

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday April 14, 2019. "Encounters: The girl who confronts Peter".

A. Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work thru from the message this past Sunday. Whether you were able to attend the worship service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper in your own spiritual walk.

Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

B. Recap Series.

We're in our sixth week of the "**Encounter**" series. A look at people who had a significant, life-changing "**Encounter**" with the person of Jesus, and how that "**Encounter**" impacted and changed the direction of their lives. We know the influence that certain people who come into our lives have. They pour wisdom and life truths into us, and our life isn't, cannot be, the same after we have those experiences. And we're using the life of Jesus, and the people who "**Encountered**" him, to draw out those powerful truths, and examining how we can apply them to our everyday life also.

C. Sunday.

Sunday we hit the topic of integrity. Such an essential element in relationships, and unfortunately so missing in our world today. People say one thing, claim certain beliefs and values, and then you don't see them live them out in their everyday life. The dictionary defines integrity as having high morals or values, but even a better definition was; "*the state of being whole or undivided*". And we can see a lack of integrity in a person or even an object, as something that is not true to itself. There's just not this congruency, or consistency between what it is supposed to be and what you actually experience. Okay...we've beat trying to define or explain integrity enough.

I'm going to let you wrestle with this idea.

What does integrity mean to you?

Where have you seen something or someone with a lot of integrity?

Where have you seen something or someone lacking in integrity?

The scripture followed and tied into a drama that took a very different angle on a familiar passage.

The story was of Peter's denial of Jesus after his arrest when confronted by a young girl who asked if he was one of the followers of Jesus.

So, read the passage first, and then we'll give you the interpretation used Sunday morning. It's found in **Mark 14:66-72**.

Before we ask you to engage with this passage, let us give you the interpretation we used Sunday.

Rather than the one most of us have heard before where the girl was almost trying to trap Peter, out him as being a follower of Jesus, we asked the question; "*What if this girl was interested in hearing about Jesus, and this was her first time being around one of his followers. She wanted to see if they*

were as convinced about who Jesus was claiming to be as Jesus said. So she was testing him to see if he would put his money where his mouth was. If he was actually as devoted to this traveling teacher as he had originally appeared”.

Rather than trying to trap Peter, this girl was testing Peter. To see if he had that idea we discussed earlier about his faith...integrity.

With this perspective, reread it, and then interact with it. We know it may be a bit of a stretch to see this, but it's not wholly out of the question. Just let your mind see this story from that understanding.

What different perspective did you have with this interpretation?

How did it change what each of the people do?

What might it say about the topic of integrity?

There was a lot of conversation about bananas, you'll just have to go to the website and watch the message, but there was a lengthy conversation about integrity. And the statement was made, that growing integrity is hard. If we're completely honest, we ALL realize that we are a contradiction of words and actions. We might be doing alright in some areas of our life, but there are certain things that we just don't even come close to how God is calling us to live. So...let's do a little inventory.

In all humility, where do you think you have some fairly decent growth in your spiritual life?

In all honesty, where do you still struggle to have integrity, where your actions match what you say you believe?

All of us struggle being the person we believe God has called us to be. And we want to reiterate that NCC is a safe place to admit, out loud, that we all fall far short of living the life we know we're supposed to. There is no shame in admitting this, we can all chime in; *“ME TOO!”*

So we asked these questions and then gave another really important scripture passage. If integrity is really important, and I think we all can agree it is. Then...

What would help us to live with more consistency and integrity in our everyday life?

How can we live life with more consistency, integrity, without just living in constant frustration that we just seem to never get to where we want to be?

In order to fashion a life that will grow our integrity, we need to realize that our life is not our own. Paul tells us how to start a process where we can build integrity into our lives. Read this passage and we'll talk about it a bit. **Romans 12:1-2.**

The bottom line question from this passage is; **What would it look like to give each area of your life as a sacrifice? Your relationships, job, parenting, resources, your money, etc.?**

D. Challenge.

The challenge is to be able to humbly and honestly admit we have areas of our life that don't show integrity, and need some work. And to begin to hand each of those areas over to God and let him transform your inside into one that is not divided, and will allow others to actually find God in you.