

## Common Ground 2021

### Encounters with Jesus

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How does real change happen? Is it education, self-help, or getting socially “woke”? None of the above. When Jesus walked this earth, he changed lives by encountering people one at a time. He engaged them in conversation, saw their deepest needs, and invited them to the better way of walking in his kingdom. This fall, we’ll look at six encounters with Jesus from John’s Gospel. And if we’re listening, we’ll never be the same. We’ll hear his voice. We’ll experience his love. And we’ll become passionate about helping others encounter Jesus for themselves.

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| Sept 26 | <b>Encounter with a Religious Man</b><br>Nicodemus / John 3:1-21                |
| Oct 3   | <b>Encounter with a Lonely Woman</b><br>Woman at Well / John 4:1-26             |
| Oct 10  | <b>Encounter with a Hopeless Man</b><br>Paralytic at Bethesda / John 5:1-15     |
| Oct 17  | <b>Encounter with a Moral Failure</b><br>Woman Caught in Adultery / John 8:1-11 |
| Oct 24  | <b>Encounter with a Grieving Family</b><br>Mary & Martha / John 11:1-44         |
| Oct 31  | <b>Encounter with a Powerful Man</b><br>Pontius Pilate / John 18:28-19:16       |

## Individual Study and Small Group Discussion Questions

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

Encounter with \_\_\_\_\_

**Pray: Begin by asking God to show you something from His Word.**

1. What do we know about the person Jesus encountered in this passage?
2. What was the need Jesus saw in this person? Do you have a similar need? Explain.
3. Describe the conversation with Jesus and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What was Jesus inviting that person to do, or to understand differently?
5. Have you personally accepted this invitation from Jesus? If so, how has your life changed as a result? If not, what is keeping you from accepting his invitation?
6. Who do you know that needs to have a similar conversation, and how will you invite him/her into this conversation?
7. Based on this week's sermon, what did the Holy Spirit show you?

**Challenge:** Can you think of other biblical teachings that connect with this encounter?

**Prayer:**

- **Love God:** Pray that you would encounter Jesus like\_\_\_\_\_.
- **Love People:** Pray that as you hear His voice, He will change your relationship with others. Be specific.
- **Serve (Reach) the World:** Pray for open doors to a conversation with (person you know), and make a plan to help him/her encounter Jesus!

## “Encounters With Jesus” Connection Activities

**Directions:** Before beginning your group discussion each week, choose ONE of the connection prompts below to get your group talking. Encourage everyone to share. Remind members to keep their responses brief, so that everyone has a chance to share.

### **WEEK 1: Encounter with a Religious Man (Nicodemus), John 3:1-21**

- Share a time when you were so curious about something that you tried to learn about as much as you could about it.
- If you could go back in history and have a private conversation with Jesus, what is one question you would ask? Why?

### **WEEK 2: Encounter with a Lonely Woman, John 4:1-26**

- What is something you are personally thirsting for? *Friendship? Acceptance? Community? Forgiveness? Healing? Boldness? Economic security?* How is your thirst inviting you closer to God?
- After her encounter with Jesus, the woman ran back to town, with such excitement, and told everyone! Recall a time in your life when you were so excited about Jesus – how can we bring back our excitement?

### **WEEK 3: Encounter with a Hopeless Man, John 5:1-15**

- Describe a time when you were sick and what it was like waiting to be well again.
- Who are the hardest people for you to love on, reach out to, care for? Why?

### **WEEK 4: Encounter with a Moral Failure, John 8:1-11**

- Briefly share a time when you either extended mercy to another person, or wish you had. How did the other person respond?
- Share briefly how grace changed YOU!

### **WEEK 5: Encounter with a Grieving Family, John 11:1-44**

- We all experience pain and difficult times in our life. What is the most painful or difficult thing that you have experienced? Did you question God’s love for you during that time? Why or why not?
- Tell a time when you were deeply affected by someone else’s tragedy?

### **WEEK 6: Encounter with a Powerful Man, John 18:28-19:16**

- Have you ever been in a situation where you were pressured to do wrong? To ignore truth to fit in with a group?
- Would you rather be the one in authority or the one subject to another person’s authority?