

FACE TO FACE

DIVINE ENCOUNTERS

Mary's Story

Focus Whatever Jesus says to you, do it.

Open Hand everyone in the group a small piece of paper. Now have each person write down something interesting about themselves that other group members don't know. This can be things like: the strangest job you've ever had, a famous person that you've met or a faraway place that you have visited. Gather all the papers, have one person read them out loud, and try as a group to guess which person wrote each statement.

Read Mary, the mother of Jesus, had many face-to-face encounters with Him. The wedding in Cana where Jesus turned water into wine (John 2:1-10) was the first miraculous sign where Jesus publicly showed He was the Messiah. Mary had raised Jesus and knew who He was, so she came to Him when they ran out of wine. Mary gave instructions to the servants at the wedding: "Whatever He (Jesus) says to you, do it."

These instructions teach us the key to any miracle: pray and obey. Our obedience is measureable. The servants filled the waterpots to the brim, so every drop of water they put in was turned to wine. If they had put in less water, they would have had less wine. The same is true for us. When we obey God, He does miracles in our lives according to our degree of obedience.

Obedience is exciting! The ceremonial pots that that held the water represented dead religion—people hardly noticed them. When the servants obeyed Jesus and filled them to the brim, the pots became containers of the best wine. In the same way, our Christian life can become a dull routine

of religion. When we do whatever Jesus says, our walk with God becomes exciting and miracles happen.

Obedience is the key to our hearts' desires (Psalm 37:4). Jesus' first miracle was to bless a family at their child's wedding. Many of us think that God doesn't care about things like that, or that it's selfish to ask God for things we need. God wants to bless His children. If we want to see miracles in our lives, we must recognize Jesus for who He is, and we must invite Him into our situation. We invite Him in by obeying whatever He tells us to do.

Talk

1. Which part of this sermon stood out to you?
2. Read Luke 6:38: "For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Have you ever thought about this principle before? How have you seen this at work in your life?
3. Obedience is central to following Christ but not popular in our culture. Did you grow up in a home that trained you for obedience? How do our minds, wills and our emotions affect our decision to obey?
4. Obedience can be risky and exciting at the same time because God takes us out of our comfort zone. Briefly tell a story of a time that you were stretched as you obeyed God, and then He did a miracle.
5. Read Psalm 37:4 and Romans 8:31–32. While we don't want to try to manipulate God for what we want, He cares about us and wants us to ask for our heart's desires. If you are comfortable, tell the group about what you are asking God for. Then pray with each other for these things.

Live

If there is an area of your life where you are lacking peace, ask the Lord what He wants you to do about it. Then, do whatever He says.

Pray

Thank You, Lord, that you care about what's important to us. We praise You because You are a God who still does miracles. Please help us, Holy Spirit, to hear what You are saying to us, and then to do whatever You say.