

Chasing Glory

Acts 7:44-60

"If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world. If none of my earthly pleasures satisfy it, that does not prove that the universe is a fraud. Probably earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it, but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing. If that is so, I must take care, on the one hand, never to despise, or be unthankful for, these earthly blessings, and on the other, never to mistake them for the something else of which they are only a kind of copy, or echo, or mirage. I must keep alive in myself the desire for my true country, which I shall not find till after death..." ~ C.S. Lewis (*Mere Christianity*)

We discover in the Scriptures that we were made for another world. This world is a foreshadow of the life that we are saved to enjoy. This life gives us an opportunity to discover the glory for which we were created and for which we were redeemed. We are glory-chasers.

Discipleship is seeking an ever-expanding understanding of God's glory and ever-expanding transformation by it. It is chasing and advancing the glory of God in this world in anticipation of the next.

We are glory-chasers.

I. The Nature of Discipleship: Longing for Glory - Acts 7:44-50

"Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, just as he who spoke to Moses directed him to make it, according to the pattern that he had seen... But it was Solomon who built a house for Him. Yet the most High doesn't dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophets says, 'Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?' Acts 7:44-50

God's intent was to fill all of creation with His glory and reveal His glory to all His children for their everlasting joy in Him.

"It appears that all that is ever spoken of in Scripture as an ultimate end of God's works is included in that one phrase, the glory of God. In the creatures knowing, esteeming, loving, rejoicing in, and praising God, the glory of God is both exhibited and acknowledged. His fullness is received and returned. Here is both emanation and re-emanation. The refulgence shines upon and into the creature and is reflected back to the luminary. The beams of glory come from God and are something of God and are refunded back again to their original so that

the whole is of God and in God and to God and God is the beginning, middle, and end in this affair.” Jonathan Edwards

Discipleship is exploring God’s glory in creation and revelation and reflecting that glory in the power of the Holy Spirit in joyful adoration for all eternity.

a. The tabernacle was a temporary “type” of a more glorious heavenly temple.

“Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, just as he who spoke Moses directed him to make it, according to the pattern that he had seen.” Acts 7:44

“Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, not to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.” Hebrews 9:23

b. The temple of Solomon was an insufficient facility to house the glory of God.

"But it was Solomon who built a house for Him. Yet the most High doesn't dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophets says, 'Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?' Acts 7:47-50

“Thus says the Lord: ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I look; he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.’ Isaiah 66:1-2

Discipleship is expansive. It is seeking that the God of glory who fills the universe fill your heart with more and more of His beauty and glory and rejoicing in it as He does.

“Moses said, ‘Please show me your glory.’” Exodus 33:18

“Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!” Psalm 57

“Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen!” Psalm 72:28-29

II. The Qualification for Discipleship: Humility - Acts 7:51-53

“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit.” Acts 7:51

"Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy." Hebrews 11:35-38

"Thus says the Lord: 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I look; he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.'" Isaiah 66:1-2

"Out of the anguish of his soul, he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous One, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities." Isaiah 53:11

Humility is recognizing that I can't see the glory of God in the face of Christ without the help of the Holy Spirit changing my heart, forgiving my sins, and repetitively and patiently, transforming my resistance to God into delight and submission to Him.

Discipleship is a guided tour of the glory of God by the Holy Spirit.

"He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you." John 16:14

III. The Culmination of Discipleship: Seeing and Entering His Glory - Acts 7:54-60

- **Stephen's Great Moment: Seeing Jesus in His Glory.**

"Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, 'Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.'" Acts 7:54-56

- **Stephen's Peace and Joy: Surrendering His Life to Jesus.**

"And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, 'Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit.'" Acts 7:59

- **Stephen's Prayer: Forgive Them**

"And falling to his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.'" Acts 7:60

"And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'" Luke 23:34

Seeing and treasuring the glory of God in Christ will free us from wanting glory from others. This joy overcomes all wounds and offenses.

“So to keep me from being conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep my from being conceited.” 2 Corinthians 12:7

Your greatest hunger is for the glory of God.

Your greatest help is the Spirit of God speaking the Word of God.

Your greatest hope is the life to come.