



**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 3 - The Storm



In Session three of our Encounters with Jesus series, we are going to look at the encounter that Jesus had with His disciples on the Sea of Galilee when He calms the storm.

Jesus and the disciples had just finished a particularly busy period of ministry, in chapter 7 of Matthew we see Jesus teaching at the Sermon on the Mount. Then in chapter 8, after He came down from the mountain, He cleanses a leper and has the encounter with the centurion and the healing of his servant, as well as the healing of Peter's mother-in-law.

It's then, after this, that Jesus decides to take His disciples onto the Sea of Galilee in boats in order to get some rest and solitude from the crowds and busyness of ministry.

**READ : MATTHEW 8 verses 23 - 27**

### Opening Questions

- What are you scared of and why?
- What makes fear such a powerful emotion?

Whilst Jesus and His disciples were sailing, suddenly a storm rose and buffeted the boat. What's important to recognise is this was no ordinary storm. A good portion of these disciples were fishermen, they would be used to storms, they were strong, brave young men who weren't bothered by wind and rain. Yet, in this passage we find the disciples fearful, believing they were going to die. The fear was so real for them that they woke Jesus from his sleep, shouting in verse 25 "*Save us Lord, we are perishing*".

### Discussion

- Why did the disciples react to Jesus in the way they did in verse 25? Have you ever had a similar response? Why do you think that was?
- Do you think Jesus' response to the disciples in verse 26 is a little harsh, considering the circumstances? Why do you think Jesus responded in this way, what was He trying to teach them and us?
- No one enjoys facing tough times but why is facing up to the storms of life an important part of our Christian experience?
- What does it mean to have faith, even in the most difficult situations of life?
- What does Jesus sleeping in the boat (verse 24) tell us about how He was feeling regarding the storm? And equally, how he feels about the storms we go through? How should that make us feel and respond when tough times come?
- What do you need to do practically in the storms of life in order to face up to them with confidence?
- What have you learnt about God from this passage? What have you learnt about yourself?

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Throughout our lives we will face storms. For the disciples it was a physical issue that they felt could potentially end their lives, for us it could come in the form of health issues, breakdown in relationships, loss of jobs, financial issues, death of a loved one, choices made by others or things we perhaps have brought on ourselves by the decisions we have made.

The disciples felt afraid, they felt out of control, they felt on their own whilst Jesus was sound asleep in the boat like he didn't have a care in the world. Have you ever felt like that? I certainly have! Moments when I have been fearful of what might happen and usually I have made it the worse case scenario in my head, I felt totally out of control and wondered where are you God?

Yet, there is something significant about Jesus being asleep whilst the storm raged. Storms don't worry Jesus - there is nothing that surprises or scares Him! What the disciples failed to realise was that Jesus was in total control of what was happening and He was there with them - he knows better than we ever could. Verse 26 tells us *"Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was great calm"*. Just one word, one touch from our King can change everything.

Whether you fully recognise it or not, Jesus will always be with you through your storms and he can be fully trusted. Joshua 1 verse 5 tells us *"No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will never leave you nor forsake you"*.

All God requires of us is to have faith to believe that He will lead us through, that we give total control over to Him and we trust even when our circumstances suggest we should be fearful. You see, nothing good comes from fear, but faith on the other hand leads to spiritual growth, a greater sense of purpose and fulfilment, and confidence for a better future both in this life and the one to come.

How does faith grow in us? By being intentional in seeking fresh encounters with Jesus and spending time in His presence, talking to Him about our fears, listening to Him and responding in obedience. As Psalm 34 verse 4 says *"I sought the Lord, and He answered me, He delivered me from all my fears"*.

As we continue on our journey of encounter this year, my prayer is that you will experience a fresh release of faith over your life—whether you are experiencing a storm, a challenge or if things are going well; knowing that God is with you every step of the way!

**[Additional Reading](#)**

**[Psalm 34](#)**

**[Isaiah 41 verse 10](#)**

**[Matthew 17 verses 20 - 21](#)**

**[2 Timothy 1 verse 7](#)**

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