support from others; 4) Receive your new assignment; 5) Receive the Holy Spirit; 6) Get baptized. Where are you in these steps?
7. **Read Acts 9:18,19 and Acts 22:15-16.** Why was it so important for Saul to be baptized immediately? Have you been baptized as a believer? If so, share your memories. If not, share your feelings about baptism if you’re comfortable.

**Next Steps**: a) Is someone in your group ready to take the step of baptism? The next opportunity is June 30th at Sunday in the Park. How can your group support someone making this step? b) What mission is God calling you to today? *Determine* you will obey.

**Prayer Thought:** Following the ACTS method, have your group take some time to ADORE our sovereign God for being in control of your lives. Then ask them to silently CONFESS ways you have not obeyed God’s calling . Next THANK Jesus for meeting you in your lives and SAY WHAT YOU NEED and ask Him to do His work in you as you obey Him moment by moment.

Encounters: Job and the Affirmation of God

Pastor Derek Sanford

May 5, 2019

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Thinking back on this week’s sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. In his sermon Pastor Derek’s big idea was “In our suffering instead of giving us explanations, God gives us Himself.” Think back to a time in your life where you walked through a season of suffering (or walked with someone else through a season of suffering), how did you experience God through this time? If you’re in that season right now, how do you see God in the suffering?
3. Pastor Derek taught that when God shows up during Job’s sufferings, He doesn’t give him answers, but He establishes 3 key things for Job about who He is as God: He is creator and sustainer, He knows things that Job hasn’t even thought of, and He does things Job cannot do (reference Job 38-39). In light of this knowledge, how can it shift your perspective during a time of suffering?
4. According to Pastor Derek’s sermon, one way to encounter God during suffering is to submit to His sovereignty and wisdom. Read Isaiah 40:28. How does this passage encourage us to submit to God? What do you need to change/stop doing/start doing to live in such a way so that when the suffering comes, you can encounter God?
5. Read Psalm 30. Pastor Derek said that in our suffering we’ll encounter God when we receive the eventual blessings of faithfulness in suffering. In this Psalm, how does the author show he’s seen the blessings of faithfulness? What are some of the ways he describes God’s faithfulness?
6. Read Isaiah 41:10, how do the words in this passage encourage you to suffer WITH God instead of on your own?

**Next Steps:** As Pastor Derek said in his sermon, in your suffering ask God for his presence, not just answers.

**Prayer Moment**: Suffering is a very real part of living in a fallen world. As followers of Jesus, we know there is hope to be found in these seasons, thought they can be unbearable. As a group, take a minute to pray for the suffering you see/know about around you – it might be your own, it might be extended family, or just the current state of our world. Pray that God be made known in and amongst it all.

ENCOUNTERS: Hagar and the God Who Sees

Sarah Burtt

May 12, 2019

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Thinking back on this week’s sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. Read **Genesis 12:1-5** and review the three-fold promise God makes to Abram.

**LG Leader: Choose to do either 3 or 4:**

1. Read **Genesis 16:1-15** and **Genesis 21:1-21**. Hagar’s story in Genesis is told in two parts.
   1. Assign each character of these passages (Abram/Abraham, Sarai/Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, God) to the members of the group. Consider the events from the perspective of this person. What do you see, hear, feel?
   2. What is revealed about the hearts of people versus what is revealed about who God is?
2. Read **Genesis 14:18; 15:2; 17:1; 21:33**.
   1. What are the names for God given in these passages? Does anyone know any other names for God used in the OT? (LG Leader- do a little research prior to your meeting to find a few)
   2. Taken together, what do these names reveal about who God is?
   3. What is significant about the name that Hagar gives to God in **Genesis 16:13**
3. Read further: choose **Psalm 139** or **Isaiah 43:1-3a**. What is the position/circumstance of the people in these passages? Who is God revealed to be?

**Next Steps:** If God sees you, what does He see? Where are you? What is happening in your life? In your heart? God is not a God of guilt and shame, He is a God of redemption and promise. Write out some declarations about who God is and who you are in His eyes: “God is…” and “I am….”

**Prayer Thought:** Share something from your list and use it to praise God, to thank Him.

**Memory Verse:** **Job 42:4-5** *‘Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.’ I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you*

Encounters: Sarah and the Laughter of God

Pastor Derek Sanford

May 19, 2019

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Talk about something that has really made you laugh since the beginning of the year.
2. Thinking back on this week’s sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
3. If over time, the child’s laughter of wonder develops into a cynical laugh, what in your life has been taking away your laughter this year?
4. Read **Genesis 18:9-13**. Sarah laughs because the promise of God, that in one year she will have a child, feels like mockery. Remember, Abraham is 99 and Sarah is 89. Tell about a time you responded with cynicism to something God said he was going to do.
5. We know that unbelief is sin and sin leads to other sins. What measures can we put in place so that we become aware of our cynicism?
6. Read **Genesis 14:1-6**. Sarah took matters into her own hands which led to immediate problems and dramatic conflict into our current times. Tell about a time you took things in your own hands instead of in faith accepting God’s plans. What were the consequences?
7. Read **Genesis 21:1**. Have one person in the group thank God for his graciousness to Sarah and in our lives despite our cynicism.
8. Read **Hebrews 11:11**. Sarah had lacked faith but her faith grew after she was confronted. How can we let waiting fuel trust and not discouragement?
9. Read **Genesis 21: 2-7**. Discuss what joy you had when a child came into your family to realize the joy that Sarah had at the birth of Isaac, which means laughter. We need to anchor our hope to God’s promise.
10. Read the following verses in praise to our faithful God: **Deuteronomy 7:9, Psalm 33;4, Psalm 119:90, Hebrews 10:23, Lamentations 3:22-23, Deuteronomy 31:6**.

**Next Steps:** Discuss how God might be leading your group into joy

**Prayer Thought:**

* **ADORATION:** Praise the God of the universe that he has a miraculous plan for all of us.
* **CONFESSION:**  Confess your lack of faith in his graciousness and power.
* **THANKSGIVING:** Thank God for how he has increased your faith as you have obeyed Him.
* **SUPPLICATION:** Ask God to clearly expose his special plan for your Life Group this summer.

**Memory Verse: Hebrews 11:11** By faith Sarah ***herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.***

ENCOUNTERS: Isaiah and the Unclean Lips

Pastor Derek Sanford

May 26, 2019

**LG Discussion Questions:**

1. Thinking back on this week’s sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. Consider watching a video from The Bible Project on Right Now Media as an introduction to Isaiah- <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/VideoElement/204153>
3. Read **Isaiah 6:1-8**.
   1. Why is Isaiah’s response to God, “woe is me!”?
   2. Discuss how God’s grace leads Isaiah from “woe is me!” to “here I am!”
   3. In the presence of a holy God, what is your view of yourself? Do you see yourself as unclean or clean? Why?
   4. Read **Matthew 26:26-28**. What has the blood of Jesus done for you? How does God see you?
4. Read **1 John 1:5-10**. We have been “washed by the blood” yet we are still sinners. Talk through a proper response to sin and how to deal with it- according to 1 John.

**LG Leader- choose to do either 5 or 6:**

1. Read **Psalm 51** out loud together. Use it to lead the group through a time of repentance and prayer.
2. Read **1 Samuel 3**. Like Isaiah, Samuel heard the voice of God speaking to him. But Samuel didn’t recognize God’s voice right away. How do we “practice” hearing God? (regularly reading His Word, listening to others preach the Word, praying and listening, spending time in worship, practicing silence, etc).

**Next Steps:** In what area of your life are you listening more to every other voice than seeking to hear God’s?

**Prayer Thought:** Use one of the passages of Scripture from the guide to lead a prayer time. How can that Scripture lead you to praise God, confess sin, thank Him, ask Him for what you need?

**Memory Verse: Isaiah 6:8** *And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”*