

REVIVAL: A Culture of Encounter

Message by Pastor Larry Neville,
Small Group Bible Study Leader's guide, and Students' pass out

Part 1: Leader's Guide

Topic: Creating a Culture of Encounter

Big Idea: The world is broken, but the answer is "Just Jesus." We must move from religious routine to a relationship where we recognize and encounter His presence.

1. Icebreaker (10 Minutes)

Ask the group: "Have you ever been somewhere famous or important (like a landmark or a special event) but missed the best part because you were distracted, tired, or looking at your phone? Share a quick story."

- **Leader Note:** Connect this to the idea that we can be in church (God's house) and still miss Him.

2. Opening Prayer

"Lord, we come here today not just to learn facts, but to meet a Person. Open our eyes like Simeon to see You. Remove our distractions. We declare that You are here . . ."
It's a good idea to pray for any needs the group requests.

3. The Word (Read Aloud)

Have different group members read these passages aloud.

Isaiah 9:6, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Genesis 28:16, "When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it.'"

Luke 2:28-30, "Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: 'Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation.'"

Joel 2:16, "Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children... Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber."

4. Discussion Questions

Q1: The Answer is "Just Jesus"

The message reminded us that despite the holidays, the world is still broken by war and hurt.

- *Ask:* Why is it often easier to look for political solutions or programs rather than simply looking to "Just Jesus"? How does Isaiah 9:6 describe Him compared to human leaders?

Q2: The Danger of "Jacob" (Missing It)

Look at Genesis 28:16 again. Jacob was in the presence of God but didn't know it until he woke up.

- *Ask:* What are the things that put us to "sleep" spiritually? (e.g., routine, checking boxes, scrolling on phones, worrying about lunch).
- *Ask:* How can we avoid walking out of church saying, "God was there, and I missed it"?

Q3: The Example of "Simeon" (Seeing It)

In the temple, hundreds of people walked past baby Jesus. Only Simeon (and Anna) stopped.

- *Ask:* What was the difference between Simeon and the crowd?
- *Leader Note:* Guide them to the idea of *expectation*. Simeon was *looking* for the consolation of Israel.

Q4: The Wedding Preparation

The message used the analogy of a Bride and Groom (Joel 2:16). We don't go to a wedding casually; we prepare.

- *Ask:* If we treated Sunday mornings like we were getting ready for a wedding, how would our Saturday nights or Sunday mornings change?

5. Closing Application

Ask everyone to identify one distraction they need to silence this week to have a "Culture of Encounter" in their own home.

Part 2: Student's Version

Topic: Creating a Culture of Encounter

Big Idea: Moving from religious routine to expecting God's presence.

1. Icebreaker

Have you ever been somewhere famous or important but missed the best part because you were distracted?

2. Scripture Reading

Isaiah 9:6, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Genesis 28:16, "When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it.'"

Luke 2:28-30, "Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: 'Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation.'"

Joel 2:16, "Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children... Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber." (It would be good to take time to read this entire chapter to know the desperation of the people).

3. Discussion Notes

Q1: The Answer is "Just Jesus"

Why is it often easier to look for political solutions or programs rather than simply looking to "Just Jesus"?

Q2: The Danger of "Jacob" (Missing It)

Jacob said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it." What are the things that put us to "sleep" spiritually so we miss God?

Q3: The Example of "Simeon" (Seeing It)

Hundreds of people walked past Jesus in the temple. What was the difference between Simeon and the crowd?

Q4: The Wedding Preparation

If we treated Sunday mornings like we were getting ready for a wedding (Bride and Groom), how would our preparation change?

4. Weekly Challenge

What is one specific distraction I will remove this week to better encounter Jesus?

www.larryneville.com

Email: Pastorjln@yahoo.com