

Encountering the Magnificence of Jesus (Prov. 2:1-5)

I. JESUS, OUR MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION

- A. A magnificent obsession is an oxymoron (a contradiction of terms). Almost every obsession the human heart has is destructive. However, there is one obsession that liberates us and brings us into our destiny, fills us with spiritual pleasure, and crowns us with God’s glory (Heb. 2:7).
- B. My basic premise is that there is no aspect of God’s grace that more powerfully transforms our emotions or satisfies our heart than when God, the Holy Spirit, reveals God to the human spirit. The most transforming, exhilarating, motivating reality in the kingdom is Jesus Himself!
- C. Christianity is actively pursuing a Person and actively resisting sin, sickness, and Satan. It is more than escaping from hell, obeying a code of conduct and fulfilling a ministry assignment. Many live a “defensive Christianity;” they focus on sincerely resisting darkness, but do not aggressively pursue Jesus. This approach is weak and ineffective and does not change our heart.
- D. Many in the Church think of Jesus mostly in terms of One who forgives them and “stamps their passport” so they can go to heaven. They only see One who heals, provides, directs, and blesses circumstances. He is much more. The best-kept secret in the Church is Jesus’ magnificence.
- E. Paul gladly gave up everything as he saw the magnificence, the excellence, of Jesus! If we can see what Paul saw about Jesus then we can live like he lived. Paul gladly gave up everything to see more of Jesus’ magnificence, to feel the power of it and to be lost in wonder at who Jesus is. When we see who Jesus is it awakens love and drives out the spirit of weariness and depression.
- ⁸I count all things loss for the excellence [magnificence] of the knowledge of Christ Jesus... (Phil. 3:8)*
- F. The Spirit longs to be our escort into the treasure of the deep things of God’s heart. The Spirit is the only One able to escort us into the deep things of God, and He will only lead us on His terms.
- ¹⁰The Spirit searches...the deep things of God...¹²We have received...the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. (1 Cor. 2:10-12)*
- G. The Spirit came to glorify Jesus in our hearts by revealing as much of Jesus as we are hungry for. He gives based on our hunger. He will not force-feed us.
- ¹³The Spirit of truth...will guide [escort] you into all truth...¹⁴He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. (Jn. 16:13-14)*
- H. My goal for this series is to convince people that the knowledge of God is:
1. The **most powerful** and pleasurable reality anyone can experience.
 2. The **most costly** treasure to pursue, but the most valuable and lasting one.
 3. The **most neglected** issue in the kingdom (zeal for Jesus will seem like an error to many).
 4. The **most emphasized** truth of the Holy Spirit in the generation in which the Lord returns.

II. THE FOUNDATION OF THE VICTORIOUS CHURCH: THE MAJESTY OF JESUS

- A. Jesus' first teaching and prophecy about the Church's foundation, function, and sure victory (Mt. 16:13-19) was centered on the question of how the leaders viewed Him (Mt. 16:15). The Spirit is asking the leaders of the Church the same question today. No question is more important.
- ¹³Jesus...asked His disciples, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" ¹⁴So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah..." ¹⁵He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶Simon Peter...said, "You are the Christ [the Messiah], the Son of the living God." ¹⁷Jesus answered..."Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father..." ¹⁸On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom...whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Mt. 16:13-19)*
- B. The people had many different views of Jesus just like the Church does today (v. 14).
1. **John the Baptist:** A holiness preacher with great dedication who fearlessly spoke the truth
 2. **Elijah:** A prophet who confronted the powers of darkness with supernatural power
 3. **Jeremiah:** The weeping prophet of compassion who tenderly cared for the people (Jn. 8)
- C. **A Church built on truth about Jesus (v. 15):** To operate in power (v. 19) and victory (v. 18), the Church must be built on the "rock of truth" about Jesus (v. 18). The primary battlefield in the kingdom is the truth about Jesus. We must proclaim the Jesus of the Bible, not the counterfeit Jesus of American culture. *Christ* means "the anointed one," "the messiah." There are many implications associated with the Christ, the Messiah, as described in Old Testament prophecies.
- D. **A victorious Church (v. 18):** Prevails over the gates, or authority, of hell on this earth. This includes victory over the darkness in the heart and body, and in every sphere of society.
A powerful Church (v. 19): Releases God's power to "bind" (stop) demonic influence and to "loose" (release) God's blessing in prayer.
- E. The most important question in your life is: what do you think of Jesus? (v. 15). Not, do you like Him? But, who do you imagine Him to be when you are quiet and alone? Our thoughts of Him are too few and too low. A low view of Jesus keeps believers in bondage with a dull spirit and trapped in spiritual boredom. The power of our Christian experience is found in interacting with the person Christ Jesus. Jesus is a glorious person, yet so many do not enjoy relating to Him.
- F. We are to introduce people to the glory of Jesus and the adventure of discovering His splendor. The only way to keep from losing ground in our spiritual life is to gain new ground in our understanding and experience.
- G. My youth leaders told me I could not be a mature Christian without growing in the knowledge of God. They told me to read *The Knowledge of the Holy* (by Tozer). Tozer taught that what we think about God is the most important thing about us. The most revealing thing about the Church is found in her ideas of Jesus. Her most significant message is what she says about Him or leaves unsaid. A hundred lesser evils are caused by this one great lack of the knowledge of God.

III. BEHOLDING THE GLORY OF JESUS

- A. The “beholding and becoming” principle teaches us that whatever emotions we behold (by study and meditation) about God’s heart for us are imparted to our heart for God. When God wants to empower us to love Him, He reveals Himself as the One who loves us.

¹⁸***Beholding...the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image... (2 Cor. 3:18)***

- B. God is raising up ministries to bring the Church to the knowledge of the deep things of Jesus. We must focus on the person of Jesus in our ministries. The most neglected subject in the kingdom of God is God Himself. Instead, we talk about relationship skills, leadership principles, economic principles, ministry skills, and how to be happy and to make life easier, etc.

⁸***To me...grace was given that I should preach...the unsearchable riches of Christ... (Eph. 3:8)***

IV. FIVE CONDITIONS FOR CULTIVATING THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (PROV. 2:1-5)

- A. In my early ministry, I was in anguish over my inability to grow in the knowledge of God. I determined not to be content to know a person who knew God, but to know God myself. I decided that I wanted to go deep in God, not just read biographies about others who did. As I pursued this new vision, I was confronted by the lack of the knowledge of God in my life.

- B. While on a college ski trip on Jan. 2, 1975, a new believer asked me how to have a quiet time.

¹***If you receive My words, and treasure My commands within you, ²so that you incline your ear to wisdom...³If you cry out for discernment...⁴If you seek her as silver and...hidden treasures; ⁵then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. (Prov. 2:1-5)***

- C. **Condition #1:** We set our heart to walk in full obedience (if you will receive My words v. 1a). To receive His words means to obey them instead of refusing or neglecting them.

¹***If you will receive My words... (Prov. 2:1a)***

- D. Loving Jesus must be on His terms, including a spirit of obedience (Jn. 14:15). The Spirit is the only One who can reveal Jesus to us. If He is quenched, we will not grow in revelation of Jesus (Eph. 4:30; 1 Thes. 5:19). Prayer and fasting are not a substitute for obedience.

¹⁵***If you love Me, keep My commandments. (Jn. 14:15)***

- E. **Condition #2:** We meditate on His Word (if you will treasure My commands, v. 1b). In the Old Testament, *commands, statutes, and precepts* are often other ways of referring to God’s Word. We treasure God’s commands by filling our mind with His Word.

¹***If you will...treasure My commands [Word] within you... (Prov. 2:1b)***

- F. We dialogue with Jesus as a person—we have conversation with Him—as we meditate on the Scriptures. It is not enough to study the Word—we must give our heart to God and receive from Him as we read it. Scripture gives us the “conversational material” for our prayer life.

- G. **Condition #3:** We must have a teachable spirit and an open heart (if you incline your ear to wisdom, v. 2). This speaks of humbling our heart to learn from the Word instead of resisting its meaning or limiting it to one small facet of our understanding of the Word. The Lord can bring those who are humble into more truth about Him. Many who are zealous for God lack a teachable, humble spirit. We easily pick up biases from those we grow up with.
- ²*If you...incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding... (Prov. 2:2)*
- H. **Condition #4:** We ask for more revelation of God (if you cry out for understanding, v. 3). We must actually pray for revelation of God (Mt. 7:7-8; Eph. 1:17).
- ³*Yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding... (Prov. 2:3)*
- ⁷*Ask, and it will be given...seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened... (Mt. 7:7)*
- ¹⁷*That the...Father of glory may give...revelation in the knowledge of Him... (Eph. 1:17)*
- I. **Condition #5:** We are to be diligent in our pursuit of God (search for her as treasures, v. 4) and to pay any price in seeking for more of God. We must spend long hours in our search for God. There is a deep correlation between the amount of time we spend with Jesus and the measure of encounter that we have with Him.
- ⁴*If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures... (Prov. 2:4)*
- J. Jesus is our greatest treasure, but is “hidden” until we seek for more of Him with all our heart. The Spirit will escort us into the divine treasury of the magnificence and beauty of Jesus. Our life is to be a treasure hunt into the knowledge of God, which becomes our very gold.
- ²*Attaining to all the riches of...of Christ, ³in whom are hidden all the treasures... (Col. 2:2-3)*
- ²⁴*You will lay your gold in the dust...²⁵Yes, the Almighty will be your gold... (Job 22:24-25)*
- ¹⁸*I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire... (Rev. 3:18)*
- K. A kingly spirit searches diligently and refuses to be denied. God draws out our love and hunger for Him by hiding. Searching for God includes prayerful study of the Word with fasting.
- ²*It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter. (Prov. 25:2)*
- L. **God’s promise:** We will understand the fear of God and the knowledge of God (v. 5).
- ⁵*Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. (Prov. 2:5)*

Note: I recommend [Corey Russell’s book Pursuit of the Holy](#) which focuses on [Proverbs 2:1-5](#)