

Encounter

Bible Glossary, People & Places

Augustine Mendoza

Sermon Reference

Augustine is introduced as the Director of Spiritual Life at Oral Roberts University. He discusses the encounter with God in connection with the spiritual hunger of Generation Z students, shares a personal testimony about the transformative impact of encountering God, and highlights the significance of worship and personal relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Background Context

Augustine Mendoza is a modern Christian leader serving as the Director of Spiritual Life at Oral Roberts University (ORU), a notable evangelical institution focused on Spirit-empowered education and ministry. His role involves spiritual development and discipleship of students, fostering environments where young believers can encounter God authentically through worship, prayer, and missions. Situated within the broader framework of evangelical educational ministry, Augustine represents a contemporary shepherd dedicated to nurturing faith in younger generations, balancing tradition with innovation characteristic of Generation Z.

ORU, founded by evangelist Oral Roberts in the mid-20th century, has a longstanding legacy within Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, emphasizing the working of the Holy Spirit. Augustine's leadership in Spiritual Life dovetails with this heritage, continuing the mission to cultivate spiritual depth among students so they may impact the world with the gospel.

Historically, stewarding the faith of the next generation has been pivotal to preserving and advancing Christianity's mission. Augustine's work at ORU continues this vital task, echoing the biblical mandate to train disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). His contribution visible through the sermon reflects a living lineage of ministry that bridges biblical teachings, modern application, and personal transformation.

Allie Mendoza

Sermon Reference

Allie Mendoza is introduced as the Assistant Director of Spiritual Life at ORU. She ministers especially to female students, overseeing chaplains and providing spiritual guidance. Allie shares insights into the spiritual hunger of the younger generation for authentic encounters with God, personal transformation, and purpose. She recounts powerful testimonies of students who experience God's provision, prophecy, and life-changing encounters.

Background Context

Allie Mendoza functions within the evangelical charismatic tradition, serving as a female spiritual leader in a university setting noted for its commitment to Pentecostal theology and ministry. Her role as Assistant Director of Spiritual Life positions her at the heart of cultivating spiritual growth in young women, a vital demographic historically celebrated in the Bible for exemplifying faith, courage, and devotion, from figures like Ruth and Esther to Mary Magdalene. Her elucidation of the spiritual needs of students, particularly female students, addresses contemporary challenges women face in navigating identity, calling, and purpose within the Christian faith and wider culture. This reflects a biblical emphasis on the unique contributions of women to the life of the church, modeled by disciples and servants of God in both Old and New Testament narratives.

Embedded in Allie's ministry is the tradition of mentoring and pastoral care, roles extensively modeled in Scripture (e.g., Priscilla and Aquila in Acts 18, or Paul's instructions to Timothy and Titus concerning church leadership). She provides encouragement and a safe space for vulnerability, reflection, and growth, mirroring the New Testament church's nurturing community where believers are equipped for works of service (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Allie's role reflects a modern extension of biblical discipleship, whereby female spiritual mentorship responds to issues of personal transformation, discipleship, prayer, and practical application of God's promises. Her ministry illustrates the biblical principle that every believer, regardless of gender, is called to grow in the knowledge of God and impact their sphere of influence effectively and authentically.

Oral Roberts University (ORU)

Sermon Reference

ORU is the setting for the ministry of Augustine and Allie Mendoza, serving as the primary location for the spiritual formation of students described in the sermon. It is depicted as a vibrant, Spirit-empowered university with a strong revival culture, fertile ground for encounters with God, worship, and missions. ORU's atmosphere is highlighted as a place where students from over 120 nations engage in authentic worship and spiritual transformation.

Background Context

Oral Roberts University, founded in 1963 by the healing evangelist Oral Roberts, arose from a vision to integrate Christian faith with higher education. It is a private evangelical university in Tulsa, Oklahoma, known for its Pentecostal-charismatic heritage emphasizing the Holy Spirit's work, healing, evangelism, and charismatic gifts. The institution's mission is deeply rooted in the biblical mandate to equip students spiritually, academically, and professionally to impact the world for Christ.

The creation of ORU marked a pivotal development in 20th-century American evangelicalism, blending rigorous academics with Spirit-led ministry, a rare combination at the time. It positioned itself as a hub where students could experience revival, spiritual empowerment, and academic growth simultaneously. The university's campus culture—highlighted by prayer, worship services, chaplaincy programs, and mission outreaches—reflects a commitment to nurturing a vibrant Christian community prepared for global impact.

ORU has attracted a diverse global student body, with students from over 120 nations as stated in the sermon, affirming its role in Pentecostal-charismatic education on the world stage. The cross-cultural environment fosters a dynamic interchange of faith expressions and ministry styles, creating a living laboratory of the universal church. It stands as a modern-day locus for nurturing spiritual initiation and empowerment, situating ORU firmly in the lineage of Spirit-led biblical institutions dedicated to shaping disciples who demonstrate God's power and grace in their lives and ministries.

Jacob / Israel

Sermon Reference

The sermon centers on Jacob's life-changing encounter recorded in Genesis 32:22-31, where he wrestles with a divine being through the night and receives a new name, Israel. This encounter marks a transformation in Jacob's identity, walk, and spiritual source. The narrative is used to illustrate the profound impact a personal encounter with God can have on a believer's life, emphasizing change in reputation, physical walk, and divine blessing.

Background Context

Jacob, later named Israel, is one of the foremost patriarchs in the biblical narrative, son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham. His life story, chronicled in the Book of Genesis, reveals a complex character journey marked by struggle, cunning, and eventual spiritual transformation. From his earliest days in the womb, Jacob's life was marked by conflict; he was born holding his twin brother Esau's heel, foreshadowing future rivalry over birthright and blessings, pivotal themes in the Genesis narrative (Genesis 25:22-26).

Jacob's early life involved deception, including obtaining his brother's birthright through a bargain and securing his father Isaac's blessing by disguise, reflecting human frailty and the flawed means he employed to achieve his ends (Genesis 25:29-34; 27:1-29). These actions positioned him as a supplanter, a name reflecting one who overtakes another by force or deception. His journey toward maturity includes profound encounters with God, culminating in the transformative wrestling encounter at the Jabbok River, representing a turning point where God initiates a new identity and mission.

The wrestling episode in Genesis 32 is crucial for understanding Jacob's theological and historical significance. This nocturnal interaction with a man described as a divine figure or angel, culminating in the name change to Israel (meaning 'he struggles with God' or 'God prevails'), symbolizes the affirming of Jacob's covenantal role and the preparation for reconciliation with Esau. The narrative thread connects to the larger biblical story of God's unfolding plan with the patriarchs, marking the genesis of the twelve tribes of Israel descending from Jacob's sons. Jacob/Israel's story is foundational to Jewish, Christian, and Islamic heritage, representing themes of struggle, grace, transformation, and divine election. His life embodies the complexities of human nature and divine sovereignty intertwining, leading to a legacy that defines Israel's national and spiritual identity. His encounter at the Jabbok river is emblematic of spiritual wrestling that results in blessing and new purpose, an encounter that forever alters his destiny and influences all biblical covenants thereafter.

Importance in the Bible

Jacob's significance in Scripture is immense, as he is the patriarch from whom the nation of Israel descends. His encounter with God exemplifies transformative divine-human interaction, illustrating how God renovates identity and destiny. The new name Israel not only signifies his personal change but also represents the collective identity of God's chosen people, who play a central role in redemptive history. This transformative encounter prefigures the ongoing biblical theme of wrestling with God's purpose and receiving a new mission and blessing, foundational to Israel's story and echoed throughout Scripture, including prophetic writings and New Testament references. Jacob's life and struggles reveal the intricate interplay between human agency and divine grace, making him a pivotal figure in biblical theology and history.

Esau

Sermon Reference

Esau is Jacob's twin brother who is part of the family drama leading up to Jacob's encounter with God. The sermon mentions Esau as Jacob's adversary due to past conflicts that included Jacob obtaining Esau's birthright and blessing, which caused Jacob to fear retribution upon his return. The meeting with Esau frames Jacob's wrestling with God as preparation before reconciliation.

Background Context

Esau, the elder twin brother of Jacob, is a significant Old Testament figure representing the ancestral lineage from which Edomites descend, distinct from the Israelites, descendants of Jacob. Esau's birth narrative establishes the theme of sibling rivalry and the struggle for inheritance (Genesis 25:19-34). Esau's character is portrayed as physically robust and favored by his father Isaac, contrasting with Jacob, who was more domesticated and preferred by their mother Rebekah (Genesis 25:27-28).

The tension between Esau and Jacob escalates in episodes that explore themes of birthright and blessing; Esau sells his birthright to Jacob for a meal in a moment of physical weakness, illustrating poor stewardship of his birthright privileges (Genesis 25:29-34). Later, through deception orchestrated by Rebekah and Jacob, Esau is denied his father's blessing, a pivotal event that results in Jacob fleeing to avoid Esau's wrath (Genesis 27). This conflict not only shapes the personal lives of the brothers but also foreshadows the political and spiritual tensions between the nations descending from them. Esau's narrative encompasses themes of loss, reconciliation, and the complexity of human relationships under divine providence. His eventual reunion with Jacob as recorded later in Genesis demonstrates forgiveness and restoration, emphasizing God's ability to mend fractured relationships integral to the covenant community's history (Genesis 33). As the progenitor of the Edomites, Esau's lineage and their interactions with Israel carry significant historical and theological implications in the Old Testament and prophetic literature.

Esau plays an essential role in the unfolding biblical narrative by representing those outside the covenant community, with his trajectory inviting reflection on God's sovereignty in election and blessing. Esau's interactions with Jacob and their descendants illustrate the dynamics of blessing, rivalry, and God's overarching plan in salvation history.

Importance in the Bible

Esau's importance lies in his role as both a personal and national figure opposing and yet ultimately connected to Israel. The sibling rivalry between Jacob and Esau prefigures the historical tensions between Israel and Edom, making Esau a symbol of the nations juxtaposed with God's covenant people. His story contributes to biblical themes concerning inheritance, blessing, and God's sovereignty over human affairs. Esau's narrative challenges simplistic views of election by showing the complexity of family dynamics and divine purpose, enriching the Old Testament's theological landscape.

Jabbok (River)

Sermon Reference

The Jabbok River is the geographical location where Jacob's encounter with God and the wrestling match took place. The sermon identifies it as the site where Jacob wrestled a man through the night and where his identity and destiny were forever changed.

Background Context

The Jabbok River, is a tributary of the Jordan River located east of the Jordan Valley. Situated in the ancient homeland of the patriarchs, this location served as a boundary and a crossing point within the Promised Land's geographical and spiritual landscape.

Geographically, the Jabbok is identified with modern Wadi Zarqa in Jordan and historically functioned as a strategic river crossing near the territory allocated to the tribes of Israel. Its waters symbolize transition and passage, fitting for the spiritual transformation occurring there. Jacob's crossing of the Jabbok signifies a physical and metaphysical threshold, moving from his past fraught with deception and fear into a future marked by divine blessing and identity as Israel.

Biblical narratives often utilize locations like the Jabbok to symbolize divine-human encounters that initiate covenantal or transformational moments. The nighttime wrestling on the banks of the Jabbok underscores the liminal nature of the encounter – a darkness before dawn where struggle with God precipitates renewal. This juxtaposition between natural setting and supernatural event enriches the theological significance of place within God's redemptive plan. The Jabbok's identification as Peniel (meaning 'face of God'), named by Jacob himself, further cements its status as sacred ground where God revealed Himself in a directly personal manner. The site becomes a testament to the possibility of seeing God 'face to face' and surviving to tell the story, accentuating the depth of divine grace. Over centuries, this place has inspired reflection on the nature of spiritual struggle and transformation within the journey of faith.

Importance in the Bible

The Jabbok River holds lasting biblical importance as the place of Jacob's transformative encounter. It symbolizes spiritual wrestling and breakthrough, themes that echo throughout Scripture in the lives of the faithful who grapple with God's purposes. The naming of Peniel at this site encapsulates the theme of divine revelation and encounter accessible to God's people, underscoring God's willingness to engage intimately with humanity even in moments of struggle.

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