

Sermon Series: Encounter

Sermon Title: Encounter Victory

Scripture: Rev. 19 & 20, Mt 25

Big Idea: An encounter will change everything.

Introduction:

There I was, Denver 2011 Mile High Stadium. My best friend and I are sitting on the second level. Tim Tebow was at quarterback, and the NFL introduced new OT rules. The Broncos win the coin toss, and they start with the ball. If they score a TD, they win the game. Tebow drops back DT, cuts a short slant, catches the ball, and runs down the right sideline, 50, 40, 30, 20, 10. Every 10 yards, the crowd noise increases by 10 decibels... TOUCHDOWN, and the stadium shakes from the shouts of victory. For the first time I ever experienced for the next hour, everyone did not rush to their cars. They just stayed dancing, jumping, screaming, shouting, hugging, and kissing... it was an absolute party.

Through the shouts, you could hear the release of angst and struggle from the weeks before as Tebow led a team with a losing record midway through the season to a playoff win. No one thought the team would have made it this far. It was one of the sweetest victories to watch. Have you ever had an experience like that? Maybe it's not an NFL game, but it is watching your kid's first victory in a soccer game. Or the victory of a team you coached. Maybe it's not a sports victory but a ringing of the bell when you finish your cancer treatment. Or a sweet victory of completing a job interview you just nailed. Maybe it's a victory celebrated by AA or CR as you receive your chip for another year or week.

Transition: Victory is a pretty sweet thing. The text we will look at is the consummation of the victory that Jesus has secured on the cross. We all know that after He secured victory from His work on the cross, He ascended in Heaven, leaving the Church to accomplish the mission of letting them know about the victory that is found in Him. In our text today, Revelation 19, 20 & 21. We are going to see the Risen King return and, as He does, establish complete and utter

victory over the stronghold of Satan. In fact, we will watch what happens as Jesus encounters Satan and how He goes about restoring all the damage He has caused. The first thing Jesus does is return and establish His reign.

Jesus Returns & Establishes His Reign

11 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. 13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. 14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. 15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. – Rev. 19:11-16

There are a lot of passages that are fuzzy and hard to understand when we read them in Revelation. However, some passages like this one seem very clear and understandable. John was not dreaming. This is not a figment of his imagination. This is something that John saw with his own eyes, and every detail is essential. Jesus will return. This is not a “maybe” or an “I think”... no, He will; when He does, He will ride a white horse. A white horse represents both purity and supremacy, and it was something that was ridden when a Roman general was coming back home from victory.

The rider is given several names, including Faithful & True, Faithful to his promises. “No Matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘yes’ in Christ. Jesus is the Answer to every promise that God has ever made. Because He is faithful in everything, He says He will do, and everything He says, therefore, must be true. His return is evidence of his faithfulness. He is a warrior who comes with justice/righteousness and makes war. The warrior came first as a meek Lamb of God and will return as a Mighty Lion. He came to first bring peace on Earth. This time, he is coming to make war on Earth to ensure that peace will reign forever.

Transition: Jesus returns, but not just for the sake of returning. He returns to take care of business. He has a To-do list as He ushers in the final victory and restoration. The first to-do is to open a can.

The final encounter involves the defeat of Satan.

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, 18 to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." 19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. 20 And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. 21 And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh. 20 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. 2 And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. – Rev 19:17-20:3

After reading this passage, whenever I pass a dead deer and watch these birds just feast, I can't help but think of Jesus' return. In His return, the Angel is so confident of victory that He tells the vultures to get their knives and forks out because they are about to have a great feast. Then the scene shifts, and you see Satan gather his two chief deputies, the beast, and the antichrist, as they try and muster their army of those who are deceived. It is the largest and most powerful army ever assembled in human history. Everything that Satan can muster up against God is here for this one climatic showdown. And it is not much of a fight at all.

Notice Jesus doesn't have an ounce of blood on Him while the enemy is drenched in it. The battle was over before it even began. All Jesus had to do was speak just as He did to a fig tree, and it withered. Just as He spoke to the waves, they laid down at His feet. Just as He spoke to a legion of demons, they fled like rats on a sinking ship. Unlike any battle that has ever occurred in time, all Jesus had to do was show up. This clues us into a fundamental reality, friends, that

this battle was already won when Jesus did his work on the cross. Remember, we no longer fight for victory. We fight from a place of victory.

Jesus seizes Satan's top chiefs, and He throws them into the lake of fire. However, He takes a different approach to Satan. God plans to not send Satan into the eternal lake of fire with the antichrist and beast until after Jesus' millennial reign.

7 And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. 9 And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, 10 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. - Re 20:7-10.

TRANSITION: Why does Jesus wait? I have no idea many speculate. Personally, I wonder if it will be torture enough for Satan to witness Christ restore all that Satan has destroyed. As he ushers in Judgement, the next event, this final encounter will involve.

The final encounter involves judgment.

The purpose of Jesus' final encounter is to restore the Earth to its original splendor, which it enjoyed before the Fall. This restoration requires judgment. This Judgment is detailed in Matthew 25, where Jesus separates the Sheep from the Goats. We covered this a little in the warning issued to the church in Sardis in chapter 3.

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' 37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' 40 And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' 41 "Then he will say to

those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' 44 Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' 45 Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'" – Mt. 25:31-46

Many things are evident in Mathew 25 regarding what that Judgement will look like. First, the Lord clarifies that He will personally conduct the judgment from His throne. Second, “All the angels [will be’ with Him”], Which indicates that the angels will again be part of this final judgment. Third, “all nations,” better translated as “all people,” will be gathered before Christ to undergo judgment. Friends, God's holiness, and righteousness demand that He executes perfect justice on the final day. To restore this earth and his kingdom to what it originally was before the Fall means that sin must be dealt with.

Transition: All people will undergo Judgment, and those still condemned for their sins will be dealt with. God will also deal with His faithful followers. The final encounter will involve the resurrection of believers.

The final encounter involves the resurrection and reign of believers.

Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years. - Re 20:4–6.

While this text singles out the beheaded Martyrs, the phrase “This is the first resurrection” summarizes the reality that this will be an experience for all believers who have died before Christ’s final encounter. Friends, the vital thing to note is that death is not the end. They came to life, meaning that their bodies had now been joined, through the resurrection, to their souls already in heaven. I don’t know how this all happens, but it does, and that’s vital to take away.

Not only will followers of Jesus be resurrected but they will reign with Christ. No longer will believers be under persecution anymore.... No longer will believers be subject to Satan's influence. They will experience a reign where Satan and his influence have been completely bound. Where there was death, there will now be life.

Transition: Not only will there be new life for believers, but the final encounter will involve a new heaven, earth, and Jerusalem.

The final encounter involves restoration.

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." 6 And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. 7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. 8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." - Re 21:1-8.

Just like Jesus' first encounter with creation in Gen 1, Jesus brings order from chaos. Jesus will restore the Heavens and Earth. This is one of the most beautiful promises in God's Word, as Isaiah proclaimed 2500 years before this revelation to John,

17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. 18 But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. 19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. - Isaiah 65:17-19

What a glorious day this will be. Some might speculate why a New Earth and Heaven are needed. First, the world as we know it will suffer total devastation. I mean, just think about Armageddon that it will endure. The impact sin had on this Earth is detrimental. Peter writes,

“The heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10).

While this Earth will be burned up, it is essential to note that the New Heavens and Earth will not be created *“ex-nihilo”* out of nothing, but it will be made out of the ashes of the old world, just like when you do a significant renovation of your house. You take it to the studs and build it back up from there. As one scholar put it, “The word “new” does not refer to something that has never existed before, but instead to renewing something that already exists.

This new renovation will bring the Heavens and Earth back into the relationship as it will be a place of righteousness. This happens obviously after the judgment of God and the separation of the sheep and the goats. Only then—after the earth has been completely purged of any who were part of Satan’s kingdom of darkness will the world be renovated and reinstated to its original splendor as it existed before the Fall. As it was the days of creation,

“God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen 1:31),

so, it will be again in the recreation. The New Heavens and the New Earth will be perfect in every detail.

Conclusion (invite worship team up):

The big idea of this series, friends, is that an encounter with Jesus can change everything, and the big idea of this sermon is that an **encounter will change everything**. In Genesis, we watched an encounter with Jesus bring order from chaos. Is your life chaotic? The thing about the chaos of creation is Jesus was able to set boundaries. This is light, and this is darkness. This is water, and this is land. A life of chaos has no boundaries, and it makes it very hard to understand what is north and what is south. What is health, and what is sickness? Friends, when you encounter Jesus, he has a way of bringing boundaries into your life and setting standards and guardrails so that you can begin to establish order and prevent chaos from running your life.

When you encounter Jesus, he can bring hope where there is barrenness. We learned from Abraham and Sarah's encounter with Jesus that the barren encounters... the encounters where we have nothing to bring... the encounters where we lack purpose or identity the barren encounters are some of the best encounters we can experience. When we encounter Barrenness, we are reminded of God's promises. When we encounter Barrenness, we can encounter miracles. When we encounter God in barrenness, we encounter hope. Remember, God does his strongest work in our weakest moments.

When you encounter Jesus, you often wrestle. Remember Jesus' encounter with Jacob. Jacob was stuck in conflict. Conflict with his brother and conflict with his in-laws. He always ran from conflict, which led to more conflict. Does that remind you of your life? Conflict isn't a bad thing. Remember, God uses conflict to catch our attention. We can either choose to run from it or wrestle with God in it. Remember, God loves to wrestle with you because it is a contact sport, and the reality is that we will never change until our pain exceeds the fear of change. So, we encounter God like Jacob. We must be committed to wrestling with God and hang on until we leave with a limp.

We watched how an encounter brought a new calling as Jesus encountered the outsiders and made them part of His *Talmidim*. We watched how He called not the best of the best but the hesitant, the skeptic, and the outcast. He took them and told them to follow Him, and in doing so, He gave them a new purpose, a new calling in life.

We watched how Jesus encountered sickness. We watched as he willingly healed the rejected, the respected, and those who were close to him. He brought healing to emotional, spiritual, and physical sickness. We learned that the healing he provides brings peace, and it isn't because of our faith but because of Him.

We watched as Mary had one of the most powerful encounters one could have as she approached the empty tomb. All she knew was Jesus died, He was placed in a tomb, the tomb was empty, and he was alive. This encounter proved to us that He can bring death to life. This encounter changed everything, and it is from the foundation of this encounter that we learn that an encounter will change everything. He will return and claim the victory that was already His. In doing so, Satan and his followers will be defeated and cast into the lake of fire. Judgment will occur as those who know *ginoskow* Jesus will be with him, and the other will be thrown into a lake of fire. Those who have died before His return will be resurrected, their bodies will be reunited with their souls, and they will inhabit a New Heavens and Earth. An encounter with Jesus will change everything, friends. And an encounter with Jesus can change everything for you today.

This is not the conclusion of the encounter series. The reality is that every time we gather in this worship center, we worship and preach, and the word Christ is revealed. When he is revealed, we have the opportunity to encounter him. So, as we gather here Sunday in and Sunday out, we will encounter Christ and worship Him in response, which is not just singing but also in how we live. As we leave this place, loving the things He loves and hating the things He hates. As we leave here, we are transformed into the husbands and wives, parents, sons and daughters, bosses, workers, and leaders he wants us to become because an encounter with Christ changes everything.