

Message Series: **The Power of a Promise**

Message Title: **'Let's Meet'**

Scripture Source: **James 4:7-8**

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### **Who Would You Love to Meet?**

Most of us have a 'wish list' of a person or people we would love to meet personally. We hear stories of individuals who are battling terminal illness and who are visited by someone they greatly admire. Stories like these warm our hearts. Sometimes there is nothing more powerful or moving than when people experience grace and love in deeply personal ways.

And then there is God. The eternal God, creator and sustainer of life, the God who reveals his strong and wise heart of love, compassion, and grace...to people like you and me, the God of history who has manifested his character and purposes through creation, Scripture and the person and ministry of Jesus. *"No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known."* John 1:18 God has revealed himself in and through of person of Jesus so that we can experience relationship with him. He wants to meet with us in the journey of life, to 'do life together' with us. From the first book of the Bible, Genesis 3:8-9, to the last book, Revelation 3:20, the unquenchable yearning and resolve of God is for intimacy of relationship with people like you and me. His heart cry is: 'Let's meet.'

### **God's Precious Promise: James 4:7-10**

If we will move in his direction with humility and faith, he will come close to us. We have a part to play in experiencing this profound promise. See also Hebrews 11:6 And God promises that he will come near to us. Near to us. Let that phrase take root in your mind and heart. And God comes, not empty handed, or deaf and mute. He comes "full of grace and truth." With a tender touch of grace and a wise voice of truth. 'Touch and voice'.

Zoe's story...reveals God's mindset and heartbeat for us...for you.

### **Where Will God Come Near to You?**

Anywhere you are. God has met with people in all sorts of places:

- A mountain top with Abraham: Genesis 22
- A prison cell with Joseph: Genesis 39:21
- A burning bush with Moses: Exodus 3
- A barren desert with Elijah: 1 Kings 19
- A pool of blood: Acts 7:55-56
- And here in this sanctuary in Niagara God has met countless people like you and me.

This morning we want to focus on God meeting people in this place. He meets us with a tender touch of grace to reassure and quieten us and a wise and thoughtful voice of truth to strengthen, enlighten, rebuke, correct, comfort, console, and empower us to deal with life in all of its messiness, possibilities, challenges and opportunities. To help us engage with life as it is and by his purpose and power, how it can be more fully.

### **In What Condition Does God Meet Us?**

If I am meeting someone society deems important, I dress for the occasion. Yet, here we have God, perfect, righteous and majestic and he meets us in our imperfections, brokenness, confusion, untapped potential and he fully engages with us. He is not put off by our messy realities; he is drawn to us, those made in his image. He sees what is and what can be and he moves near to us.

Like Jesus did with the leper: Mark 1:40-42 (also check out 2 Samuel 9:1-13)

And Jesus radiates touch and voice in a life changing way...amazing grace.

### **How Does Jesus/God Actually Meet Us?**

How does he draw close individually and collectively? How does Jesus actually show up in your life and mine...in this place?

1. **Through Proclamation** – as we take in truth through music, story, art, prayer and teaching God's Spirit conveys grace and truth to our weary souls and hungry hearts. 2 Timothy 3:15-17. We come to understand our desperate need for a Saviour because of the reality of sin and estrangement from God...and we are enabled to understand God's love and grace manifested in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. And so we are committed to the creative, courageous and compassionate proclamation of God's love.
2. **Through Incarnation** – God often offers 'voice and touch' through people, especially followers of Jesus. Read 2 Corinthians 7:5-7. In this connecting and caring we are seeking to follow the nudging and instruction of the Spirit of God. For the ministry of the Spirit is intelligent, active, and purposeful. Illustrate:
3. **Implications** – as leaders we are committed to thoughtful, prayerful and Spirit guided worship and word experiences and environmental conditions. This place set apart to focus on God, to draw near to God and meet with God. To actually meet with God. Help us cultivate a strong sense of 'sanctuary'...let us be mindful of others...and the Other, God. Come empty handed, leave the coffee cup in the cafe and draw close in a posture of prayer and faith, anticipating meeting God. Let us be thankful for this place, even with some rickety pews and threadbare carpet...God has met us in the past and will meet us here in the future.

### **Beyond our Sanctuary**

And then as we leave the sanctuary, let us be freshly prepared and ready with God's gracious and wise help and guidance to be the voice and touch of Jesus out there...wherever your 'out there' is, with whoever God brings across your path...starting today.