

**LifeGroup Sermon Series Study**  
**2021-2022**  
***Series Six***



## “Encounters”



Sometimes when we read the Bible, we read it like a fictional story - we enjoy the characters, the storyline is interesting, and the experiences are fascinating. But trying to get our head around people being healed, demons being cast out, and the disciples being less than perfect is just difficult. The reality is that the Bible is not filled with fictional stories but real-life experiences that transformed people's lives.

“Encounters” is a series about five experiences that real people, with real issues, looking for real solutions had with Jesus. The details are real, the experiences are not censored, and the outcomes impacted people for the rest of their lives. Not all these experiences had good results, but we will see that those involved had a choice how their stories would end.

Jesus is still encountering people today. Providing real solutions to real people with real problems. That is what makes this series so exciting. We will be able to see ourselves in these real people because in many cases they are just like us - the details may be different, but the experiences are the same. With the help of the TV series “The Chosen” we will be able to see a very real Jesus interacting with people He loved.

As this series leads up to Easter, my hope and prayer is that your encounters with Jesus are transformational this season. I also hope that your encounters with Jesus will motivate you to reach out to your Person of Interest according to your style for Total Impact. May we see people come to know Jesus because of the encounters they learn about in this series and your encounters with Jesus.

For His Kingdom,

Pastor Doug

# “Encounters”

## LIFEGROUP ROSTER

<b>NAME</b>	<b>PHONE #</b>	<b>E-MAIL</b>

# “Encounters” - Nathanael and Philip

## John 1:43-51

### Lesson 1

I. **Purpose:**

- A. To help us understand who Nathanael and Philip were.
- B. To help us know how Philip got Nathanael to meet Jesus.
- C. To help us see how Jesus called Nathanael and Philip to follow Him.

II. **Community that Cares:**

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

III. **Community that Understands the Background:**

We know from the gospels that Jesus had to invite the disciples to follow Him multiple times. In this passage, we see the first time that Jesus called Philip to follow Him. Philip was from the town of Bethsaida which was also where Andrew and Peter were from. Jesus' encounter with Philip is simple and a continuous act, "Follow Me." Jesus asked Philip to continue to follow him because Jesus used a present tense of this verb in the Greek. It wasn't just a one-time call, but a lifetime call.

Nathanael was a friend of Philip. (Nathanael is generally thought to be the same person as Bartholomew. Nathanael was his personal name.) The first thing that Philip did after Jesus said, "Follow Me," is find Nathanael. Philip told Nathanael that he had found the Messiah that Moses wrote about. Nathanael obviously had a prejudice against Nazareth. He said, "Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael was skeptical but interested at the same time. Philip used the ultimate invite when he said, "Come and see."

Jesus' encounter with Nathanael is different than with Philip. First, Jesus complimented Nathanael for his faith and honesty. He was a man of integrity. Then Jesus answered Nathanael's question of how Jesus knew him by telling him something that Jesus should

## Lesson 1 cont.

not have known. Jesus said He had seen him under the fig tree before Philip called him. (It is possible Nathanael liked to pray and read God's Word under the shade of a fig tree. It is interesting that the phrase "under the fig tree" was a phrase Rabbis used to describe meditation on the scriptures.) Nathanael was so blown away by Jesus' revelation that he instantly believed. Lastly, Jesus gave Nathanael a glimpse of future events.

### IV. **Community that Learns:**

A. Review the points of the Pastor's message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encouraged you in these points?

B. Sermon outline: "Encounters" - Phillip and Nathanael.

Three observations about Jesus' interaction with Philip and Nathanael:

1. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ Philip to follow him. John 1:43-46
2. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ to Nathanael that He knows and sees him. John 1:47-49
3. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ Nathanael that he will see even more than this. John 1:50-51

### V. **Community that Applies:**

A. Why do you think Philip was ready to follow Jesus? Are you as willing to follow Jesus?

B. Why do you think that Jesus changed his approach with Nathanael?

C. Why do you think Nathanael was skeptical and prejudiced against Jesus?

## Lesson 1 cont.

- D. Are you skeptical or prejudiced against Jesus like Nathanael? Why or why not?
  
- E. Jesus spoke right to Nathanael's skepticism and prejudice, what would Jesus say to you to confront your skepticism and/or prejudice?
  
- F. Do you relate more to Philip or Nathanael? Why?

### VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about Philip and Nathanael?

### VII. **Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes praying about your next step.

### VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

- A. The scriptures next week are John 5:1-15.
- B. If you missed Sunday's sermon, watch online at [www.lifewatercc.org](http://www.lifewatercc.org) before the next Life Group.
- C. Reflect on next week's questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

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**“Encounters” - The Lame Man at the Pool of Bethesda**  
**John 5:1-15**  
**Lesson 2**

**I. Purpose:**

- A. To help us understand that this man was without hope.
- B. To help us know that Jesus wanted to heal the man (but he almost kept Jesus from doing it because he was so focused on getting into the pool).
- C. To help us see that the man had faith and Jesus told him to stop sinning.

**II. A community that Cares:**

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
  
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

**III. Community that Understands the Background:**

Jesus went to Jerusalem because there was a Jewish feast. There were three feasts that all male Jews were required to attend in Jerusalem. They were The Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread, The Feast of Weeks which was also called Pentecost, and The Feast of Tabernacles. (We do not know which feast they were celebrating.)

There was a pool in Jerusalem near the “Sheep Gate.” This was the area where sheep were brought to be sacrificed at the temple. The pool was known for its healing powers. (This pool has been excavated in the area just north of the temple. It was found to have five porches just like John said.) This pool was deep enough to dive in based on its name. Every now and again the pool would bubble (probably because of a stream that ran underneath the pool). When the pool bubbled, people believed that it was caused by an angel and the first person who got into the pool would be healed.

The man who was paralyzed had been at the pool for 38 years. Being paralyzed had become his life, his identity. No one would

## Lesson 2 cont.

help him get to the pool. He had lost all hope of ever being healed. He also lost all motivation to help himself. His situation was completely hopeless until Jesus walked up to him.

### IV. Community that Learns:

A. Review the points of the Pastor's message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encouraged you in these points?

B. Sermon outline: "Encounters" - The Lame Man at the Pool of Bethesda.

Three observations about Jesus' interaction with the paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda:

1. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the man if he wanted to be healed. John 5:6
2. The man had \_\_\_\_\_ his hopeless situation. John 5:7
3. The man put into \_\_\_\_\_ the command of Jesus to get up. John 5:8-9

### V. Community that Applies:

A. Have you ever been in a situation where you were hopeless? Describe it.

B. What did you do?

C. Did God help you or not?

D. What did you learn from the experience?



## Lesson 2 cont.

- E. How can you keep from letting hardship define you or become your identity?
  
- F. How do you keep a problem or hardship from causing you to lose hope?
  
- G. Have you ever seen God use a hardship or problem to help you help others? What happened?

### VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned from Jesus' encounter with the paralyzed man?

### VII. **Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes in prayer about your next step.

### VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

- A. The scriptures next week are Mark 3:17 and Luke 9:51-55.
- B. If you missed Sunday's sermon, watch online at [www.lifewatercc.org](http://www.lifewatercc.org) before the next Life Group.
- C. Reflect on next week's questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

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**“Encounters” - James and John**  
**Mark 3:17; Luke 9:51-55**  
**Lesson 3**

**I. Purpose:**

- A. To help us understand who James and John really were.
- B. To help us know why James and John hated Samaritans so much.
- C. To help us see how Jesus handled misguided James and John.

**II. Community that Cares:**

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
  
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

**III. Community that Understands the Background:**

James and John were two fiery fishermen and Jesus gave them the nickname “Boanerges” which translates as “Sons of Thunder.” (In Hebrew, Boanerges means “Fiery preacher, especially one with a powerful voice.”) These brothers were impulsive, short-tempered, and judgmental. They were bold and asked Jesus if they could have seats of prominence at his side.

There was a strong division between Samaritans and Jews. Samaritans were half Jew and half Gentile. Their race came into being after the Assyrian captivity of the northern kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C. Some of the Jews stayed behind and intermarried with the Assyrians producing the Samaritans. They did not associate with Jews (they had their own temple and religious practices) and when Jesus passed through Samaria on His way to Jerusalem, they did not receive Him. So, James and John asked if they could do what Elijah did to the servants of a wicked king in 2 Kings 1.

James was believed to be the first who was martyred for his Lord Jesus in 44 AD. There is a legend that says that his accuser was won to Christ, because of James’ courage, and they were both beheaded together. John went on to write the gospel of John, I, II, III John, and Revelation.

## Lesson 3 cont.

### IV. Community that Learns:

A. Review the points of the Pastor's message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encouraged you in these points?

B. Sermon outline: "Encounters" - James and John.

Three observations about Jesus' interaction with the Sons of Thunder:

1. Jesus gave \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ their name. Mark 3:17
2. James and John had a deep \_\_\_\_\_ against the \_\_\_\_\_ of Samaria. Luke 9:51-53
3. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ their \_\_\_\_\_ to destroy the city. Luke 9:54-55a

### V. Community that Applies:

A. Why did James and John hate the Samaritans so much?

B. Why do you think James and John thought it appropriate to ask if they could call fire down to destroy the Samaritan village?

C. Would people describe you as fiery? Why or why not?

D. What was Jesus' reaction? Why did He react in this way?

E. What do you think Jesus said to them in His rebuke?

## Lesson 3 cont.

- F. What is the essential problem with people who are judgmental and prejudice against people who are different (race, background, social economic, experience, personality, belief)?
  
- G. What do you think is Jesus' attitude towards people who are different than you? Why?
  
- H. What are some steps you need to take to connect with people you do not like?

### VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about Jesus' encounter with James and John?

### VII. **Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes praying about your next step.

### VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

- A. The scriptures next week are Mark 9:33-35.
- B. If you missed Sunday's sermon, watch online at [www.lifewatercc.org](http://www.lifewatercc.org) before the next Life Group.
- C. Reflect on next week's questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

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**“Encounters” - The Disciples**  
**Mark 9:33-35**  
**Lesson 4**

**I. Purpose:**

- A. To help us understand that the disciples were ordinary people just like us.
- B. To help us know that some of their desires were selfish in nature.
- C. To help us see how Jesus corrected them.

**II. Community that Cares:**

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

**III. Community that Understands the Background:**

Sometimes we forget that the disciples were just ordinary men who were trying to figure it all out. Everything that Jesus was teaching them was contrary to their culture and background.

This group of men were extremely diverse. Peter, James, John, Andrew, and Philip were fishermen. Fishermen were hard working, rough, unschooled men, and antisocial. Nathanael (Bartholomew) was a student of the Bible and lived a holy life. Matthew was a tax collector who was despised by Jews and Roman residents. Simon the Zealot was a member of an aggressive, even violent, political party whose concern for the Jewish people led them to despise even Jews who sought peace and reconciliation with the Roman leaders. We don't know much about Judas (who betrayed Jesus); or James (son of Alphaeus), or Thomas, or Thaddeus.

Jesus chose this group of 12 for an important reason, their diversity (which would later become a huge asset.) But first, they would have to learn that being first meant being willing to be last and the servant of all. They would need to learn to be humble. They would need to be a family and a team that could work effectively together.

## Lesson 4 cont.

### IV. Community that Learns:

A. Review the points of the Pastor's message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encourage you in these points?

B. Sermon outline: "Encounters" - The Disciples.

Three observations about Jesus' interaction with the disciples:

1. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ a crucial question. Mark 9:33

2. The disciples' \_\_\_\_\_ spoke volumes. Mark 9:34

3. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ to their pride. Mark 9:35

### V. Community that Applies:

A. Why did Jesus ask so many questions of the disciples?

B. What can you do more effectively by asking a question?

C. In your conversations that are hard, do you ask questions? Why or Why not?

D. Do you prefer people to ask you questions or tell you what you need to do? Why?

E. Why were the disciples silent?

F. How can silence be effective?

## Lesson 4 cont.

- G. What do you think Jesus said to the disciples to show them the right way?
- H. Do you ever use silence when talking about difficult subjects with people? Why or why not?
- I. Have you ever used Jesus' pattern (ask questions, allow for silence, and then speak) when in a discussion?

### VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about Jesus' encounter with the disciples?

### VII. **Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes praying about your next step.

### VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

- A. The scriptures next week are Matthew 12:1-8.
- B. If you missed Sunday's sermon, watch online at [www.lifewatercc.org](http://www.lifewatercc.org) before the next Life Group.
- C. Reflect on next week's questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

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**“Encounters” - The Pharisees**  
**Matthew 12:1-8**  
**Lesson 5**

**I. Purpose:**

- A. To help us understand what the Pharisees were focused on.
- B. To help us know what Jesus thought of this focus.
- C. To help us see what God really desires of us.

**II. Community that Cares:**

- A. What is your next step and how are you doing with taking that step?
  
- B. How are you doing with your 5-5-5 this week?

**III. Community that Understands the Background:**

In Palestine, in the time of Jesus, farmer’s fields were planted in long narrow strips and the ground between these strips were rights-of-way for travel. It was on one of these strips that Jesus’ confrontation with some Pharisees took place. This was not a matter of stealing because the law allowed for hungry travelers to pick grain by hand from the fields. (Deuteronomy 23:25)

The problem that these religious leaders had with Jesus and His disciples was that they took the grain to eat on the Sabbath. The Sabbath law was very complicated and detailed what people could do or not do. The commandment was that Jews could not work on the Sabbath, but the interpreters of the law felt there needed to be further expectations and laws added to this simple law. “Work” needed to be defined and so the religious leaders came up with 39 basic actions which would be prohibited on the Sabbath. But still these leaders were not satisfied, and they broke the law down even more with detailed descriptions and definitions of each action. For example, one of the basic actions was that Jews could not carry a “burden” on the Sabbath. But what was a burden? It was decided by the religious leaders that a burden was the weight of two dried figs. Even the suggestion of work was forbidden. So, by plucking the grain, the disciples were guilty of harvesting; by rubbing it in their hands they were guilty of beating the grain; and by separating the grain they were



## Lesson 5 cont.

guilty of sorting it. By doing all three they were guilty of preparing a meal on the Sabbath which was prohibited.

The problem with these men was not their zeal to follow the law but their hearts. They were filled with pride and power and lost the whole reason for the law in the first place. Their hearts were cold and unresponsive to God. Jesus speaks the truth to these religious leaders. What is the real heart of the matter? These men could not understand that God desires mercy, not sacrifice.

### IV. **Community that Learns:**

A. Review the points of the Pastor's message. What spoke to you, challenged you, or encouraged you in these points?

B. Sermon outline: "Encounters" - The Pharisees.

Three observations about Jesus' interaction with the religious leaders:

1. The Pharisees were \_\_\_\_\_ in their approach to Jesus. Matthew 12:1-2
2. Jesus offered a \_\_\_\_\_ defense for their actions. Matthew 12:3-5
3. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the true intent of God. Matthew 12:6-8

### V. **Community that Applies:**

A. What were the Pharisees focused on (when the disciples began to pick and eat the grain)?

## Lesson 5 cont.

- B. Why is the condition of our hearts so important in following Jesus?
- C. In the following areas are you more focused on discipline (being obedient) or legalism:
1. Attending Church.
  2. Doing your 5-5-5.
  3. LifeGroup participation.
  4. Serving in ministry.
  5. Giving your tithe and offering.
  6. Reaching your Person of Interest.
- D. What does it mean to you that God desires mercy more than sacrifice?

VI. **Community that is Accountable:**

Is there something you need to start or stop doing because of what you learned about Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees?

VII. **Community that Prays:**

Spend a few minutes praying about your next step.

VIII. **Community that Looks Ahead:**

- A. The scriptures next week are Matthew 28:1-7.
- B. If you missed Sunday's sermon, watch online at [www.lifewatercc.org](http://www.lifewatercc.org) before the next Life Group.
- C. Reflect on next week's questions during your five minutes of daily silence.

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## Fill in the Blanks

### Lesson 1

1a asked

1b affirmed

1c assured

### Lesson 2

1a asked

2a accepted

3a action

### Lesson 3

1a James          John

2a prejudice      people

3a rebuked        request

### Lesson 4

1a submitted

2a silence

3a spoke

### Lesson 5

1a ritualistic

2b realistic

3c revealed

### Prayer Requests

DATE	PRAYER REQUEST	ANSWER

## Prayer Requests

DATE	PRAYER REQUEST	ANSWER

### Prayer Requests

<b>DATE</b>	<b>PRAYER REQUEST</b>	<b>ANSWER</b>

### Prayer Requests

DATE	PRAYER REQUEST	ANSWER



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