

CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE FOR ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

SERMON OUTLINE

Introduction

- To encounter means to have an unexpected/expected meeting with God.
- It means to have a heaven on earth experience.

Lessons from Zacchaeus' Encounter with Jesus

1. Spiritual quest is a sign of an underway encounter.

Luke 19:3a "He (Zacchaeus) wanted to see who Jesus was,"

Philippians 3:10-11 "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead."

Matthew 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

John Piper "The greatest enemy of hunger for God is not poison but apple pie."

2. Encounter with God is usually faced with obstacles

Luke 19:3b "But being a short man, he could not, because of the crowd."

Little children: *Luke 18:15-16* "People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the little children..."

Blind beggar: *Luke 18:39* "Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'"

3. Every candidate of divine encounter usually loses sight of self and makes calculated efforts that result in encounter with God.

Luke 19:4 "So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way."

Mark 5:25-34 (vs. 27-28) "When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, 'If I touch his clothes, I will be healed.'"

4. When a man/woman initiates or creates an atmosphere for an encounter with God, God steps in.

Luke 19:5 "When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.' So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly."

Jeremiah 29:13-14 "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity."

Hebrews 11:6 "He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

Essence of an Encounter with God

1. Change/Transformation

Luke 19:8 "But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

2. Salvation

Luke 19:9 "Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham."

3. Flourishing of God's word *Luke 19:11-27.*

Purposeful reflecting...

This week, you will reflect on Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus and take a spiritual stock of your walk with God in the past year. Who knows, this might be an opportunity for you to do a wholistic appraisal of the year 2018, so that you can live a better, more fulfilling and God-glorifying life in 2019.

- Read Luke 18:18-30. What are the most impressive parallels between the accounts of the rich ruler and of Zacchaeus? Apart from the lessons learned from the sermon, what other lessons can you draw from Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus? What lessons can you draw from Jesus' encounter with the rich ruler (18:18-30)?
- Compare Psalm 42:1-2 "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" and John Piper's statement "The greatest enemy of hunger for God is not poison but apple pie." Discuss your thoughts with someone.
- Identify what to appreciate God for in the past year (Ps. 103). I know some of us have had the glory sightings, but we can never *out-thank* God. :)
- Identify secrets or principles that worked for you (or for others) that must be reworked again and again (1 Tim. 4:14-15).
- Identify what to do differently in the year 2019 (Deut. 1:6-7).
- Identify what (or who) to put behind you in order to encounter God in 2019, live a more fruitful life, and be *an-everyday-blessing* to someone (Phil. 3:13-14).
- Identify what you have learned in the past year(s) that will remain with you (Rev. 3:11).