

I WAS
IN THE SPIRIT

Encounter

CONNECT RESOURCE

Campaign Introduction

Dates: Sunday 10th September - Sunday 1st October 2023

Purpose of this campaign: To help our church grow deeper in the revelation of who the Holy Spirit is and how we can encounter Him on deeper levels in our lives.

Key texts for this campaign: Theme: The Holy Spirit

Explanation as to why this campaign matters: TEACHING AND ENCOUNTER

Each week we are teaching about the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit ending in an encounter week to experience and equip our people.

Key overarching point of this campaign: This campaign is to bring strong teaching on the Holy Spirit so that our people would encounter Him afresh.

Key Action: "I want to ask you, over the month of September to practice asking and making room for the Holy Spirit to help you."

Week 1: Encountering the Holy Spirit (Ps Alex Video Preach)

Week 2: The Encounter of Empowerment

Week 3: The Encounter of Conviction

Week 4: Time to Encounter God

Logistics:

Week 1-3

25-minute message 5-minute salvation response

Key historical context, commentary, or references:

As we begin our series on the Holy Spirit – let's set some foundational theology. Foundations probably need to be repeated each week as we explain another facet of the work of the Holy Spirit.

1. God exists in perfect community – he is Father, Son and Spirit. The Trinity
2. God has always existed as the Trinity.
3. The Holy Spirit is God – Eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing, always present. He is love.
4. He is in no way inferior to the Father and the Son – he is co-equal.
5. The Holy Spirit's work did not start on the Day of Pentecost – we are going to see how he has always been at work in creation and with people.

Great Video from N.T Wright, which provides a good overview of this series:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyKFMww1OVA>

Another helpful document is the Nicene Creed- the early church Fathers, guided by the Holy Spirit, wrestled through understanding who God is to pen these words.

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father; God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God; begotten not made, one in being with the Father. Through Him, all things were made.

For us men and our salvation, He came down from heaven. By the power of the Holy Spirit, He was born of the Virgin Mary and became man. For our sake, He was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day, He rose again, in fulfilment of the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His Kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son, He is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Week 1: Ps Alex pre-recorded preach

Weekly subtitle: ENCOUNTERING THE HOLY SPIRIT

Date: Sunday 10th September 2023

Key Action: “I want to ask you, over the month of September to practice asking and making room for the Holy Spirit to help you.”

Key Scriptures:

John 14:15-18

¹⁵ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

John 14:25-26

²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Historical Context, Commentary + supporting references:

John 14 is part of Jesus' last words to his disciples, he is comforting them and telling them what will come. As Jews, they would have been aware of the work of the Spirit – their monotheism (worship of one God) was dynamic and incorporated the Spirit. However, the personhood of the Spirit is part of the unfolding revelation of the Trinity.

Supporting points to Key point (3-5 points max):

WE ENCOUNTER THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the New Testament, we see disciples encountering the Holy Spirit, God with us. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He is God and lives in us. From the time of the New Testament onwards, the infilling of the Holy Spirit results from what Jesus did on the cross. We can now encounter the presence of God in our lives, infilling us, equipping us, guiding us, and convicting us of sin; as disciples, we are called to walk in the Spirit.

We see the filling of the Holy Spirit and his guidance throughout the New Testament:

- Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit at his baptism and throughout his life (Luke 3)
- The disciples are filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2)
- Ananias, while praying, was guided by the Spirit to go and pray for Saul (Acts 9)
- Cornelius, while praying, was guided by the Spirit to Peter (Acts 10)
- Peter, while in the Spirit, praying, had a vision that corrected his understanding of the Gentiles (Acts 10)
- John was in the Spirit when he had the visions found in Revelation to encourage the church.

What will God do when you press in for a fresh encounter with the Holy Spirit? Will you take up the call in this campaign to encounter the power? Let's review some facts about the Holy Spirit to know who we encounter in these moments.

1. The Holy Spirit is a Person, our Helper

When we encounter the Holy Spirit, we must remember that we are encountering a person and the power of God. However, he is not just a force there for our use but a person we have a relationship with. Like we mentioned last year, he is like a dove, like wind, like fire. When we encounter the presence of God, he changes us, equips us, sanctifies us, and transforms us from the inside out. An encounter with the living God looks different for everyone.

2. When we encounter the Holy Spirit, we encounter the third person of the Trinity.

In Genesis, God said, "Let us" make man in our image:

Genesis 1:26

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit were all present at the baptism of Jesus:

Luke 3:21 ESV

²¹ Now when all the people were baptised, and when Jesus also had been baptised and was praying, the heavens were opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Our God is three in one. So, when you seek God in prayer and align your heart with the Holy Spirit, you are experiencing the presence of God; he is no less than the Father or Jesus. We need to have the same respect, honour, and awe for all three, Father God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:11 NLT

11 The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

3. When we encounter the Holy Spirit, we encounter the Spirit of Truth.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth; he will guide you, convict you of things that are not 'truth' in your life, and show you behaviours and thinking that are not in line with the Word of God. He will guide you into truth (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit is the beautiful counsellor, one called to walk alongside and guide us into truth.

4. He dwells with us and will be in us.

The Holy Spirit is God with us on earth right now. Jesus and Father God are in heaven, and the Holy Spirit is administering the Kingdom on earth. When we are baptised in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit fills us, dwells with us and will be in us, as the Bible shows.

1 Corinthians 3:16 ESV

16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

2 Timothy 1:14 ESV

14 By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

Romans 8:11 ESV

11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Galatians 5:25

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

Week 2

Weekly subtitle: THE ENCOUNTER OF EMPOWERMENT

Date: Sunday, 17th September 2023

Key point of this week: The Spirit is our equipper to be witnesses and to live an empowered life.

Key Response: For our people to know that the Holy Spirit empowers us with gifts.

Key Action: “I want to ask you, over the month of September to practice asking and making room for the Holy Spirit to help you.”

Key Scriptures: Acts 1:8, 1 Cor 12: 1-11, Romans 12

Historical Context, Commentary + supporting references:

There are 2 Biblical sections of Pneumatology – the Lukan texts (Luke- Acts), which focus on encounter with the Holy Spirit, and the Pauline texts, that focus on how the Holy Spirit empowers the body to be effective and in unity.

Paul connects the gifts specifically to our Christian identity. We are members of Christ's body, each with our roles as members of that body- hands, feet, and so on. *Craig Keener- Gifts and the Giver, p.55.*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErWtH_aa8H0

Acts 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

“⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and everyone, it is the same God at work.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

Historical context for this week:

Luke-Acts

It is important to remember that Luke and Acts are two parts of one long story. Jesus's ministry in Luke is the model of ministry for the church in Acts. In the same way, Jesus announces his Spirit Anointing in Luke 4, referencing Isaiah, which sets the tone for the book. In the same way, Luke uses Isaiah and Joel to announce the Spirit Anointing of the Church, setting the agenda for Acts.

This emphasises that it is the same Spirit empowering Jesus and His Church. The body of Christ on the earth should have the same type of empowerment, in principle, that Jesus had. *Craig Keener, Gift and the Giver, p.53.*

1 Corinthians

Various issues in the church in Corinth are addressed in this letter. For the passages we are dealing with, the problem was concerned mostly with Spiritual superiority based on gifts. People were elevating some spiritual gifts and, therefore, the people who exhibited them. There were also ecstatic behaviours that were out of order. All of this was causing disunity. Paul emphasises in these passages these things.

Supporting points to Key point (3-5 points max):

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, he empowers us and gives us gifts under the Lordship of Jesus.

1. The Holy Spirit fills us with power.

Power to BE witnesses – not to DO witnessing. In Acts 1:8, when we are empowered by the Holy Spirit, he empowers us to be witnesses. Did you notice that the empowering of the Holy Spirit is not just for gifts to be used inside the Church walls? The Holy Spirit empowers us to use our gifts in our workplaces, schools and universities.

Acts 1:8 ESV

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

2. Holy Spirit empowers us with Spiritual Gifts.

The gifts are the sovereign work of the Spirit and do not indicate a person's superiority. All are given gifts, we are one body with many parts, and each part has a different role: unity and diversity all at once. Gifts are meant to be operated in love, to build each other up. 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4 and Romans 12 all speak of gifts.

The gift, like the fruit list, is probably not exhaustive, but we know that these were gifts operating in the New Testament church. Gifts indicate the heart of the Father, Son and Spirit to give us a purpose. Gifts that form our motivation for our Christian lives – Romans 12:3-8 Gifts that are given in a moment/season to build up the body – 1 Cor 12/14

- **The Spirit of the Lord is upon the church** – as he was upon Jesus for purpose – Luke 4:16-21. Gifts are for others – to bind up the broken hearted, to set people free.
- **He gives Gifts** – 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Romans 12: 3-8 and Ephesians 4: 1-16. We do not own the gifts; they are given to us by the Spirit to be submitted to the Lordship of Jesus. Gifts should be operated in Love -1 Cor 13 – 1 Corinthians chapter 13 is not a digression from the point. It outlines the heart from which gifts should operate.
- **Paul tells us to eagerly desire Spiritual Gifts** – 1 Corinthians 14:1. Here at C3 SYD, we have tests you can do to help you discover what your spiritual gifts are. Encourage people to take their **next step** and unlock their gifts.

3. We are empowered so that we can be a witness.

In John 4:1-19 The Samaritan Woman at the Well, Jesus demonstrates how to use the gifts well. What do we notice about this conversation?

- Jesus doesn't use religious language.
- He doesn't embarrass her in front of others.
- The gift of a word of knowledge opens her heart to hear the truth of the Kingdom. She comes to faith in Messiah.
- She leaves and goes into the city and tells them about Jesus John 4:28, 29.

The first step in receiving gifts is to be baptised in the Spirit. Many people in our congregations may have experienced the gifts but have let them become dormant – pray for people to re-engage with the Spirit and the gifts he has available for them.

CONNECT QUESTIONS

17th September 2023

THE ENCOUNTER OF EMPOWERMENT

GATHER: (ensure that these questions centre around community)

- What are some of the spiritual gifts you have seen operating in the church? Particularly share any stories on the importance of 'less flashy' gifts.
- How have you seen Christians in other arenas of life empowered by the Holy Spirit to be witnesses/ to be different?

GROW: (ensure that these questions prompt discussion on personal growth and maturity)

- Are you using your gifts to serve the church? What about the Holy Spirit's empowerment outside the church? What might your next step be?
- Think about the different spheres of your life. How is the Holy Spirit empowering you in each one?

GO: (ensure that these questions prompt discussion on going and spreading the good news)

- The Holy Spirit empowers us to be a witness for Jesus. Is there someone that you would like to talk with about what Jesus has done? Pray for an opportunity.
- A witness in court describes what they have seen and heard. We don't save people – Jesus does – our job is to describe what we've seen, heard and experienced. What would be three things you could describe?

Week 3

Weekly subtitle: THE ENCOUNTER OF CONVICTION

Date: Sunday, 24th September 2023

Key point of this week: Holy Spirit is working within us to form us into the image of Christ. However, we partner with him in this process. We have been made Holy, and we are being made Holy.

Key Response: For our people to know that the Holy Spirit leads us away from sin and into truth.

Key Action: “I want to ask you, over the month of September to practice asking and making room for the Holy Spirit to help you.”

Key Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 ESV

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.^[17] For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Historical Context, Commentary + supporting references:

In this scripture, Paul is referencing Moses. Moses reflected God's glory, but we reflect God's glory under the new covenant so much more. The concept of sanctification began in the Old Testament – it was an act of setting something apart, consecrating it to God. The act of consecrating is what made it holy. In the New Testament, the concept is carried over. However, we now understand that we are involved in this process as we demonstrate faith in Christ and yield to God. (Stanley Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, P442)

It is connected to the concept of holiness because God is holy. He commands us to be holy, and the Holy Spirit's task is to make us holy 1 Peter 1:15-16.

Supporting points to Key point (3-5 points max):

The Holy Spirit is our Guide and the one who convicts us.

Conviction is not condemnation. We know that under Christ, there is now no condemnation (Romans 8:1); however, as you journey life with the Holy Spirit as your guide to truth, he will convict you of sin and work in your life for sanctification.

The work of sanctification (the action of making something holy, purified, and freed) is the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

The Holy Spirit is our guide to salvation and sanctification.

The Holy Spirit guides us first to salvation. We must be born again by the Spirit John 3:3-5. It is the Holy Spirit by whom we are born again into the Kingdom – how does this happen?

Here are some things the Holy Spirit does to lead us into our salvation and guide us as believers as we work out our salvation through sanctification.

1. He convicts us of sin before we are saved.

John 16:8 – before we are disciples of Jesus, we are in the world, and he convicts us of sin – we need to know we have sinned – it's a work of the Spirit. It may be that the implication here is that as the Spirit has come to believers, we play a part in this conviction.

“The Advocate would carry out this work of proving the world to be in the wrong through the ministry of the Disciples“

Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: John, Colin G Kruse P 383.

Approach this with care – it is the believer's job to love the world – and allow the Holy Spirit to convict via their good works and speak the truth IN LOVE. The truth is the seed, and the soil is love!

2. He guides us into the truth of who Jesus is.

John 16:13 – the Spirit will reveal Jesus to you. John 16 promises that the disciples will have the same connection with Jesus that they did when he was on earth – just by knowing the Spirit. This is great news for us – because by the Spirit, we can be disciples of Jesus. For first-century believers, a disciple followed a Rabi for a season to learn from him – it was a very relational and tactile learning experience. Jesus in the scripture is promising that through the Spirit, we can see Jesus – and become His disciples.

3. He continues to convict us of sin as believers.

Romans 2:4 - this is not a new concept; the Old Testament and Judaism knew that God's grace was the only thing that made repentance possible. We need to understand, as Christians, that there is a difference between 'conviction' and 'condemnation.' The difference is the 'hope' of the revelation – conviction comes with the hope of change, salvation, and redemption. Condemnation is judgment

without hope. There is no condemnation in Christ (Romans 8:1), but the Holy Spirit brings conviction from sin. God's conviction is not ever condemning – it is out of his Father's heart, knowing that sin is not good for us.

“The mercy and grace of God are not meant to make us feel we can sin and get away with it; they are meant to break our hearts so we will seek never to sin again.”
William Barclay, The Letter to the Romans p51.

It is described in the verse before as riches of his kindness, forbearance, and patience. Hence, we should not judge others because God's grace and kindness is the thing that leads us to repentance – it is his gift to us.

4. He teaches us all things.

John 14:26. Reminds us of who Jesus is and what he has taught – so we don't forget as we travel in our Christian life. He is the guide who travels alongside us. Jesus says we would not be alone when he ascended to the Right Hand of the Father John 14:16-18 to teach us. As he reminds us – he also Guides us into further conviction – yes - but also peace John 14:27 Why do we have peace now? Romans 5;1 -because of our salvation, we have Peace with God!!

5. He journeys the sanctification process with us.

You have been sanctified – set apart for God by the work of Jesus (1 Corinthians 6:11, 1 Peter 2:9). We are set apart for a purpose, sanctified to do the works that God created us for (Ep 2:10.) To be effective at the works we were created to do – we need to be becoming more like Jesus (2 Cor 3: 17,18).

The Spirit helps us in our weakness to become more like Jesus; he searches our hearts and helps us to pray (Romans 6:26). The Spirit helps us when we are tempted to be more like Jesus (1 Cor 10:13 (God with us is the Holy Spirit). We need to yield to the Spirit's work in our lives (Rom 12: 1,2).

Jude 24-25

Now unto him that can keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Week 4

Weekly subtitle: TIME TO ENCOUNTER GOD

Date: Sunday 1st October 2023

Key point of this week: The Holy Spirit is Emmanuel, God with Us. It is our heart to encounter God daily.

Key Response: For our people to know and ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom, to understand the past, wisdom for the present and future.

Key Action: “I want to ask you, over the month of September to practice asking and making room for the Holy Spirit to help you.”

Key Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 2:10-16, Acts 10:1-47, Revelation 1:9-11

Historical Context, Commentary + supporting references:

Supporting points to Key point:

Encounters with the presence of God are seen throughout the Bible, in the Old Testament and the New. Time and time again, people set aside time to pray, seek God for wisdom and encounter Him, and he turns up in incredible ways.

- Moses encountered God in a burning bush (Exodus 3:2-4), and he called him to a purpose higher than himself, to lead God's people out of Egypt.
- Moses encountered the glory of God in Exodus 33:18-23, and he was given the commandments in this encounter.
- The priests couldn't stand when they encountered the glory of the Lord in 1 Kings 8:10-13 as the temple was dedicated.
- Bezalel and Oholiab were given gifts when they encountered the Spirit of God Exodus 31:2-6 so that they could build the temple.
- Isaiah was convicted of his unholiness when he encountered God in Isaiah 6 so he could prophesy the Word of the Lord to Israel.

These encounters changed their lives forever. The Old Testament prophets encountered God, and God gave them messages and visions that were not just for them but changed the world around them.

In the New Testament, Peter was praying and had a vision that changed the course of Christianity as we know it. While imprisoned on Patmos, John was in the Spirit on

the Lord's Day when God gave him incredible visions for the seven churches of Asia. Encountering God is not just for you; it's for you and your family, your workplace and your world. We are a Church purposed for others.

What does God want to do in you as we spend time waiting on God and encountering his presence at Conference this week?

When we encounter the power of God through the Holy Spirit, things shift and change. He gives us wisdom that can only come from God.

God with us – God to be encountered.

1. The Spirit of God gives us wisdom.

Isaiah 11:2 ESV

*And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.*

1 Corinthians 2:10-16 NIV

*The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.¹¹ For who knows a person's thoughts except their own Spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.¹² What we have received is not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.¹⁴ The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.¹⁵ The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments,¹⁶ for,
"Who has known the mind of the Lord
so as to instruct him?"
But we have the mind of Christ.*

Extra Scriptures: Acts 6:9-10, Colossians 1:9.

2. God gives us wisdom for today.

Acts 10:1-47

Peter's Vision

*⁹ About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, **Peter went up on the roof to pray.** ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. ¹³ Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."*

¹⁴ "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

¹⁵ The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

¹⁶ This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

¹⁷ While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. ¹⁸ They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three^[a] men are looking for you. ²⁰ So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

This is the pinnacle moment in the history of the early church. The church would have looked very different if Peter was not praying on a roof. This encounter with God showed Peter the bias of his heart against Gentiles. We see in Acts 10:1-9 that God has already spoken to Cornelius and sent messengers to come and get Peter. Now we get to see the Spirit working on the heart of Peter to receive the men and go with them. This is where the early church accepted that the Gentiles could be saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. Without this incredible encounter, the church would be very different today. It also happened in the same place, Joppa, that Jonah left for Tarsus in hatred because God wanted to save the Ninevites. God wanted to extend his grace to them, so they would repent and be saved; Jonah wanted them to be punished (Jonah 4:2). In one place, there was a decision of hatred, and this is redeemed in Acts 10, where Peter chose acceptance and saw the house of Cornelius saved and filled with the Spirit.

3. God gives us wisdom for our future.

Revelation 1:9-11

⁹I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit. I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,¹¹ which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

John is on the island of Patmos, seeking God over the persecuted church. He cannot get to them, so like Paul, he writes to them. But this time, what God reveals to John is not just for his edification, for his gifting, for his encouragement but an encouragement to the churches of Asia Minor and the body of Christ across the globe. One of the most incredible, amazing visionary text starts with 1:10 "On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard..."

Maybe today we need to hear afresh the cry of the book of Revelation.

Revelation 2:29

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Time and time again, throughout the Old and New Testaments, people set aside time to encounter God. He showed up, spoke, and gave them wisdom for the past, power for the present and hope for the future. What can the Holy Spirit do when you take time to be in the Spirit, in prayer, setting time aside to encounter God?

God is revealed as the God who appears to ordinary people in ordinary circumstances and reveals to them extraordinary things.

CONNECT QUESTIONS

1st October 2023

TIME TO ENCOUNTER GOD

GATHER: (ensure that these questions centre around community)

- What have you seen the Holy Spirit do when you've taken time out for His presence at previous conferences?
- We at C3 SYD are doing life together. Share if you're comfortable, what you would like to hear wisdom from the Holy Spirit about? It may be that He will speak to someone who has you on their heart or that friends will receive a revelation that will help you.

GROW: (ensure that these questions prompt discussion on personal growth and maturity)

- What does God want to do in you as we spend time waiting on God and encountering His presence at Conference this week?
- Are you struggling to believe that God would want to help you with your everyday issues? What verses promise that He will?
- We all have our habits to make time for God in our busy schedules. What more can you do to give Him space when your calendar is cleared for the purpose of hearing from Him?

GO: (ensure that these questions prompt discussion on going and spreading the good news)

- Is there someone who has been highlighted to you this week in your time waiting on the Holy Spirit? Pray for them.
- What Godly wisdom have you gained in your Christian journey that is useful for sharing with everyone? (e.g., on the power of a sabbath rest, the importance of forgiveness)