

# Ministry Encounters

“The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach”  
(Acts 1:1).

**W**arren Wiersbe said ministry takes place when divine resources meet human needs through loving channels to the glory of God. The Gospels unveil what Jesus did and taught. They express how He used divine resources to meet human needs. His preaching was confirmed through miracles. He laid the foundation for us. We do well to follow His example. He was a specialist in ministry encounters. He looked for every opportunity to minister one-on-one or to a group. We are equipped with divine resources. Through the power of the name of Jesus sins are remitted, miracles performed, and prayers answered. Many who heard and saw the ministry of Jesus Christ experienced two encounters:

1. Truth Encounter
2. Power Encounter

For our purposes:

- A truth encounter is a clear declaration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- A power encounter is a manifestation of God’s spirit and power.

Many ministers today place emphasis on power encounter to the neglect of the truth encounter. They identify, and minister to “felt needs.” This could be any area of life where a person perceives he has a need (usually physical, social, or emotional). Spiritual needs should not be neglected in ministry. These are the “real needs.” The core spiritual issues of sin, disobedience, and rebellion against the Word of God should never be overlooked. Jesus addressed “felt needs” along with “real needs.” Thus, real change and transformation took place. God, at times, allows us to minister to “felt needs” to bring a person to a place that results in conversion. In ministry, we need to deal with both, giving priority to the “real need” which is the salvation of the person’s soul.

“So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:31-34, *NIV*).

An effective ministry encounter or gospel presentation should be in word and in power. There should be a balance between the two. One without the other is incomplete.

Look at a couple of examples in the ministry of Jesus. This sampling is taken from Luke 4 and immediately follows Jesus’ proclamation of His purpose. (This in itself clearly evidences truth and power encounters, and points to having balance).

“The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon Me, because He has anointed Me [the Anointed One, the Messiah] to preach the good news (the Gospel) to the poor; He has sent Me to announce release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to send forth as delivered those who are oppressed [who are downtrodden, bruised, crushed, and broken down by calamity], To proclaim the accepted and acceptable year of the Lord [the day when salvation and the free favors of God profusely abound.] [Isaiah 61:1,2.]” (Luke 4:18-19, AMP).

“And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath days. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power” (Luke 4:31-32).

Truth encounter	“Astonished at his doctrine”
Power encounter	“Word was with power.”

“And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out” (Luke 4:36).

Truth encounter	“What a word is this!”
Power encounter	“with authority and power he commandeth...”

In ministry we possess (at least) two powerful weapons:

1. Power of the Gospel (Romans 1:16).
2. Power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:19).

The early apostles and preachers ministered in power utilizing both encounters.

“And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen” (Mark 16:20).

Truth encounter	“...and preached everywhere...”
Power encounter	“...confirming the word with signs following.”

In the Scriptural sense “signs” may be a power encounter that points people to the one true God. They confirm God’s Word and have a way of shouting, “Hey! God is at work here! This is truth being preached to you!”

“After dark one evening, a Jewish religious leader named Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to speak with Jesus.”Teacher,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are proof enough that God is with you” (John 3:1-2, NLT).

*Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary* explains that a sign “points to, or represents, something larger or more important than itself...In the New Testament the word signs is linked with both “wonders” and “miracles” (Acts 2:22; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:4). Signs point primarily to

the powerful, saving activity of God as experienced through the ministry of Jesus and the apostles.”

Rick Love in his book *Muslims, Magic, and the Kingdom of God* explains that “the *manifestation* of the kingdom pointed to and corroborated the *message* of the kingdom.” He also mentions “Witnessing in Acts...includes both bold proclamation and supernatural demonstration. The two go hand-in-hand (2:43; 4:30, 33; 5:12; 6:8; 8:6; 14:1-7; 15:12).”

Power encounter	Manifestation of the kingdom.
Truth encounter	Message of the Kingdom.

Let’s look at how the Apostle Paul conducted his ministry encounters.

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, *declaring unto you the testimony of God*. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in *demonstration of the Spirit and of power*” (1 Corinthians 2:1-4).

Truth Encounter	Declaring the Word
Power Encounter	Demonstrating the power.

Today, we find multitudes of churches. Many can be described as “power” churches because they place emphasis on signs, miracles, and wonders. Others pride themselves in being “Word” churches. Which type is best? Neither. The best church combines the two. It has balance.

Hopefully, “All that Jesus began both to *do* and *teach*” (emphasis mine) has taken on new understanding. Let’s review.

Teach	Do
Doctrine	Signs, Miracles, Wonders
Truth Encounter	Power Encounter
Power of the Gospel	Power of the Holy Spirit
Message of the kingdom	Manifestation of the kingdom
Declaring the Word	Demonstrating the Power
Declaring	Demonstrating
Declare who He is!	Demonstrate what He can do!

### Study Questions

1. According to Warren Wiersbe when does ministry take place? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What two types of encounters make up effective ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What is a truth encounter? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What is a power encounter? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Should ministers address felt needs or real needs? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Which is more important, a truth encounter or a power encounter? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What is meant by “felt needs”? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Why were people astounded with Jesus' doctrine? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. What are the two powerful weapons that we possess in ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What is a "sign"? \_\_\_\_\_

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11. According to Rick Love, what does witnessing include? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. Explain the truth encounter found in 1 Corinthians 2:1-4. \_\_\_\_\_

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13. Explain the power encounter found in 1 Corinthians 2:1-4. \_\_\_\_\_

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14. What type of church is best, a Word church or a power church? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

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