

## ENCOUNTER

WEEK 3: 19 SEPTEMBER 2010

When we ENCOUNTER God, He takes us to new levels of responsibility, accountability and responsibility. An encounter is never, meant to make us famous or more comfortable or more important. It's meant to empower us to do the work of the ministry, to step up and be counted.

Many want an ENCOUNTER with God for the wrong reasons. We want God to bless us for us. We want an Encounter for our 'Ministry' sake. To experience an ENCOUNTER is a dangerous thing because He will expect us to deliver when He asks us to.

"To him who has received much, much is expected..."

### GIVE ME THIS MOUNTAIN

***Num 14: 24 But my servant Caleb is different from the others. He has remained loyal to me, and I will bring him into the land he explored. His descendants will receive their full share of that land.***

***Num 14: 24 "But my servant Caleb - this is a different story. He has a different spirit; he follows me passionately. I'll bring him into the land that he scouted and his children will inherit it. [MSG]***

In the gospels we read the word 'follow' 77 times. Would you say that there is a reason why it is used so many times in the Gospels??

***Mt 8: 22 But Jesus told him, "Follow me now! Let those who are spiritually dead care for their own dead."***

Many of us would disagree with Jesus if He had to say to us; "Leave those people alone!" They're dead- spiritually, it doesn't matter what you do, they will not listen or respond to anything... so leave them alone and follow ME! We would question His sense of care and concern for the lost and the dying, wouldn't we...?

The reason why He said those words were because there is a distinct need for following HIM whole-heartedly. When He sent out this call it was with this intent... follow Me in likeness; follow Me in union. Align yourself, your whole being with Me. There are no other examples to follow. Not those who thrive on sentiment; feel good experiences; religiously correct actions; no follow Me!

*Eph 5:1 Follow God's example in everything you do, because you are his dear children.*

The word 'follow', here means to [MIMIC; COPY; EMULATE]

So what is it that God expects us to do? What must we emulate? What is the road on which we must walk to be true Followers?

We must take the mountain! Do we have the spirit of Caleb, who when he was old wanted more? It would be wonderful if God would say;” That person, Wow! They’re something else! There’s something different about them! They had an encounter and look at how they’re doing! They’re claiming ground that once was lost. They’re taking back what the enemy has stolen. They’re not content to just sit back and allow the devil to take more and more, they’re willing to “follow Me”. To copy my example and be strong in the things that will cause them to have victory over circumstances.

Here’s the challenge!

***Mt 22:1-14 Jesus told them several other stories to illustrate the Kingdom. He said, 2 "The Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a king who prepared a great wedding feast for his son. 3 Many guests were invited, and when the banquet was ready, he sent his servants to notify everyone that it was time to come. But they all refused! 4 So he sent other servants to tell them, 'The feast has been prepared, and choice meats have been cooked. Everything is ready. Hurry! 5 But the guests he had invited ignored them and went about their business, one to his farm, another to his store. 6 Others seized his messengers and treated them shamefully, even killing some of them. 7 "Then the king became furious. He sent out his army to destroy the murderers and burn their city. 8 And he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, and the guests I invited aren't worthy of the honour. 9 Now go out to the street corners and invite everyone you see.' 10 "So the servants brought in everyone they could find, good and bad alike, and the banquet hall was filled with guests. 11 But when the king came in to meet the guests, he noticed a man who wasn't wearing the proper clothes for a wedding. 12 'Friend,' he asked, 'how is it that you are here without wedding clothes?' And the man had no reply. 13 Then the king said to his aides, 'Bind him hand and foot and throw him out into the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 14 For many are called, but few are chosen."***

***Mt 28:16-20 "16 Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him -- but some of them still doubted! 18 Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."***

He wants us to emulate HIM in doing what He did.

Reasons for not taking our Mountain.

### 1. Containment:

The word means to prevent or hinder growth. We will stay small in our thinking our attitude and our actions because we have made a choice to do that. We are limiting ourselves and the sad part is that we also limit those around us with our small mindedness.

- We are contained when we won't let go.

Of what? We want things to remain as they are. It must just be us and our circle of comfort. Nobody else is good enough to join us. We won't let go! I pray that God would make things so uncomfortable for us that we will be willing and open to any form of newness.

- Were also contained because of offence.

***Mk 6:5 And because of their unbelief, he couldn't do any mighty miracles among them except to place his hands on a few sick people and heal them.***

Jesus couldn't do much here because there was a certain type of an atmosphere. A negative vibe. He couldn't even break through. There was transgression, there was resentment, there was sin, wrongdoing etc.

### 2. Comfort/ contentment:

***Jos 18:1-3 "1 Now that the land was under Israelite control, the entire Israelite assembly gathered at Shiloh and set up the Tabernacle. 2 But there remained seven tribes who had not yet been allotted their inheritance. 3 Then Joshua asked them, "How long are you going to wait before taking possession of the remaining land the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has given to you?"***

Complacency leads to convenience and casualness.

When we treat God as a convenience we become casual with HIM. We become part time, not permanent. I can drift in and out of my relationship with Him, the church and whoever else because it doesn't really matter to me.

### 3. That leads to compromise:

That's when He says; 'You don't taste nice, you're foul...' Rev 3:16

***James 1:6 "But when you ask him, be sure that you really expect him to answer, for a doubtful mind is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.***

Double-minded about anything is a sad place to be in. 'Are you in or are you out?'

We need to know where we stand with each other in any relationship. Business, school, church, filial etc. It is rather awkward if we don't know where we stand with each other. God feels the same.

These factors are clear indicators that we are not really interested in claiming the mountain. We may say we want, we may even pray for strength to take it, but if I don't act on it. I won't get it. How long are we going to say; I know I should, but I didn't. I know I should've been there, but I had other things to do; etc...

### **The one key for taking the 'mountain', whatever the mountain may be is FAITHFULNESS.**

#### **1. Faithful people produce fruit.**

God honours faithfulness before fruitfulness. Fruit comes when we have been faithful. The two are bedfellows. I cannot expect to be fruitful if I have not been faithful.

Trees that are in the same soil for a period of time have a better chance of bearing top quality fruit. If trees are transplanted every now-and-then, they have less chance of bearing fruit' let alone quality fruit. It takes an apple tree four years to grow to maturity and only thereafter it will bear fruit. With that in mind...

Mt 25. The bridesmaids/ virgins. There was a delay, they became drowsy and fell asleep. Suddenly HE appeared then, the foolish ones were found wanting. They had no oil in the lamps. What happened? They waited and like us, they got tired. They got involved with many other things that used up the oil. They got side-tracked. The things that draw us away from the main thing are not seen as wrong. They seem very plausible and do-able, yet they will use up the oil, that was meant to last for when the Groom comes.

We get tired of waiting for God to show up. I've been serving here for so long and nobody notices me. I've been tithing faithfully and nothing seems to happen in my finances. And you move on. Using your oil for something else. And suddenly, He appears and you're not ready...

#### **2. Faithful people are Good stewards:**

They know that it doesn't belong to them, therefore they will look after it until the owner returns. The word refers to 'managing the household on behalf of the Master of the house. To administer the affairs of the household on behalf of the owner. God is the Master. We are stewards of what He has entrusted to us.

This means that we are to be devoted and dedicated. Devoted to and dedicated to what? Obviously to God... this has an outflow that is seen in how we conduct ourselves in what we claim to be our ministry and more so amongst the saints of God, the Household of faith

3. Faithful people are dependable:

***Mat 25:14 "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a trip. He called together his servants and gave them money to invest for him while he was gone."***

They didn't drop the ball at the last minute. They are committed whole-heartedly to the cause.

4. Faithful people are accountable:

They take the flack; they're answerable; they're responsible; they're liable. I.e. they don't shrug their shoulders and walk away as if it's a small matter when things don't work out. Neither do they take offense when challenged on the quality of their task. When they didn't step up, to the plate, they say it's my fault and they don't blame circumstances or people.

5. Faithful people endure:

Caleb endured. He pushed through and received his reward. They're not here today and somewhere else tomorrow. They have stick-ability.

**Conclusion:**

You want a God encounter? Are you willing to stand up and be counted? Are you going to stay under the radar and remain insipid in your faith? And allow the enemy to continue stealing what God has in store for you? We have preached about the fact that God will continue to love and care for us, even when we are down and out. He will work in His mysterious way to keep us safe. But you know what, He wants us to enjoy the fullness of what He has prepared for us before the foundation of the earth and the only way we are going to get that is when we; CLAIM THAT MOUNTAIN. When we step out and are bold and determined in our faith, as weak as it may be. When we step out and commit to serving Him. When we become faithful followers.

**Prayer:**

Father help me to be what you want me to be. I have been weak and I have made excuses for my weaknesses. I have become too comfortable in my service. I have had no desire to be stretched. Now I ask that you forgive me, and give me grace and strength to allow the Holy Spirit to lead me further in serving You! Amen.