

ENGAGING JESUS IN THE GOSPEL STORIES

LIFE OF PRAYER CLASS – SESSION 4

I. LONG AND LOVING MEDITATION – THE PATHWAY TO EXPERIENCING GOD

- A. The primary way to encounter God is through extended times of praying the Word back to Him. We cut ourselves short when we only meditate for small chunks of time, though it's still powerful to do that. Our hearts get touched deeper and quicker if we give longer times to the Lord in focused prayer.
- B. Encountering God and cultivating a tender heart is very simple, yet few take the time that is needed to developing such a heart. Every sincere heart that gives adequate time to God in prayer will cultivate a tender heart.
- C. The Word of God is God's self-revelation to all of creation. We need a higher vision for encountering God in the Word. The words of a person are the most intimate revelation of the invisible inner workings of their heart. God's Word is the communication of the inner workings of His heart.
- D. Jesus came as the Living Word to declare what the invisible God is like. God physically expressed Himself for 33 years in the person of Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-3, John 1:1-18, John 17:6, 26, Colossians 1:19, 1 John 1:1-2). What those around His throne hadn't seen in centuries, was made manifest in the flesh for humanity to see and experience.
- E. Pray-Reading through Gospel stories is a unique experience in that we have real displays of Jesus' heart to talk to Him about. We can see His actions, attitude, thoughts, emotions and His interactions with real people in these stories. Like a good novel, there is nothing like being caught up in a good Gospel story.

II. PRAY-READING THROUGH THE GOSPEL STORIES

- A. Pick a Gospel story and read the entire story a few times so you have an overall idea of what happened. You'll pick up new details just by reading it a few times.
- B. Then read it slowly through and get a growing picture in your imagination of what was happening. Partner with the Holy Spirit and develop all the different aspects of the scenery of the story. There are real colors, smells, sounds, people, moods, landscapes....to imagine as we enter into the story. You want this story to be real in your heart, because the more real story, the more real the interactions with Jesus will be to your own life. God wants to reveal Himself in the details.
- C. Journal the landscape of the story, your thoughts and questions, impressions about Jesus and anything else that you want to capture.
- D. You've probably noticed a few details in the story that interest you more than the others, so start there in your meditation and ask the Spirit questions. Go phrase by phrase and ask Him questions about the story. Or if it helps you, direct your questions to Jesus. Why did

