

From Everest to Olympus: Sermon Notes

When Agatha Christie was in her 70's, she said, "I love being married to an archaeologist, because the older I get, the more interested he becomes in me." This is how God intends it to be as we follow Christ. The longer we know Jesus Christ, the more glorious it becomes. We go from glory to glory. Our text for this sermon is: 2 Corinthians 3:18 "and we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness from glory to glory!!!" KJV NIV GREEK

The Christian life consists of a lifelong journey of being transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ, from glory to glory - to glory, to glory, to glory.... Why did I say to glory 5 times? Because we NEVER exhaust the fullness of Jesus Christ!!

It is God's will that you and I be moving from glory to glory. Is this happening with you? For many of you, I know it is. But there may be some of you here this morning who have hit a plateau. During the first ten years of my Christian life I thought, I want to grow in my knowledge and experience of Jesus Christ. I prayed, Lord bring me closer to yourself (under my breath I would say, but leave me pretty much the way I am – change those around me, but you do not have to change me!) This led to a deep crisis in my marriage at year 11 of our marriage. By God's grace, and with much counseling help for me, our marriage survived, and was resurrected. Afterwards, I saw it was about 98% my fault that our marriage was in serious trouble. I am grateful to God that Paula and I have been married for 50 years.

The Lord made it clear to me that the Christian journey of glory to glory involved changes in my behavior, and not simply learning more about the Bible. Our Scripture Text says, "we are being transformed (changed) into the likeness of Christ." From glory to glory. **Everest and Mt Olympus.... Everest is tallest mountain at earth at 29,028 ft. The tallest mountain in our Solar System is on Mars, Mt. Olympus, at about 70,000 feet!!**

If we are not changing, moving from glory to glory. I want to talk

first about some ways we block the glory journey, and then, some things we can do to make progress on the glory journey.

The first way we block the journey is described by CS Lewis in a chapter called “The Great Sin” in his classic book Mere Christianity.” Lewis says

“there is one vice which every person in the world despises when they see it in someone else. There is no fault which makes a person more unpopular, and no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves. And the more we have it ourselves, the more we dislike it in others.”

What is the great sin? Lewis says pride the great sin. Pride is when and we do not want to know our own faults.

I think we would all admit that we are not yet at this moment like Christ. In 1 John 3:2 we read: “we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” We shall be Christ-like when we see Him face to face. Until then, we are on a journey. From glory to glory. So when someone tells me a fault, why not say “Thank you for telling how I may move from glory to glory?” What do we do instead? We say: “don’t you dare tell me I have a fault. Don’t you dare tell me that I need to learn to relate better to people, that I am not sensitive to people.” That is our pride. CS Lewis said: *If you think you do not have any pride, it means that you have a great deal of pride indeed.* **If this sermon is irritating you, then your pride is showing!**

Two other obstacles that can keep us from glory to glory. A critical spirit. It is very easy to be critical of others. The more pride we have, the more critical we will be. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, famous German theologian and Pastor said (in his book Life Together)

“He who loves his dream of a community more than the

Christian community itself becomes a destroyer of the latter, even though his personal intentions may be ever so honest and earnest and sacrificial.”

We have our own image of what ideal Christians should be like, and of what an ideal Christian congregation should look like, and so because we never find this ideal, we become critical and negative, and help destroy the very community we think we love. Real Christian love accepts the person and the community right where they are, and then seeks to move them, and ourselves, toward the ideal.

How do we deal with this spirit of criticism? We confess it to God. “Lord, I am sorry that so often I am negative and critical about those you have directed me to love and accept.”

Another problem which keeps us plateaued in “the glory to glory journey” is *gossip*. The Bible says gossip is a sin, and explains gossip as: person A does something which offends person B, and then B goes and tells person C about it. The Bible says in Matt 18:15 “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, just between the two of you...if he will not listen, take one or two others along, ...then tell it to the church!”

If someone does something that is offensive to you, DO NOT go to your friends about it, rather, go to that person, in Christ’s love, and talk to them about it. If they do not listen, then try again, bringing someone else with you.

If I love to gossip (because it is fun, and we have all done it), then say “Lord, I am sorry, I confess...” and whenever anyone tells you a criticism of someone else, ask them if they have gone and talked to that person about it. If their answer is no, then suggest to them that they go talk to that person about it. So, three things to avoid in our journey of glory to glory, 1st pride, 2nd a spirit of criticism, and 3rd: gossip.

Here are some positive things we can do to move from glory to

glory. Moving from glory to glory involves changing. A Presbyterian moved into a mostly Catholic neighborhood, and every Friday night this Presbyterian would BBQ a thick juicy steak, and the odor of this steak would float all over the neighborhood...hmmm it is a great odor. The Catholics got so frustrated they decided to persuade the Presbyterian to become a Catholic. They went over and talked to him and he decided to become a Catholic. The priest sprinkled holy water on the Presbyterian, and said, you were born a Presbyterian, you were raised a Presbyterian, and now you are a Catholic. The Catholics thought this would solve their problem on Friday nights. The very next Friday our new Catholic convert pulls out a thick juicy steak and puts it on the BBQ. The delicious aroma settled in over the whole neighborhood, and the Catholics got angry, they came over to his house together, and were going to talk to him. Just as they were going into the yard to talk to him they saw him sprinkling water on the steak saying, you were born a steer, you were raised a steer, and now you're a fish! --pause-- YOU CANNOT CHANGE a steak into a fish. Your might as well try to change into Christlikeness by means of your own strength. We need the power of God....

One person said "Nothing should ever be done for the first time."

This is a definite way NOT to get from here to here....

Jesus said about Himself "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." We are to serve, to be giving of ourselves to others. ELAB.... We are being transformed into his likeness from glory to glory. Notice there is a little word in the phrase "from glory to glory." The word TO. It is the transition from one glory to the next glory. The TO is often painful. It may be an obstacle in the form of a trial, a loss, a setback, a temptation. We need to get through this obstacle in order to get to the next level of "glory." Personally, I do not like the TOS. I would like to grow from glory to glory without ever encountering any TOS! But in order to be on a lifelong journey of transformation into Christlikeness we must learn to deal with the "to" that lies in between each level of glory. From glory to glory.

Joni Erickson Tada had an accident as a teenager and became a paraplegic in a wheel chair. There were times during the first weeks of recovery when she wanted to end her life, but she could not move anything in her body in order to do it. The Lord helped her through this period, and she did not give up. For over 40 years Joni has led a productive life in her wheelchair. She has written thirty books, has gotten married, and is active in the church today. Recently Joni said:

"Someday I will stand before God, and I will have new arms, and I will have new legs, and I will have a new body!"
She has learned how to deal with the "to." In one of her books she has this poem:

"though I spend my mortal lifetime in this chair, I refuse to waste it living in despair... for I am Christ the Savior's own bride, and redeemed I shall stand by His side. He will say "shall we dance?" And our endless romance will be worth all the tears I have cried."

We all have our own wheelchair, our own burdens in life. Jesus comes to you now, and he says, Shall we dance? He whispers lovingly in your ear, will you dance with me from glory to glory?

Many of you are going from glory to glory, and I have great news for you this morning... there is another glory after the first two! It really is from glory to glory to glory to glory... And when you reach the 16th glory, there is another one. If you are not going from glory to glory, you need a serious conversation with God.

Because His will is that we move from glory to glory.

PRAYER: Lord, thank you for loving us so very much. Lord, by your grace and mercy, I want to move from glory to glory. Yes Lord, I take your hand now and let's dance from glory to glory! In Christ's name, Amen