

Encounter with the Gospel, Part 2

Lev Rak — I had always thought the word *encounter* was casual, just a chance interaction, but we learned that it has to do with *conflict*. In Mk 10, the rich young ruler had an *encounter* with the gospel. When he heard the gospel, he became gloomy. His face fell. He had great sorrow. He was encountered; he came into conflict because his trust and his comfort were in his riches in this life. But in contrast to that is the man in Mt 13:44. With great joy he went and sold everything for this great treasure hidden in the field. It's not as if he didn't have things, but somehow it was joy for him to sell them. When encountered with the gospel, he was able to really see the worth of it.

Our Master told the rich young ruler, "This is what you lack: go and sell everything and give to the poor, then pick up your cross and follow Me." The cross deals with our self-will every time we encounter it. We are initially encountered with the gospel, but then we are encountered with the cross every day to follow Him. I want to do that with great joy, just as the first time I heard the gospel. I'm thankful for people who have that response to the joy of seeing our Master Yahshua.

Shemiyah — We are being called to prepare for the Kingdom. I keep thinking about the parable of the king with twenty thousand and the king with ten thousand. There is a King coming, and He is coming to take rulership. Some people hear about the King who is coming and gladly give up their authority because they see a better King coming. But some don't want to give up their life, and so they lose it. We need to go out and tell people there is a King coming. That's the hope of this world. There is a better King coming. Our Master Yahshua is coming back. People have to choose whether they want to encounter that King who is coming, or surrender to that King. It's according to whether they love their life in this world or hate it.

Sho'er — For Abraham the gospel was not an encounter. Gen 12:1 said, "Get out of your country, and from your father's house," and in verse 4 it says, "Abram departed, for the Sovereign had spoken to him." The gospel demands a response. The gospel brings about conflict, and conflict brings about crisis, and crisis brings about change. We are learning what the gospel produces. If it's not producing that, we ought to really judge and inspect ourselves. Because that's what the gospel brings about: conflict which brings about change.

Our Master's radical claims of the good news encountered the rich young ruler's security. Encounter means a sudden, violent, unexpected clash. For the rich young ruler, meeting our Master was an encounter. He didn't expect that. He just expected to add a new dimension to his life, but it wasn't like that. It was a sudden, violent clash — a conflict of interest. The answer came unexpectedly.

He came face to face with the One who could give him what he asked for, but he rejected His radical message as to what it takes to have eternal life, to be the very dwelling place of God, reigning throughout the universe forever and ever.

This meeting in Mk 10:17 was not by chance; it was calculated on the part of the rich young ruler in order to ask Him what he must do to have eternal life. I guess he had been thinking about it for a while. But he didn't expect to hear what he heard. The good news was bad news to him. When one hears Mk 8:34-37, it could be a great encounter. That's what the rich young ruler was told to do, and that's what everyone must do. It could be a conflict of interests.

For the restoration of all things to come about, the radical claims of the gospel have to be restored. It's going to be an encounter with so many people. It will disrupt their little life, as it did the rich young ruler's. I remember when Sehyah and his wife had their beautiful log cabin in Virginia, and here we came with the gospel. You can't imagine the beautiful paradise they had. He worked as a tree surgeon, and they were pretty well off. But the gospel wasn't an encounter for long, as he surrendered to do our Father's will. A person works all his life and finally gets his dream home up in the woods, his little paradise, and then a sent one comes with the good news.

That's the high calling of the Kingdom of God, to rule and reign with him forever and ever. What is the Kingdom of God like? We have to explain what it is like. What keeps a person from responding to the high calling? Pride is the greatest sin. Humility is the greatest virtue. Pride kept the rich young ruler from doing our Father's will. He

wasn't willing to do our Father's will. So when he heard the good news, he thought it was bad news.

Chazaq — Isn't it wonderful that we can surrender early in the morning? One of the first things I heard this morning was that surrender ends the conflict. Very easily this morning, I could have gotten busy and started doing things and not surrendered. But I'm thankful we have circumstances that come up and let us know whether we are surrendered or not. We never know whether in the middle of the day, something may happen and our Master needs us, and then there is a clash. But if we surrender first thing in the morning, our eyes are not on ourselves, but on others. If we don't surrender, we're so full of self that we can't even hear the needs.

That is why we have the morning and evening minchah to give our bodies as a living sacrifice. When we lift our hands, we are surrendered — that's what it means. We have to prepare for that, or it could be an encounter.

ha-êmeq — When Moshe saw the bush burning, the first thing he heard was a mandate that he had to decide whether to submit to. Yahweh told him to take off his shoes. What a command! A bush tells you to take your shoes off! You have to walk without shoes on the burning sand. Moses could have had something to say, but he surrendered, and then there was no conflict.

So the command was given to the rich young ruler to drop in behind and follow the Master. Here he is, Mr. Somebody, and all of a sudden he's told to drop in behind! Behind! How demeaning! Everything changed at the moment of the conflict. You can say, "I'm busy, I'm busy," or you just drop in behind and it's all over. Submission or surrender ends the conflict.

Everyone remembers his encounter with the gospel. We all had one when we met the gospel head-on. At some point, I saw it and dropped in behind, but it felt *terrible*. It was as if I were dying to drop in behind, to follow, as if I couldn't breathe. "I've given up control! I'm turning over the wheel!" Then I just surrendered. I took my shoes off. I took a command from a higher authority and submitted to it.

That does the greatest thing that could happen. It humiliates you. How humiliating is it that this dusty Messiah on the road encounters this rich young ruler and expects him to drop in behind and follow? But he was being called to the highest calling imaginable!