



Life Groups in Central Telford Parish

Summer 2016 "Encounters"

Week beginning 10th April 2016

Genesis 12:1-8 – Abraham and the God Who Blesses

• Introduction

In the coming weeks, we are going to be looking at people in the Bible who encountered God. Actually, that is one of those slightly obvious statements because the Bible could simply be described as the one big encounter which people have had with God through thousands of years. We shall talk about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, through to the apostles and those who encountered God in the person of Jesus Christ. And then the world of the early Church where, through the power of the Holy Spirit people encountered God in power and miracles. And all of this leads on to the church of today and the simple but profound idea that when we come to Church, Life Group, when we are in prayer, when we read the Bible ... through life we shall have an encounter with God.

• Welcome

Who is the most famous person you have ever met? What did it feel like to meet them?

• Worship

If it helps you to worship, light a candle in the middle of your group and be quiet for a while.

Read the following verses ...

- Psalm 139:7 - *Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?*
- Matthew 28:20 – *"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*
- Matthew 18:20 – *"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."*
- John 15:9 - *"Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love."*

Play or sing a worship song which speaks of an intimate desire to meet with God such as *"To be in Your Presence"* or *"Be Still for the Presence of the Lord"*. Speak out prayers and worship in response and ask Jesus to stand among you in your time together.

• Word

- ❖ When you hear the word "blessing" or "blessed", what do you understand by it?
- ❖ Do you believe in "luck"? What is the difference between "luck" and "blessing"?
- ❖ What might God's blessing look like in your day to day life?
- ❖ How would you understand God's blessing if things appear to go wrong in your life?

Read Genesis 12:1-3

- How many times does the word "bless" or "blessing" appear in these verses?
- List the ways God promises to bless Abraham.
- List the people who will be blessed through Abraham as a result.
- Add your own name to the bottom of that list!
- Note the first words of these verses: *"The LORD **had** said to Abram"*. At some point in the past, God had spoken to Abraham and spoken of an instruction and a promise. In the verses that follow, we see the response of Abraham.
- What was the instruction of God in verse 1?
- And what were the cost and consequences of obedience for Abraham?
- What were the challenges and consequences for his wife and "family" of obedience?
- Could the promises have been fulfilled had Abraham not been obedient?
- So what conclusion can we draw from this?

Read Genesis 12:4-8

- Abraham's obedience leads him to go to Canaan where God appears to him (v7). Seeing as Abraham is old (75) and has no children, what might have been the effect of God's words to him?
- Why did Abraham build an altar in response?
- What did this journey of faith do to Abraham's relationship with God (v8)?
- What might calling on "the name of the Lord" mean to Abraham at that time in his life?

- ❖ Have you ever sensed God promise you something? If you feel able to, please share it with the group.
- ❖ Has God ever stretched you by calling you to obedient when it didn't feel logical?
- ❖ Have you a story of the way God has been faithful to you when you have been obedient?
- ❖ How might we build "*an altar to the Lord*" in this day and age? What might it look like?
- ❖ What might calling on "*the name of the Lord*" mean to us in our lives?

An encounter with God is never something that "just happens". God invites us to encounter him because he has a purpose for it. He knows who we are, everything about us and he knows us intimately – and has plans for us (Jeremiah 29:11) which involve us knowing life in all its fullness (John 10:10). Our part in all of this is to want to have an encounter with God (which can be a slightly nerve wracking concept) and to be obedient to whatever he calls us to do. But, and it is a big BUT, God is a caring, loving and wonderful Father who only knows how to give good gifts (Matthew 7:11) and bless people so an encounter with God is something to look forward to!

- **Walk**

- Do we actually want to encounter a God who wants to bless us?
- Do we actually believe that God can and wants to bless us as an individual?
- Do we want to live lives that share the fullness of life that we know with those around us that they might be blessed by God through us?

- ❖ How do you react to these questions?
- ❖ What holds us back from encountering God?
- ❖ What do you need to do to be obedient to God's call on your life?

Pray for any other specific issues people are facing in the Life Group. If you haven't done so, it is a great idea to start a prayer diary, recording the things you have prayed for and seeing how God answers your prayers!

- **Next Time ...**

Genesis 21:5-21 – Hagar and the God Who Cares

