

ENCOUNTER

“An Invitation into Transformation”

John 3:1-5/ John 19:38-40

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF GOD TO BRING TRANSFORMATION!

Jesus is the great transformer, and darkness, evil, chaos, and death are no match for him!

Paul writes, “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and bought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.” Colossians 1:13

Jesus invites us into a sin defeating, bondage breaking and life-giving encounter with Him!

In the nighttime meeting with Nicodemus, we see three characteristics of a life radically changed by an encounter with Jesus.

An Encounter with Jesus Begins with Curious Expectation.

“Keep praying for greater encounters with God and resolve to be ever grateful for what God gives, but never satisfied – always seeking Him for more of Himself.” – Rob Reimer

- 1) What does it mean for you to step into the Light?
- 2) Why is a performance-based religion such a temptation and why is it so easy to fall into the trap of substituting intimacy with Jesus for a religious spirit?

Note: A religious spirit - Judges people by their outward appearance. Tries to conform to outward holiness without inward transformation. Is always critical of other people’s walk with God. Performs Christian duties but has no passion or hunger for God. Desires position and honour in the church more than honor from God. Has perfected the art of a spiritual image but inside is angry and resentful.

- 3) What aspects of a religious spirit are you most prone towards and how can you resist it?

An Encounter with Jesus Opens Our Eyes to some Humbling Realizations.

“The Bible has a clear and devastating word about our souls and the reason it has a clear and devastating word about our souls is so that we will know what we need and dance when God gives it.” – Dr. John Piper

- 1) Why does spiritual transformation require a humble realization of the true condition of your heart? What potential deception are you believing about your heart?
- 2) To be born again is the power of God to regenerate the entire world brought into your heart now. **Tim Keller exclaims,** *“It is that renewing, regenerating power by which God is going to heal everything, and remove all evil and all sin and it comes into your heart now.”* How does this bring you hope and courage to your Christian life?

An Encounter with Jesus will result in courageous Identification.

“The mark of a truly born-again believer is that the loves of your heart are being reordered!”

Saint Augustine

- 1) What are the loves of your heart that have been re-ordered by the new birth?
- 2) Where do you need to be more courageous in identifying with Jesus in your places of influence?

Prayer: “Father, thank you for the transforming power of your Holy Spirit in my life. Forgive me for any places I have defaulted to performance-based religion. Thank you for giving me life. Thank you for setting me free. Empower me to courageously identify with you in my daily living and be an agent of your love to those who are far from you.”