

## Truly Encountering Jesus Leads to Return Encounters

Luke 2:8-20, 17:11-19

Have you ever heard of the phrase “A seeker-sensitive church?”

This phrase really applies to every church because every church is sensitive to seekers, **just different kinds of seekers!**

Some churches are more sensitive to certain ethnic groups, economic groups, denominational ties, doctrinal views, even political stances.

Churches often shape what they do around **the people they want to attract!**

This “seeker-sensitive” phrase also applies to every person who has ever become a part of a church, b/c everyone who comes is seeking something.

Some seek answers, some seek relationships, some seek healing, some seek happiness, some seek hope, and **some come simply seeking Christ!**

- What were you seeking when you first came to BRC?
- What are you seeking today?
- What kind of seekers do you see us as a church being sensitive too?
- Who are we attracting and how is that obvious by what we do?

BRC claims to be a church “Where the love of Jesus is transforming lives!”

- We want to be the church that people who are seeking Jesus Christ, & His transformative love at work in their lives, want to be a part of!
- **We want to provide opportunities for return encounters** where seekers of Christ can continue to learn, grow, love & worship Him!

How are we doing? Has this been your experience here?

Are you here & a part of us because you, like the Apostle Paul, are declaring

- **“I resolve to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”**
- “I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.”

This sermon series is all about encounters with Jesus, not only to show how others have encountered Him, but to show how we can encounter Him to.

**We believe these encounters have eternal ramifications** because Jesus changes lives forever! Has your life been changed by encountering Him?

In the first passage this morning we see shepherds encountering Jesus **first out of curiosity**, but then they return & encounter Him again! Why?

God first initiated a heavenly encounter with these shepherds & then stirred a curiosity within them to go and seek out this Jesus.

That encounter with Jesus led to a passionate response of sharing the truth of who this Jesus is with the world around them!

Then these shepherds returned to encounter Jesus again because **their curiosity turned into a desire to worship Him!**

What began as a pursuit of curiosity led to a desire to worship Jesus as Lord!

In the second passage we see 10 lepers encountering Jesus, first out of a desire to be healed, but after receiving the healing they asked for, one chose to return to Him with praise and thanksgiving!

All 10 came seeking healing, **only one returned seeking a second encounter!**

All 10 got out of Jesus what they initially came for, only one discovered that Jesus Himself was of greater value than the healing they received from Him!

Many people seek an encounter w/Jesus for various reasons! Why do you?

We as a church want to be sensitive to all, but we also want to wet the appetite for return encounters of a deeper kind – **the worshipful kind!**

We want people who come with their hands out to return with their hands raised! **This change of posture often reflects a change of heart!**

Has your encounters with Jesus led you to return, like those shepherds & that Samaritan leper, for the purpose of worshipping Him w/ all your heart?

Too often we come seeking something from Jesus & if we get what we are seeking from Him we never return to give thanks & worship Him.

Other times when we don’t get what we are seeking from Him we don’t return b/c we didn’t receive that which our hearts truly desired.

Why are you here today? What are you seeking in this encounter w/ Jesus?

Have you returned today b/c you simply want to say thanks & praise Him? **Has your heart been turned into a heart of worship?**