

Exodus 34:29-35
Psalm 99
2 Corinthians 3:12 – 4:2
Luke 9:28-43a

Sermon February 27th, 2022

Our Encounters with God Re-energize Us

Everyone of us here this morning, whether worshipping in this sanctuary, or from home, has probably had encounters with God in some form. Sometimes these encounters happen in some extraordinary event that leaves us wondering if that really just happened to us.

For Peter, James, and John, they are excited to finally get away from the demands of the crowds. This hike. This camping trip will be a good way for them to unwind, and re-energize for the road ahead. Remember. Right before they left on this adventure Jesus had foretold his impending death to them. This camping trip is way overdue.

As they reach the top of the mountain, they are tired from the long hike (**Image**). As well as, tired from the demands of being one of Christ's disciples. Well, as the old saying goes. There is no rest for the weary. Something extraordinary happens as they reach the top of the mountain. Something that they cannot explain or even comprehend.

While Jesus is praying, he starts to glow. His appearance changes. Jesus is re-energized through this transformation to walk the path he needs to walk. The path where he will have to make a stop at Golgotha.

Through the witness of this transformation, Peter is re-energized. Peter who is ready to settle down for a restful sleep. His heavy eyes, which he struggles to keep open, are now wide open as he feels this sudden burst of energy. This sudden need to show hospitality to Jesus, Elijah, and Moses. Peter offers to build three dwellings for them.

Then if they were still unsure of whether this experience is an encounter from God, or some other phenomenon, a cloud comes over them, and the voice of God declares Jesus as the Son of God. They are invited to listen to Jesus. They are in awe, and feel re-energized from this encounter to follow Jesus. Even through the hardships of persecution.

Like Peter, James, and John, sometimes we encounter God in an extraordinary event. An event where we are left silent. Where we are left in awe. Wondering what just happened? Wondering if it happened? These extraordinary events often times re-energize us. They light us up. They change us. They inspire us to follow Jesus. To listen to his invitation.

I hear of these experiences often. Someone comes to me and starts by saying, I don't know if you will believe this but...We encounter God in the extraordinary mysterious unexplainable experiences of our lives. Those mountain top moments of our lives **(Image)**.

And yet, sometimes we encounter God in ways that are not so extraordinary. Sometimes we encounter God at the bottom of the mountain where we reintegrate into life's routines.

Jesus, Peter, James, and John are quickly drawn back into the presence of the demanding crowds as they reach the bottom of the mountain. Kind of like what work is like the first few days when we return from vacation. They are met with a concerning parent. There is a boy who needs healing. And the disciples were unable to do it. So, not only are they drawn back to these demands, but are named for their inadequacies. Their short comings.

Well, you think this would squash any new energy they gained from their mountain top encounter with God. Right? On the contrary. Jesus will not allow Peter, James, and John to wallow. Jesus heals the boy.

Through this healing, Jesus reassures Peter, James, and John that God's presence is in Jesus. And so, when they are with Jesus, they are encountering God.

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, Paul reiterates this message to the persecuted church. Jesus has pulled the veil away from our eyes. When we see Jesus, we see God. When we experience Jesus. We experience God. When we have an encounter with Jesus. We have an encounter with God.

This belief re-energizes the early church to keep proclaiming the gospel even as they face persecution.

When we have an encounter with God we are re-energized. We are lit up. Something inside us changes. In our story in Exodus, Moses who at times is overwhelmed by the demands of being leader of a liberated people living in the wilderness, encounters God. Moses talks with God, and when he returns to the people, he is glowing. Moses is re-energized to mediate for God to God's people. Moses goes into the cloud a tired, insecure mess. And comes out a confident and energized leader who proclaims God's Commandments to the people.

When we have an encounter with God we are re-energized. Something inside us changes. We are lit up. Glowing for others to see.

Sometimes this encounter happens in an extraordinary event. Sometimes this encounter happens in prayer (**Image**). In a conversation with God. Sometimes this encounter happens in the routines we follow.

For example, sometimes in a worship experience we have an encounter with God. Now, optimistically I would like to believe we encounter God in every worship experience. But there are worship experiences where we don't feel this encounter. There are worship experiences where the routines get to us. Where we feel tired from the same old.

But there are worship experiences when we feel this encounter with God (**Image**). In these experiences, we come away feeling re-energized. Changed. Glowing. Ready to listen and follow Jesus. Participating in the work Christ has in store for us with fervour and passion.

Sometimes we feel this encounter with God when reflecting on a devotional story in scripture. We are inspired by this story. We are re-energized to participate in the ministries of the church.

Sometimes we feel this encounter with God in our participation of communion (**Image**). We come away feeling changed. Forgiven. Renewed. Re-energized to do what we are called to do. Loving our neighbour. Loving our enemies. Loving God.

Sometimes we feel this encounter with God when participating in a ministry in the church. We can feel re-energized. We can feel changed. We can glow. Inspired to change the world through this ministry.

Our encounters with God re-energize us. They change us. They make us glow. Inspiring us to be Christ's hands and feet in our world.

Let us pray, thank you God for revealing your presence to us in the extraordinary events of our lives, as well as, in the routines. Re-energize us through these encounters so we can be active participants in your kingdom come. **Amen.**

© copyright, 2022, Wallace Bornhuse. All rights reserved.