

Sunday 15th September 2024

Subject: An encounter with Jesus: The apostle Paul's transformation

Book: Acts 9:1-16

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Not all encounters are equal. Some will leave you with everlasting memories while others will leave you indifferent. What is your most memorable encounter? Is it your partner, your spouse, your boss, a friend ? In apostle Paul's case, it's an uncommon man called Jesus of Nazareth, a man whose words and deeds have left nobody unmoved.

Jesus is alive. He had encountered so many people and is still doing it. So the question is: have you met the man of Galileo? The encounters with Jesus can be classify into 3 categories:

> Fleeting impressions: these are brief encounters that Jesus has with people who are just curious about him, they want to experience what they've heard about him. So what you have this kind of encounter with Jesus, you listen to God's word, you even witness miracles; it will leave you with a lasting impact, but the problem is they will no be any transformation nor commitment as you'll return to your old self, your ordinary life. This is what happened when the governor Herod met Jesus (Lucy 23:8); same as the rich young ruler (Mathiew 19:16-22)

> Miraculous moments: With this kind of encounter with Jesus, one experiences God's divine intervention, and as a result one's life experiences great improvements. The challenge and problem with this kind of encounter, you love Jesus, you have good memories and testimonies of his interventions in your life, YOU LOVE HOW IT MAKES YOU FEEL. Your love for him is beneficial and not sacrificial. A biblical illustration of this kind of encounter is the one the crowds had with Jesus (John 6:14-25)

>The inner explosion: this is the encounter that changes everything in your life: worldview, life purpose, heart; it does not just improve your life, it replaces the life you had by a new whole life, the life Jesus has for you. This inner explosion requires that you die to yourself, lose control; whatever is gain for the unbelievers from the world becomes garbage for you (Philippians 3:5). Only then you can experience the power of resurrection.

What kind of encounter have you had with Jesus? Are you ready to suffer for God's sake? While suffering and experiencing losses, worship God because it is more than worth it.

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