

Encountering God

God's invitation to you

Encountering God through biblical teachings.

Introduction

Hello, My name is David Peñate. I am currently in my final year of Theology and Ministry and this month I am going to take you through the monthly bible readings. This month we are going to journey together and discover how to encounter God. In other words, we are going to uncover how to experience God in our lives. God invites everyone into a loving relationship with Him and His ultimate purpose is to be deeply involved in our life. Therefore lets take a look at God's vision for our lives and how we can encounter God through the Bible.

Week 1, June 1-7.

Day 1- Thursday 1st of June: “It is written”

Suggested Readings: Proverbs 30:5; Isaiah 8:20; 2 Timothy 3:16; John 17:17.

“Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path”.
(Psalm 119:105)

Have you ever been or felt lost? I think we all have at some point, and what is it that we most desire when we are lost? Help, direction, guidance, instruction or a rescuer? You see, throughout the bible we encounter a reoccurring theme, which is, God seeking and chasing after a lost race. That race been us (humanity). From the beginning of time when the first humans (Adam and Eve) rebelled against God in the Garden of Eden, humanity has had to bear the consequences of been separated from the creator God. However, because of God’s infinite love for His creation He seeks to establish a relationship with every lost individual. God does this through the Bible. The bible is a unique book; it has been referred to as the “Holy Scriptures” and “the Sacred writings”, why you may ask? Because of its uniqueness, the Bible authors claim that the messages they received were not of themselves, but instead inspired and revealed by God. The Bible gives us direction, instruction, guidance (2 Timothy 3:16-17) and speaks of God’s plan to save humanity. God’s invitation to us is that we will experience and encounter God through his word, because it is written *“People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God”* (Matthew 4:4). God’s word is an open invitation for those who seek the word’s hidden truths, principles of salvation, God’s will and guidance in life. After all, God promises *“I know the plans I have for you, plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope”* (Jeremiah 29:11). Friends I invite you to seek God through his written word, that in it you will find God’s will, future and hope for your life.

- **How can we apply the different books of the bible in our lives?** (Hint: Daniel & Revelation reveal the future, Proverbs give advice and the Gospels reveal God’s plan of healing, restoration and salvation)
- **What do you want God to reveal to you, this week, through His word?**

Day 2 - Friday 2nd of June: “Three in One”

Suggested readings: Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2.

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”.

(Matthew 28:19)

Allow me to pose forth a question, if you were to study the universe using a magnifying glass how much would you discover? I bet, not much at all, in fact I am quite certain that your study would raise more questions than it answered. The same can be said about God. The more we study God the more of a mystery He may become. However, it is not God’s will for us to view God as a mystery. In fact the bible tells us to love God with all of our heart, soul and mind. We cannot love someone we know nothing about. Thankfully, God reveals Himself to us through His love for us; through the bible we gain insights into God’s love for us. Lets consider the following: In 1 John 4:8 the bible tells that “God is Love”, in what way though? God so loved the world that He sent His only Son (Jesus) unto the world (John 3:16). Jesus willingly came, showed compassion for this world and claimed that the Holy Spirit of God was upon Him (Like 4:18). Interestingly enough, the fruit of the Spirit is love (Galatians 5: 22). Hence, at Jesus’ baptism we witness something spectacular, we see God the father say, “This is my Son, whom I love” (Matthew 3:17), then we read that the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus. Here we have a scenario where the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all present. From reading the Bible this is what we would often refer to as the Godhead, three separate beings, but one at the same time. The Bible reveals to us that the Godhead were involved in the plan of loving and saving the world. The Father sent His son Jesus, Jesus died to reconcile humanity back to the father and Holy Spirit convicts us of the truth in God (2 Thessalonians 2:13). It’s amazing to know that all of the Godhead, the Three in One, are deeply involved in our personal life and in our salvation.

- **How do we experience the Godhead in our daily lives?**
- **How does the involvement of the entire Godhead enhance our view of God’s plan of salvation?**

Day 3 – Saturday 3rd of June: “Father to the not so good”

Suggested Readings: Revelation 4:11; 1 Corinthians 15:28; Genesis 1:1; 1 Timothy 1:17; 1 Peter 1:9.

“You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you pleased”

(Revelation 4:11)

Today I want you to reflect on people who have meet during your life. I kindly ask you to reflect on people that you have meet along the way that you would consider “not so good people” and contemplate why they seemed not to be good people.

Likewise, I would ask you to reflect on people you have meet that you would consider good or even amazing individuals. Now, what differs with the not so good and the good? Their personality? The way they treated you? Their attitude? Had a bad experience with them? Well, the list could go on and on. Consequently, from our human predicament we are most likely not to want to associate with the “not so good” people. However, what if I told you that that “not so good” person is you, everyone, and I? How does that make you feel? You see, our sinful nature doesn’t make us good people at all; we have sinned and rebelled against God. From our human standpoint we may think that God the Father wants nothing to so with us because maybe we haven’t had the proper attitude, obedience, experience and respect towards God. However, the Bible describes God the Father as a person to wants to be with His creation, even if we don’t want to be with Him. The Bible tells us that God the Father is a Father where we can find mercy (Exodus 25:8), a Father where we can find refuge (Psalms 27:5), a Father where we can find forgiveness (Psalms 51:1,11), a Father who is faithful (Isaiah 41:9), a Father who gives, a Father whose nature is love and most significantly a Father who redeems and brings forth salvation (Isaiah 35:4). I invite you today to reflect on what God the Father offers to you, the same Father that created all things and is worthy of glory and honor, wants to have intimate encounter with you. Even if we are “not so good”.

- **Read 1 Peter 2:9. How does knowing that God calls us Holy enhance our experience with Him?**
- **How to you perceive God the Father?**

Day 4- Sunday 4th of June: “All Human, All Divine”

Suggested Readings: John 1:1-3, 14; Luke 1:35; Romans 6:23; Hebrews 2:9-18.

“So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son”

(John 1:14)

IMAGINE if Australia’s Prime Minister came to your home and personally served you and attended to all your needs. Even better, imagine if the President of the United States or the Queen on United Kingdom devoted their efforts on you. Wouldn’t that be great? Maybe. But at the same time a far fetch reality I would say. However, what if I told you this far fetch idea actually happened, is happening and can happen, only at a larger scale? That would be awesome right? Well, this is exactly what Jesus did for every single one of us, the King of the universe the creator (Genesis 1:1, 27) of all things, Jesus who is God himself came to this world not only to serve and be with us, but most importantly He came to die for you and me. Jesus who is God, who held the highest position in the universe, who was worshipped day and night by the angels, came down to earth and took on the form of a simple man. Jesus became a man for the sole reason of serving, devoting and saving you. Thus, in the same manner we face challenges, trails, hardships and temptations so did Jesus. Jesus was tempted in all areas as we are (Hebrews 4:15). However, Jesus’ victory over temptation on earth has qualified Him to sympathize with our weaknesses, with our temptations and trials. Jesus (God Himself) left the comfort of His throne in heaven for you and me, because He wanted us to encounter him. In other words, Jesus gave up all the perks of been a king and become a servant for the purpose of saving your life (Philippians 2:7).

- **What does it say about God that He was willing to become human for us?**
- **How does knowing that Jesus suffered and was tempted in the same way we are bring hope to us today?**

Day 5- Monday 5th of June: “The Re-creationist”

Suggested Readings: Genesis 1:1; Luke 4:18; Acts 1:8; John 15:26; 2 Peter 1:20-21.

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit....”

(John 14:16-17)

In ancient times God did miraculous wonders among the people. In other terms, God dwelled among His people (Exodus 25:8). Further, God Himself (Jesus) came and dwelled among His people (John 1:14). However, you may be asking yourself where is God today? Well, Jesus said that the Father would give us a comforter, that comforter been the Holy Spirit. The Bible reveals the Holy Spirit as a person, He teaches (Luke 12:12), convicts (John 16:8), directs the affairs of the Church (Acts 13:2) and inspires (2 Peter 1:21). Therefore, today if we open our hearts to the calling of the Holy Spirit I can assure you that our lives will change for the good. We are given the assurance that the Holy Spirit will bring us a deep conviction of sin, urge us to accept Jesus and lead us to repentance. Most importantly, the Holy Spirit’s work is one of re-creation He wants to re-create and mold us into the loving character of God. The Holy Spirit is here to guide, help and assist us in experiencing the grace and peace of God. The Holy Spirit brings to every individual the presence of Jesus.

- **What do you think is the mission of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3)?**
- **Do you think you currently need the Holy Spirit?**
- **In what ways can the Holy Spirit re-create us into?**

Day 6- Tuesday 6th of June: “The Art of Love”

Suggested Readings: Genesis 1:1-31; Hebrews 11:3; Psalms 19: 1-6; Amos 4:13.

“So God created human beings in his image own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them”

(Genesis 1:27)

Nature speaks volumes of God’s love. Just look at the many beautiful and wonderful things of nature; the flowers, tress, hills, mountains, seas, rivers, and the living

creatures. They all demonstrate features of who God is: joyfulness, happiness and love etc. And because love motivates all that God does, therefore creation is an act of love. Creation is God's master art piece. Every bright flower, tree, waterfall, blade of grass and the melodies of signing birds all reveal God's love in creation. However, God's crowning art piece was the creation of humans, God made man in "his own image". The God and creator of all the universal, in his great love, decided to create us (you and me) in his image. In other words, God created us to reflect his image of love. The creation account in the Bible begins with God creating the heavens and the earth and then moves on to creating humanity. This testifies that God on purposely prepared a perfect environment for us to live in; we were the crowing work of art in His already glorious masterpiece of love. Hence, because we are created in His image, we have been called to glorify God. God invites each one of us to enter into communion with him, daily seeking to experience more of God and able to reflect his love more fully to others also.

- **What does "been created in the image of God," mean to you?**
- **How does God's creation speak to you personally?**

Day 7- Wednesday 7th of June: " The Crowning Piece"

Suggested Readings: Genesis 1:26-28; Romans 5:12-17; 2 Corinthians 5: 19-20.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me"
(Psalms 51:10)

After God had completed His creation he reflected on it and said that "it was Good", after God created man he reflected and said, "it was very good". It was the creation of humans that brought God the most satisfying emotions humans were his crowning piece on an already perfect world. In the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve were created perfect, their thoughts were pure and honorable and there was not a trace of evil. However, when they choose to disobey God their thoughts were changed and the love for self took the place of love for God. Since then God's crowning piece (You and me) have wandered away from God's first intentions for our lives. Now we live in a world where evil reigns, where malice, suffering and death are a given. However, this was never God's plan. Therefore, God invites us all to reflect and imitate his prefect image. Without God we cannot have a truly good character, and the only way

to God is through Jesus, Jesus declared, “ I am the way, the truth and the Life (John 14:6). Event though we are not perfect and we have our many faults, God is always seeking to establish the Eden image in us. Through Jesus, even though sinners, we find comfort and hope in Him; *“I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent”*.

- **How should we live our lives knowing that Jesus came to save sinners?**
- **What character features should we display, knowing what we are created in the image of God?**

Week's Summary

Humanities greatest need is having a genuine encounter and experience with God.

This week we have looked at how to encounter God through different bible teachings. This included, mainly, how to encounter God through his word. However, we also touched on how to experiencing God through God the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, creation and our sinfulness. It is my prayer that you will continue to seek God with all your heart, mind and strength.

Many Blessings.