

An Encounter with God

Text: “I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high”
“I will sing unto the Lord because he hath dealt bountifully with me”
“I will sing, yea I will sing praise unto the Lord”
“Sing unto the Lord O ye his saints and give thanks...”
“Sing unto him a new song play skillfully with a loud noise”
“My tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness”
“I will sing of the mercies of the Lord”
“Make a loud noise and rejoice and sing and praise”
“I will sing as long as I live”
“I will sing praise unto my God while I have any being”
“Let everything that hath breath, praise ye the Lord”

I am glad that we come to church and can lift up the Lord right out loud! I love singing songs, clapping and shouting in church just as much as the next guy, maybe even more!

Point:

But somewhere in your walk with God you have to **grow beyond** just a singing and shouting relationship with God. – you have to learn **how to walk and live** for God!!

Somewhere you have to reach the point that your **relationship is an intimate** one.

-it involves talking to him on a personal level not just singing about him.

Example: We all talk about President Bush but we just “sing his praises” but it’s different with Laura Bush -she knows him personally, intimately, as her best friend!

-she is the President's wife

*This is what I’m preaching about tonight!

Having an encounter with God, more than just an emotional encounter but a true encounter with our Savior! -we are the Bride of Christ and he wants to be intimate w/ us.

I want to have an Encounter with Christ that does more than **just excite** me, I want to be **changed forever!**

I want a relationship with the Lord that isn't based on just my "lip service" to him but it's based upon my "heart service" for him.

Worshipping God isn't just some method that we go through. It's not like playing the right note on an instrument or singing the right tune in a song but it's having an actual encounter with the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings!

In Isaiah, we read where the man of God had an encounter with God. Is. 6:1-8(read) clearly shows us what happens to a person that has an encounter with God.

One thing that stands out in my mind is when Isaiah says : "**I saw the Lord**"

He didn't have some kind of a nightmare or vision inspired by too much pizza the night before.

-this was not a product of his imagination

-he was not making up some supernatural encounter

But Isaiah had a true life-changing encounter with the Lord of Glory!

Where he was praying, the door posts and the threshold shook like an earthquake.

-the room filled with the holy smoke of God

I remember a few yrs ago, during an altar service the glory of God was so real that there was a blue haze, holy smoke in the sanctuary about 4 ft off the ground.

-we were having a life changing encounter with God.

Reality check: I have lived for God for many years! I've been saved for 34 yrs and been preaching for 29 yrs.

-I've seen people lots of people have an encounter with God but many of these were just **emotional encounters**.

-encounters where they come to an altar or kneel in a pew, pray, weep, cry, shed tears, shout etc but then they get up and live and act the same way they did before.

I believe when we have a true encounter with God, it changes us!

-when we truly repent to God, we aren't the same anymore!

Bible says: "Old things are passed away.."

I feel sorry for demonical Christians that have an emotional encounter with God in repentance but then try to live holy and righteously w/o really having a change in their life. -they feel better but they really haven't been born again yet

-they really haven't changed yet!

Now , don't get me wrong, some people in the church have never had an **emotional encounter with God**, let alone a **true life changing encounter** with him.

-we all need to get emotional about serving the Lord

-we have to be willing to give God our feelings and emotions

- but there is a place, a line that we cross over when our life is changed forever!

This isn't a shallow place but it's a deep place in God.

Sometimes when you get to this place all you can do is groan and moan in the spirit.

-words can't describe what happening to you

-but when **you stand up, you're different!**

-you're not the same anymore!!!

The chains of this world have fallen off and the **Devil has lost his grip** on your life.

You have a **new purpose and desire** to please the Lord like you've never had before!

Many encounters with God are just an overflow of emotions, which are ok, but there is a **deeper place in God**. –there is a **place of true encounters**

One of the sure proofs that someone has had a true encounter is the change it produces afterwards.

How many times have we seen people come to an altar, shed some tears, pray for a long time, show all kinds of signs of remorse and then **they get up, go back home and never change a thing?**

-they had an emotional encounter with God but not a true life changing encounter with the Master!

An emotional encounter will make you feel better but it will not change your life.

Only a true, intimate encounter will do that!

Do you desire this tonight? Do you yearn for an intimate walk with God?
Do you want to get beyond mere emotions and have the King of Glory come into your life?

Tonight's your night so **start preparing** to make it happen!

Get ready for 3 days of prayer and fasting this week.

Turn off the TV, the radio, lay down newspapers, stop computer games for 3 days etc.

-start praying and seeking the Lord **in your spirit**

-get in tune with the Lord so when its time you will "**touch him**"

There are many examples in the Bible of men who had life changing encounters.

Jacob was a young man who loved the things of God more than his brother Esau.

Jacob had some flaws in his life.

-he loved to get ahead at others peoples expense

-he was driven to succeed but at the cost of his morals and integrity

One day, he played a dirty trick on his brother and it caused him to leave home over it.

He went to live with his Uncle Laban.

-trouble was Laban was worse than Jacob some Jacob reaped what he had sowed.

After being away for many yrs, he was now prosperous and blessed so he decided to go back home.

On the way home , in a place called PENIEL, he came across his brother Esau and 400 armed men looking for him -Esau was going to get revenge for the tricks played on him.

*At this moment, Jacob realized he needed God.

-how many times has the Lord allowed things in our life in an effort to point us to him?

-he has let things happen to make us realize that w/o him we are hopeless!!!

Gen.32 It tells us Jacob had a true encounter with God.

He literally wrestled with an angel of God all night long until he got blessed”

“I will not let you go until you bless me”

(Jacob was tired of the way he had been living and he wasn't going home the same way he came- he wanted to be different)

He finally got blessed and God changed his name from Jacob to Israel.

Israel means “God prevails” (I want God to prevail, take control in my life)

(I don't want to go home w/o being changed!)

Song says: “You won't leave here like you came in Jesus name”

God is here to meet with us in an intimate way tonight!

When you touch God, you will be changed!

-all the bitterness, the grudges, the hurt will all be gone

- all the pity parties and feeling sorry for yourself will disappear
- all the little words that find fault and cause division will stop.

When God touches you, you're changed! You're new! Old things are put away!

You can't touch God and walk away the same!!!

- your joy is renewed
- your peace in God is restored

From that day forward, Jacob walked with a limp.

When someone asked him "why are you limping", he could say:

"I had an encounter with God"

When you have a true encounter with him, even the way you **walk**, the way you **talk**, the way you **think** is different! -it's a spiritual walk!

People that don't have "spiritual limps" don't understand people that do!

-in fact they usually criticize them for what they do because they haven't got a clue

Folks! When you step out and decide to please God and not people, get ready for an attack from the enemy

-that attack may even come from some close friends that haven't had an encounter with God yet!

-don't get mad at them, just love them, be patient and pray they have a life changing encounter with God!

-pray that they start thinking and walking different!!

Let me back up and tell you what had previously happened to Jacob.

Before Jacob ever wrestled with God at PENIEL, he was in BETHEL.

Remember he was on the run from his brother.

He was scared to death and feeling bad about his old deceiving, selfish ways.

He stopped and went to sleep!

He had a wonderful dream and even a word of promise from God.

-he had a vision of a ladder that stretched into the Heavens

-God reassured him that he would take care of him and provide for him

But his BETHEL experience didn't change the way Jacob lived. He got up with all the promises of God feeling better but he still lived and acted the same old way he always did.

It wasn't until PENIEL, that he had had enough! He got desperate!!!

“ “ “ “ that he decide to get a close relationship even if it killed him.

“ “ “ “ did he change from **Jacob to Israel!!!**

-he changed from being a cheat and liar to an man of honesty

-he changed from being a deceiver to a man of integrity

-God went from being #2 in his life to #1

PENIEL means “facing God”!!

Many of us here tonight have had a **Bethel experience** with the Lord. We've been born again, we love the things of God, we want to go to Heaven

-we might even **consider ourselves to be saved**

But have you had a PENIEL, true encounter with Lord yet?

Have you had a **face to face** encounter with the Lord yet where it **changed you?**

As your pastor, I can almost tell you who has and who hasn't:

-by the way you **walk**, the way you **talk** and they way you **live**.

-by the way you pay your **tithes and treat** each other

People that have a true encounter with God stop playing church and become a part of the church.

-they **commit themselves to the local** church and revival

-they **commit themselves to the work** of God

We all need to be able to say "I saw the Lord"

It's time like David said in Ps. 27:4 "its time to seek him in his temple"

Spiritual-blindness is caused by **Self-blindness!**

-it will weigh you down to the point that you can't rejoice anymore
-you can't see thru the fog of **envy and jealousy** of all the good things going on around you.

We need to ask the Lord tonight, and I am talking to everyone, to open our eyes so that we might see him more clearly!!

People that have trouble dressing and living holy are still looking **thru human eyes and not sp. ones.**

One of **the biggest problems in Gods church** is people not **being able to see in the spirit** what is going on.

-all wrapped up in their own desires and goals
-they get more involved in personal things and drop out of church things.

When Isaiah had an encounter with God, he finally said:

"Here am I, send me" -he got involved in what God was doing
-he laid aside his own life to gain a sp. life

My wife and I have prayed the prayer of II Kings 6:17 so much lately for others, I feel like **I'm a spiritual optometrist.**

Elisha prayed for his servant "O Lord open his eyes that he may see"

If you want a strong and convincing testimony;

If you want a powerful influence on people as you tell them about God;

If you want to be used by God;

-you need to be able to say "I saw the Lord"

It's time we ask the Lord ourselves, "Lord Open my eyes that I can see"

-let me see the lost as you see them
-let me see the vision of revival the pastor has
-let me see way that I can encourage others

-let me see you Lord, more clearly so I can do things the way you would do them.

Closing:

Did you notice the **1st thing that Isaiah said** after coming in contact with God?

You'll probably have the same reaction when you really encounter God. He said in vs. 5 **"Woe is me!"**

When we enter into the Lord presence and behold his glory, his majesty, his beauty, his purity and holiness;

-when you encounter his mercy, his justice and perfection, we come face to face

with our **own sad reality of imperfection!**

-his light lights up the **sad flaws in our own life**

In the light of his presence, we can see all those things that are against his desires and his ways.

We immediately recognize the changes he wants to make within us and we can say is:

"Woe is me"

Example:

Have you ever been in a restaurant where maybe the lighting is poor.

We drip or spill some food on our shirt, blouse or tie.

We take some water and a napkin and try to wipe it off and **we think** we've got it.

-ties are magnets for food

In the dim light of the restaurant, we think we've taken care of the problem.

But later on when you get home and the lighting is much better, you see the problem is still there.

Not only is the original stain there but all the other stains of us trying to fix it are there also.

-w/o proper light, w/o proper vision we end up making the problem worse!

The same thing happens when we come before the Lord in his perfect light. The things we thought were so true measured in the light of this earth and world are not true and will only get worse with our own efforts to fix them.

We have to go into his presence with an open heart. Instead of going around talking about changes that need to happen in **the church or at work**, why not try to go into the Lord throne room with a desire to be changed yourself

Many people avoid prayer and fasting because it reveals the flaws in our walk with God.

They resist changing! They refuse to admit they need to change! Thus they only have an emotional encounter with God from time to time but they **continue to live, talk, and act** the same way they always did.

Entering into Gods presence makes us sensitive, open, vulnerable to Gods all seeing eye!

In II Chron. 7:14 God is **speaking to his people, the church** when he said:

“If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from Heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

Altar Call:

Church!!!

We have to enter into his presence and admit we are not perfect!

-that we have sin among us and allow him to cleanse the church

-allow him to cleanse each and every heart in this place

We have to be willing to say **“Woe is me”**

and then get to the place that we say: **“Here I am Lord, use me”**

Allow the HG to break up some hard spots and then **renew you, restore and remold you anew** tonight.

