



## It All Starts with a Glimpse

### The Grand Plan

- God wants to fill the earth with His glory (Hab 2:14, Num 14:21, Isa 11:9, Isa 40:5)
- Glory = His attributes on display
- The best thing for all creation is to know, love and serve their creator.
- God is most glorified when we find our satisfaction in Him.
- God's method of making Himself known is by creating mankind in his image and instructing them to multiply and fill the earth (Gen 1:27-28)
- He wants us to reflect what He is like (Matt 5:16, 1 Peter 2:12)
- Obviously when man fell, we lost our ability to accurately reflect him, we became focused on self-promotion, self-protection and self-provision. No capacity or desire to point towards Him. (Rom 3:10-12)
- But God, in His love and commitment to us and desire for us to be part of his purpose and for us to be fulfilled, solved the crisis of sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- Now, with the infilling of the Holy Spirit, God partners with us to make us like Him so we can truly show the world what He is like.

### His Desire to be known

God wants us to have life in abundance. He wants us to know joy above anything this world can offer. He wants us to experience peace that is beyond all understanding and love that sweeps away all fear. He wants us to have hope and a future. And God knows we can have none of these things without Him. So, He invites us to the source

- **Come**, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. (Isa 55:1)
- **Come to me**, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. (Matt 11:28)

- The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When He comes, He will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I **am He.**” (John 4:25-26)

John Piper - God loves you in that He does everything necessary in order that you might be enthralled forever and increasingly with what will bring you full and lasting happiness (namely himself).

God’s promotion of His own glory is incredibly loving – He makes us aware there is an answer to all our needs and the answer has come to us as Jesus.

He has come to us. The creator of time waits for us to respond!

*Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. (Rev 3:20)*

He wants to be found

- Matt 7:7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.
- Jer 29:13-14 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. 14I will be found by you,” declares the Lord...

I often use the phrase ‘catching sight of God’, by which I mean a revelation or experience of God which is more than mere head knowledge. Such an experience inspires a total response. We delight in Him.

Before my first child was born, a friend bought me a Nasal Aspirator (effectively a snot sucker). It was the grossest thing I had ever received. I hid it in a drawer and forgot about it. Two weeks later my son was born. You can’t anticipate what happens when this little life crash lands into your life. Suddenly everything that used to matter doesn’t and things that never matter suddenly mean the world to me. A few days after he was born, I noticed a blockage in a nostril was bothering him. Without hesitation I ran to the drawer, snatched the snot sucker and put it to good use.

What had changed? I’d catch a sight of my son. I had seen him. And what was presented before me wasn’t some abstract equation to be solve but an opportunity to express this love inside that needed a valve!

When we see Christ, something fundamentally shifts and the repercussions of this will take the rest of our lives to work out.

He wants all to know Him. No one will be left to experience God ‘2<sup>nd</sup> hand’.

*No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” ...  
Jeremiah 31:33*

## Our Part as LifeLine Church

God reveals Himself to everyone. When we see Him, it triggers two things

1. Desire (we want to be with Him, to be like Him, to serve Him, to bring others to also see Him) (Phil 2:13, Ps 27:4)
2. Transformation (as we look on Him something miraculous happens by which we actually become more like Him – our attitude, thoughts and behaviour becomes more like His) (2 Cor 3:16-18).

John Singleton has experienced times of significant revelation. These life-changing experiences triggered a desire in him to share what he has seen with those God has charged him to care for and lead. And to provide an environment where this company of people can put into practice what it means to live lives which show the nature of God. This enables us as a community to glorify God, to put His attributes on display.

## Faithful to Who we have seen

When we see Him for ourselves (John 4:42) we are no longer dependent on someone else's best, but insufficient effort, to describe Him. And then our faith becomes our own. (And like all owners of assets we have to give an account and commitment to maintenance and growing.)

This sets us on a process (not always linear) of learning to put trust in Who He has shown us to be.

**Trust** means a level of vulnerability when you commit to act according to what you claim to be true.

*Blondin was an acrobat who walked across a tightrope over Niagara Falls. He asked the audience if they believed he could walk back across with someone in a wheelbarrow. They said they believed he could do it. Then he asked who would put themselves in the wheelbarrow.*

Perhaps God has showed me He is my provider – but I might hold this in my mind intellectually yet still not be willing to confront my boss's corrupt actions in fear I would lose my income and provision.

When He allows us to see Him there is something *He does* and there is something *we do*. Think of dropping mentos into coke as an illustration. Something is dropped inside – it **compels** something to bubble up and come to the top. But I could put the cap on. I could resist/grieve the Spirit, or I can **collaborate** whereby I seek to work with the compulsion.

When He shows me what He is like and inspires me live like this, I can either resist when I count the cost, or I can consider obeying to be worth the pain.

Sometimes God reveals His nature at a specific time or event, but we have the opportunity and responsibility to nurture this revelation by committing to mediate, training, mentoring – allowing mindset to be challenged and adapted.

To see our lives transformed by the revelation we must collaborate. Additional to the initial revelation, we also choose to surrender, and invite the Holy Spirit to empower us. Over time the gospel will burrow to the centre of identity (transforming us from the inside out) To be faithful to the revelation we need a loving community around us to encourage, challenge, and expand our view.

Being faithful to Him mean I can't live according to whatever suits me. The sight of Him smashes me (Isa 6:5) to pieces, but He arranges the pieces of me around Him in the centre in a beautiful mosaic.

Thought such as

*“But I don't like this leader”*

*“But I just need ‘me’ time”*

*“But if I give up this, how will I be protected and provided for?”*

Are put in context by the question *are these attitudes, thoughts and behaviour consistent with who I know Him to be?*

*Does it fit with your experience and the truth of God laid out in scripture?*

The purpose of my life is to point to Him, to glorify Him.

There are points when going God's way feels really hard. This is where we choose to surrender to His way (like Jesus did in Gethsemane) and ask for His Spirit to work in us to enable us to live in the way that pleases Him.

**What should I do if I haven't had personal revelation of something I can see in scripture?**

*How do I make sure I'm not living from head knowledge rather than that inspiration which leads to total response?*

Choose to do what you believe God requires, whilst seeking Him to show you the joy within the command.

## Deconstructing and Reconstructing

Over the years of John's ministry, he has sought to share his experience of who God is through teaching and modelling. Under his leadership LifeLine has put a large emphasis on 'being doers and not just hearers' of the word. This has meant we have put a priority to find practical ways to live out what we have seen of God.

At LifeLine, we talk a lot about 'values' and 'expressions' –

- 'values' = aspects of God's nature, His attributes. When we see Him, we see His values. For instance, there was one time I experienced a revelation of God, when the aspect of His nature that was especially impressed upon me was His compassion. I could then describe compassion as a value of God. I was inspired to show compassion to others.
- 'expressions' = the action/activity/application of a value. This value needs to be expressed.

For example, my compassion for young people would inspire me to spend time with them, we'd play football together or FIFA on the computer. But now the people I have compassion for don't like football, I need to adapt the activity/expression so I can continue to show God's compassionate nature otherwise it could get missed in an irrelevant activity.

The value doesn't change but the expression needs to be adapted so it remains relevant and therefore accurate.

There needs to be space to review our individual and corporate expressions to ensure they accurately express the values. This involves **deconstruction** – unpacking *what* we are doing to rediscover *why* we are doing it and then **reconstruct** the expression so that we are confident that it reveals an aspect of God's nature.

## Holy Spirit Transformation over Behaviour Modification

As a church is it important, we remain committed to our calling, which is to show what God is like. To share what we have seen of Him with this world. And our focus needs to be leading people to see and experience God for themselves rather than teaching them procedures and processes which modify behaviour. We want to people to be faithful to who they know God is rather to relying on us for this, because this puts us in a priestly role where we are acting as a mediator between the individual and God. But Jesus is the only mediator (1 Tim 2:5) and we are all priests (1 Peter 2:9).

*No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*

### Jeremiah 31:33

God promises that His Holy Spirit living in us will reveal truth and guide us. This is more effective than an external pressure (whether directly applied or indirectly via social norms). When we have our own experience and relationship with Him, we give account to Him for this revelation. The law is now written on our hearts (Jer 31:33).

God has shown me that I have often put a premium on compliant behaviour which has caused me to overlook whether the individual is living out of a life-giving experience of God. I also have a tendency to revert to structural intervention to resolve a challenge rather than looking for the revelation of God. For instance, perhaps we are concerned that an aspect of God's nature isn't being expressed, say acceptance/welcoming, because new people are left standing on their own after the Sunday meeting. A structural response could be for the stewarding team to be instructed to spot new people and talk to them. This practical response seems fine, but we can't rely on this structural solution as an alternative to people experiencing and seeing a God who has gone out of His way to accept and welcome us into His family. The revelation of this will cause me to want to be like Him and will transform me to be able to spot those on their own and inspire me to step out of my comfort zone to go over and generate conversation.

When I am speaking with members of the church, we might identify behaviours that need to change but I now tend to ask the question "what do you need to experience or see of God so that you desire and are enabled to live out this change?" We need the Holy Spirit to transform us otherwise any behaviour modification will only last as long as our willpower.