



## Encounters with Jesus

**14 studies reflecting on the impact that an encounter with Jesus had on peoples' lives.**

† baptist church  
**ebenezer**  
rockofhelp.org.uk • scarborough

Colombus Ravine  
Scarborough, YO12 7QZ  
Registered Charity : 1148674

In the run up to Easter we will be reflecting on what what happened to a variety of characters as they encountered Jesus. On Easter Sunday we will be thinking about our own personal encounter with the risen Christ, and the following week we will look at what happened when the first disciples encountered him.

This booklet contains a series of study questions to help each of us to engage more deeply with the passage each week. Some of the mid-week small groups will be working through these booklets together. However even for those of us who are not in small groups, or for those whose group is doing something else, my prayer is that this booklet will help you to have a deeper personal encounter with Jesus each week as you reflect on those encounters from 2000 years ago.

Each character's encounter with Jesus is very different, but some of the questions in this booklet will be the same each time - who was there, what do you think they were feeling and thinking, and so on.

An encounter with Jesus is a life changing event as each of the passages we will be studying reveals. The preacher will preach from the passage each week, but without reference to the study questions, so it is entirely possible that you will notice different things in the sermon than you do in the study afterwards and that is absolutely fine.

## **Notes:**

**Notes:**

There are no trick questions and no questions requiring deep knowledge. Many don't have a "right" answer and if any do then they are simple obvious questions just to help you move through the passage - and even with these there will be a variety of different ways of answering. So be encouraged, speak up, offer your answer, share the insight the Spirit is giving you for the benefit of the rest of the group.

It may be you are studying alone, in which case please use the questions more meditatively to ponder the passage.

There are lots of study guides and resources available on the internet if you are stuck, and I haven't included leaders notes in this series because I don't want to narrow down our exploration of the passages - so please attempt the questions before consulting Google!

My prayer is that as you see how the lives of others were changed through encountering Jesus, you will find your life changed too.

Every blessing

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'N' followed by a horizontal line.

**Date:** 8th January  
**Character:** The Wise Men  
**Reading:** Matthew 2:1-12

**Questions from the sermon:**

What did God say to you through the sermon, and what caught your attention?

**Questions:**

1. Who are the characters in the passage, what are their motivations, fears and hopes?
2. What aspects of the passage catch your attention and why?
3. How does God show his guiding hand in this passage? Who sees God's hand and who doesn't?
4. What hopes are found in the passage for the child? What lies behind the threat to those hopes?
5. Who do you identify with in the passage and why?
6. Those who should have seen God's hand at work didn't, when and why do we lose sight of God's hand at work?
7. Share with each other something this passage has stirred in you and pray for each other.

**Date:** 23rd April  
**Character:** The disciples  
**Reading:** Luke 24:13-55

**Questions from the sermon:**

What did God say to you through the sermon, and what caught your attention?

**Questions:**

1. Who are the characters in the passage, what are their motivations, fears and hopes?
2. Imagine yourself in the scene, what do you notice?
3. Have you ever had a time when you have been disappointed with God? How did you react? How did it turn out?
4. What is deficient about the disciple's gospel?
5. Is Jesus' response in v25 onwards harsh, or if not why not? What are the key things he wants them to understand?
6. Why does Jesus say and do what he does in v36-43? What assurance and hope does that give us?
7. How would you feel if you had been there as one of the disciples through to the end of v53?
8. Share with each other something this passage has stirred in you and pray for each other.

**Date:** 2nd April  
**Character:** Martha and Mary  
**Reading:** John 11:17-43

**Questions from the sermon:**

What did God say to you through the sermon, and what caught your attention?

**Questions:**

1. Who are the characters in the passage, what are their motivations, fears and hopes?
2. Imagine yourself in the scene, what do you notice?
3. Martha's declaration of faith in v21 is astonishing in her grief. How easy do you find it to remain full of faith in the dark valleys of life?
4. What do you understand Jesus to mean in vv25-26?
5. Death is an awful thing. What can we learn from Jesus' reaction to it in v33?
6. Despite her faith Martha clearly had limits in her mind on what Jesus could do (v39). How do you limit Jesus today?
7. Share with each other something this passage has stirred in you and pray for each other.

**Date:** 15th January  
**Character:** Peter  
**Reading:** Luke 5:1-11

**Questions from the sermon:**

What did God say to you through the sermon, and what caught your attention?

**Questions:**

1. Who are the characters in the passage, what are their motivations, fears and hopes?
2. Imagine yourself in the scene, what do you notice?
3. How do you imagine Peter felt in v3 and again in v4-5? What circumstances can cause us to respond similarly to God's call on our lives?
4. How did Peter's reaction to Jesus change in v8? Can you recall a similar moment in your life - perhaps you could share it with the others around you?
5. What are the differences between fishermen and fishers of men? What are the similarities?
6. What does leaving everything behind to follow Jesus mean to you?
7. Share with each other something this passage has stirred in you and pray for each other.

**Date:** 22nd January  
**Character:** The woman at the well  
**Reading:** John 4:1-26

**Questions from the sermon:**

What did God say to you through the sermon, and what caught your attention?

**Questions:**

1. Who are the characters in the passage, what are their motivations, fears and hopes?
2. Imagine yourself in the scene, what do you notice?
3. This woman wouldn't have expected Jesus to speak to her, who in our society today wouldn't expect to be the focus of Jesus' interest?
4. What do the different titles for Jesus convey as the passage develops, what do they mean to you? (v9, 11, 19, 25, 26, 31, 42)
5. Samaria was separated from the Jews politically and culturally, where do such boundaries exist in relation to the church today? How might we follow Jesus' example in crossing them as opposed to focussing on those most likely to listen to us?
6. Jesus got the woman's attention when he spoke prophetically into her life, up until then his testimony had no obvious impact. How does this challenge you today in your witness?
7. Share with each other something this passage has stirred in you and pray for each other.

**Date:** 26th March  
**Character:** The feeding of the five thousand  
**Reading:** John 6:1-14

**Questions from the sermon:**

What did God say to you through the sermon, and what caught your attention?

**Questions:**

1. Who are the characters in the passage, what are their motivations, fears and hopes?
2. Imagine yourself in the scene, what do you notice?
3. Why do you suppose Jesus went up the mountainside? (Reading the parallel passages may help with this)
4. In v8-11 Jesus took the insignificant and used it. How have you seen God use the insignificant?
5. Discuss Jesus' unlimited supply of resources. How should his unlimited supply affect the way we live?
6. What does this passage teach us about living by faith?
7. Share with each other something this passage has stirred in you and pray for each other.

**Date:** 19th March  
**Character:** Nicodemus  
**Reading:** John 3:1-21

**Questions from the sermon:**

What did God say to you through the sermon, and what caught your attention?

**Questions:**

1. Who are the characters in the passage, what are their motivations, fears and hopes?
2. Imagine yourself in the scene, what do you notice?
3. How do you imagine Nicodemus felt at each step in the passage as Jesus revealed more and what his thoughts might be?
4. What do you understand by being born of water and the Spirit? How does that happen? Share with each other when it happened to you if it has.
5. What is Jesus' point in v8?
6. What do v16-18 tell us about God the Father, Jesus the Son, Humans, and how to not be condemned?
7. Share with each other something this passage has stirred in you and pray for each other.

**Date:** 29th January  
**Character:** Bartimaeus  
**Reading:** Mark 10:46-52

**Questions from the sermon:**

What did God say to you through the sermon, and what caught your attention?

**Questions:**

1. Who are the characters in the passage, what are their motivations, fears and hopes?
2. Imagine yourself in the scene, what do you notice?
3. v48 reveals a determination on Bartimaeus' part? Think of a time you encountered opposition, how did you handle it? What can you learn from Bartimaeus?
4. What can we learn from v51? How might that impact our prayer life?
5. What do v50 and v52 tell us about discipleship?
6. Where do you find yourself spiritually blind? How might you let Jesus minister to you?
7. Share with each other something this passage has stirred in you and pray for each other.

**Date:** 5th February  
**Character:** The woman with the haemorrhage  
**Reading:** Mark 5:24b-34

**Questions from the sermon:**

What did God say to you through the sermon, and what caught your attention?

**Questions:**

1. Who are the characters in the passage, what are their motivations, fears and hopes?
2. Imagine yourself in the scene, what do you notice?
3. How would it feel to be the woman before Jesus healed her?
4. The disciples fail to understand what Jesus means in v30. How do we miss the movement of Christ amongst us today?
5. Notice how easily Jesus heals her. How willing are we to press in like the woman did? Are we as expectant as she is?
6. What aspect of your life needs utterly transformed by God today?
7. Share with each other something this passage has stirred in you and pray for each other.

**Date:** 12th March  
**Character:** The man born blind  
**Reading:** John 9:1-12

**Questions from the sermon:**

What did God say to you through the sermon, and what caught your attention?

**Questions:**

1. Who are the characters in the passage, what are their motivations, fears and hopes?
2. Imagine yourself in the scene, what do you notice?
3. v2-3, can you think of any instances where sin might have been the cause? How do you feel about Jesus' answer in this instance?
4. Why do you suppose Jesus made the mud and applied it to the man's eyes? The man hadn't asked to be healed, how do we know he had faith in Jesus?
5. v8, why do those around discuss the man's identity rather than the miracle?
6. In the crowd's search for truth and later on in John 9 the search for truth sacrifices the truth by missing the point. How have you seen that happen in Christian life?
7. Share with each other something this passage has stirred in you and pray for each other.

**Date:** 5th March  
**Character:** The healing at the pool  
**Reading:** John 5:1-15

**Questions from the sermon:**

What did God say to you through the sermon, and what caught your attention?

**Questions:**

1. Who are the characters in the passage, what are their motivations, fears and hopes?
2. Imagine yourself in the scene, what do you notice?
3. Jesus' question in v6 is hard to answer because many people become defined by their illnesses or difficult situations and don't really want to be healed or released from them. Share some examples (anonymised if necessary) where you have seen this happen.
4. What do you make of the man's response in v7? What thoughts does that give you about Jesus' response in v8?
5. What can we learn from the fact that he didn't know who Jesus was (v13)?
6. When were you last bruised or damped down with little fire in your life? What happened? How did Christ come alongside? Or are you still in that place of being bruised? Are you ready to reach out for Christ's healing, even if it means your life will be different?
7. Share with each other something this passage has stirred in you and pray for each other.

**Date:** 12th February  
**Character:** Jairus  
**Reading:** Mark 5:21-43

**Questions from the sermon:**

What did God say to you through the sermon, and what caught your attention?

**Questions:**

1. Who are the characters in the passage, what are their motivations, fears and hopes?
2. Imagine yourself in the scene, what do you notice?
3. How would you feel in Jairus' position when the woman gets in the way?
4. What significance do you see in v36, v37, v40b?
5. The crowd laughed at faith, v40a, where do we find a similar reaction today? Do we press on as Jesus does, or does such a reaction stop us?
6. What does this passage tell you of Jesus' authority? What confidence does that instil in you?
7. Share with each other something this passage has stirred in you and pray for each other.

**Date:** 19th February  
**Character:** A Sryo-Phoenician Woman  
**Reading:** Mark 5:21-43

**Questions from the sermon**

What did God say to you through the sermon, and what caught your attention?

**Questions:**

1. Who are the characters in the passage, what are their motivations, fears and hopes?
2. Imagine yourself in the scene, what do you notice?
3. What is the significance of this woman's ethnic background?
4. What does her answer in v28 reveal of God's plan for Gentiles?
5. The woman is ready to humble herself before Jesus, what areas of your life do you struggle to be humble before Jesus?
6. Does v29 contradict v27, and if not then why not? How might it inform our mission?
7. Share with each other something this passage has stirred in you and pray for each other.

**Date:** 26th February  
**Character:** Zacchaeus  
**Reading:** Luke 19:1-10

**Questions from the sermon:**

What did God say to you through the sermon, and what caught your attention?

**Questions:**

1. Who are the characters in the passage, what are their motivations, fears and hopes?
2. Imagine yourself in the scene, what do you notice?
3. Zacchaeus is a man who became rich at the expense of others. What surprises you about Jesus' reaction to him? What characterises Jesus' choice of who to go after?
4. What can we learn from Zacchaeus' response to Jesus?
5. Where do we find the crowd's attitude (v7) today? In particular, where is it found in Christian life?
6. Share with each other something this passage has stirred in you and pray for each other.