

A close-up photograph of a person with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a white robe, with their right hand held out palm up. The background is a soft, warm, golden light.

**SMALL GROUP
STUDY**

ENCOUNTERS
WITH
JESUS

ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

INTRODUCTION



Throughout scripture we find examples of times when Jesus encountered people from a whole host of different backgrounds and social standings. These encounters were not just nice moments but significant events that impacted their lives. Whether it be a conversation, gaining an understanding of their sin, a healing that took place, or a miraculous sign being performed.

These encounters left people either challenged and at times upset by what He said or in awe of what God had done. For those who chose to follow Jesus they embarked on a new journey that would become life long as they learnt to cultivate relationship with Him, obey His voice and become faithful witnesses of the Gospel.

If you are a believer in Jesus today, you too will have experienced your own personal encounter with Him, when you recognised your need for God's forgiveness and grace and you experienced His love envelop you and begin to change you for the better.

But that's not enough, that encounter won't keep you forever. We need to continually interact and encounter God's presence - it's what keeps us moving forward, feeling fulfilled, changing to become more like Jesus, empowered as we go through the ups and downs of life, helping us to understand who we really are in Christ and to be effective witnesses for His kingdom.

As we dig deeper over the next four weeks into encounters that Jesus had in the Gospels, my prayer is that we will be challenged and motivated to grow deeper in the things of God, live Godly lives and most importantly, we would be hungry for fresh encounters.

Best Wishes
Pastor Steve

ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

SESSION 2 - Mary & Martha



In our second study from Encounters with Jesus in the Gospel, we are going to be focussing on an encounter that Jesus shared with Mary and Martha.

READ : LUKE 10 verses 38 - 42

Opening Questions

- Are you naturally more of a doer 'always on the go' or are you more likely to 'stop and be present'? Why do you think that is?
- What would your response be if you knew Jesus was coming over to your house today to visit? What do you think would be your priority and why?

Life is busy, there is always something for us to do - whether we are pursuing our career, bringing up a family, seeking new experiences or in our retirement years. The only time we are not busy is when we are asleep! But is being seen to be busy the most important thing?

Mary and Martha were given the same opportunity, they both were aware that Jesus was coming over - but they both decided that different things were important. Mary decided her time would be best spent at Jesus' feet, whilst Martha busied herself making sure that Jesus would have a wonderful experience and be treated with honour (because she had taken the time to make the house tidy, put the best cutlery out and the food was on point!)

Martha's reason behind what she chose wasn't wrong, per se; she wasn't putting herself first, she wasn't doing something evil or being underhand, she was doing all this for Jesus. But in her eagerness to do her best, and to be a blessing, is it possible that she became overwhelmed and missed out on what was most important?

Discussion

- Who do you see yourself most in - Mary or Martha? Why?
- What do you think it means to sit at Jesus' feet? What might that look like for you?
- Read verse 40 again. What can we learn from Martha's outburst about how she was feeling? Was she justified in her annoyance or do you think there was something deeper going on?
- What does Jesus want to teach us when he says in verse 42 '*Few things are needed - or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.*'
- How can we practically go about cultivating a culture of being in God's presence over being busy?
- What is your biggest challenge to spending time in God's presence? What can you do to overcome it?

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There is nothing wrong with us being practical, getting things done, being busy with kingdom work - if we don't, we will never fulfil the commission to make disciples of all nations! BUT, through the encounters that Jesus had with both Mary and Martha we can learn that there is a priority order. We can't expect to be successful in our endeavours for God's kingdom if we don't first learn to sit at Jesus' feet.

It's at the feet of Jesus that we find rest for our souls, it's at the feet of Jesus that we find our purpose and hear His direction, it's at the feet of Jesus that we are inspired and empowered to go and fulfil His kingdom purposes. It's from being in the presence of Jesus that everything else flows.

As Jesus says in Matthew 6 verse 33: *"Seek first the kingdom of heaven and his righteousness, and all of these things will be added unto you"* He will provide for all of our needs both physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

There is no greater purpose for our lives than to spend time at Jesus' feet and equally there is nothing more that Jesus wants than to spend time with you.

Why not finish your time together by reflecting on something that has stood out for you in the study and spend some time in prayer.

Additional Reading
Matthew 6 verse 6
Philippians 4 verse 19
John 15 verses 4 - 8
James 4 verse 8

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