

# Encountering Jesus

Luke 5.17-26

The 4th Encounter: Faith that counts with Jesus

- ▶ The first—and always—way that we encounter Jesus is in the Word (Luke 5.1). Jesus himself said that the Scriptures testify about him (John 5.39).
- ▶ The second way that we encounter Jesus is in our recognition of our sinfulness (Luke 5.8), leading us to understand that following him and his way is worth leaving—and losing—everything else in life (Luke 5.11).
- ▶ The third way we encounter Jesus is in our desperate need for cleansing from sin and His empathy and sufficiency for our need.

Luke 5.12-16

Matthew 9.1-8

Mark 2.1-12

# Homecoming—

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. (Mark 2.1-2)

- ▶ After his baptism and the forty days of fasting, prayer, and temptation, Jesus moved out of Nazareth and relocated to Capernaum. It wasn't for reasons that we might relocate— a new home, better neighborhood, career opportunity, education; every choice that Jesus made was for one purpose.

- ▶ Matthew, with his emphasis on “Jesus the Messiah” (cf. 1.1), wrote:  
Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali—to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:  
“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,  
the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan,  
Galilee of the Gentiles—  
the people living in darkness have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of the shadow of death  
a light has dawned.” (Matthew 4.13-16)

- ▶ Capernaum was about 85 miles north of Jerusalem, the center of Jewish religious life. The people who lived there were considered less faithful and more compromised than those who lived in Judea or Jerusalem—thus it was known as “Galilee of the Gentiles.”
- ▶ Here we encounter the heart of the God who “so loved the world that he sent his one and only Son” (John 3.16) and the heart of the Son who came to make the Father known (John 1.18). The Father has a missionary heart and Jesus is a missionary.

- ▶ Seven hundred years earlier, the prophet Isaiah wrote down words that YHWH had spoke to the Messiah:

“It is too small a thing for you to be my servant  
to restore the tribes of Jacob  
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.

I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,  
that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.”

(Isaiah 49.6)

- ▶ Do we have the heart of Jesus for the salvation of lost people?  
How are our lives oriented around this one purpose of Jesus' life?

# “Seeing their faith . . .”

Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a sleeping mat. They tried to take him inside to Jesus, but they couldn't reach him because of the crowd. So they went up to the roof and took off some tiles. Then they lowered the sick man on his mat down into the crowd, right in front of Jesus. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the man, “Young man, your sins are forgiven.” (5.18-20)

- ▶ In their gospel accounts, both Mark and Luke want us to understand the “extraordinary”— four friends who wouldn't stop at anything to get their friend to the only One who could heal their paralyzed friend— so they tore open a hole in the roof!

- ▶ Because of their faith Jesus said to their friend, “Your sins are forgiven.” In this encounter, we learn some of the most important things we must understand and questions we must ask ourselves as people who claim to have faith and follow Jesus—
  - (1) Every person’s greatest need is to be forgiven of their sins—this was Jesus’ singular purpose in coming (cf. vss. 31-32). People need a direct encounter with the only One who has the authority to forgive sins.

- (2) What people need more than anything else is for someone to bring them to Jesus.
- (3) Faith that gets the attention of Jesus is faith that stops at nothing to bring people to Jesus.

(4) The actions or inactions of our faith have a direct correlation to someone being forgiven of their sins and reconciled to God.

But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? (Romans 10.14)  
(see also 2 Corinthians 5.20; John 20.22-23)

# What about your faith?

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. . . . However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18.1, 8)

▶ Toward the end of his ministry, Jesus told a story about faith that stops at nothing; he concluded the story with this question:

“But when the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?” (Luke 18.8 NLT)

What good is it, dear brothers and sisters,  
if you say you have faith  
but don't show it by your actions?  
Can that kind of faith save anyone?

Faith by itself isn't enough.  
Unless it produces good deeds,  
it is dead and useless.

James 2.14, 17

Does my faith have worth to Jesus?

With this in mind, we pray constantly for you,  
that our God may count you worthy of his calling,  
and that by his power he may fulfill  
every good purpose of yours  
and *every act prompted by your faith*.  
We pray this *so that the name of our Lord Jesus  
may be glorified* in you, and you in him,  
according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1.11-12

*“... every act prompted by your faith.  
so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified”*

- ▶ What has your faith prompted you to do about people who don't know Jesus? Anything?
- ▶ From Jesus' perspective, the most important validation of our faith is that we bring people to him—just as the most important validation that we are following Jesus is that we want to be “fishers of men” (Luke 5.10-11).

- ▶ Our prayer needs to be like that of the disciples—  
“Show us how to increase our faith.” (Luke 17.5)

In response, Jesus told them that a little faith can accomplish big things. It is not hard to bring someone to the place where Jesus is—a daily prayer list, inviting someone to church or a church event, inviting someone to dinner to cultivate a friendship and show that you care about them. It's not hard to make space for Jesus to work, but it does require intentional action. Just do it!