

The Pursuit of God

Series: Sustainable Faith: Vision

Luke 24:45-49 (1002)

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Last week:

1. We will lead.
 - a. God's church must move from, "It's all about me" to, "It's all about the kingdom"
 - b. We are not called to just build a God-honoring church; we are called to transform a city!
2. We will pursue God and will settle for nothing less.
 - a. Just "doing church" isn't worth the effort
 - b. We want God's presence, his power, his provision

This week:

3. We will be messy in the pursuit at times, but that's both ok & necessary.
 - c. We are committed to allowing God to lead us & we will have to learn what that means as we go along
 - d. If we don't know what to do, we will wait on him.
4. We will actively pursue every gift of the Spirit and shy away from none.
 - e. We can't fulfill our calling without all God has for us regarding the gifts of the Spirit.
 - f. This means we will honor and celebrate the diversity of gifting, thereby honoring one another.

I. The pursuit of God requires desire

a. God does not hide from us, but he will not bless complacency

A.W. Tozer *The stiff and wooden quality about our religious lives is a result of our lack of holy desire. Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth. Acute desire must be present or there will be no manifestation of Christ to his people. He waits to be wanted. Too bad that with many of us he waits so long, so very long, in vain.*

Jeremiah 29:13 NIV ¹³*You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

b. God does not hide from us, but he will not play religious games

Isaiah 58:2-3a NIV *For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, ... and [they] seem eager for God to come near them. ³'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?'*

TM *They're busy, busy, busy at worship, and love studying all about me. To all appearances they're a nation of right-living people—law-abiding, God-honoring. They ask me, "What's the right thing to do?" and love having me on their side. But they also complain, "Why do we fast and you don't look our way? Why do we humble ourselves and you don't even notice?"*

Isaiah 58:3b-4 NIV ...*"Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. ⁴Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high.*

Isaiah 58:6-9 NIV ⁶*Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? ⁷Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? ⁸Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. ⁹Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.*

Matthew 5:23-24 TM *If you enter your place of worship and, about to make an offering, you suddenly remember a grudge a friend has against you, abandon your offering, leave immediately, go to this friend and make things right. Then and only then, come back and work things out with God.*

1 John 4:20 NIV ²⁰*If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.*

A.W. Tozer *If we would find God amid all the religious externals, we must first determine to find him, and then proceed in the way of simplicity. Now, as always, God discovers himself to "babes" and hides himself in thick darkness for the wise and the prudent. We must simplify our approach to him. We must strip down to essentials (and they will be found to be blessedly few). We must put away all effort to impress, and come with the guileless candor of childhood. If we do this, without doubt God will quickly respond.*

II. The pursuit of God requires understanding

a. We can only know God because he has revealed himself to us

Luke 24:45-49 NIV ⁴⁵*Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.* ⁴⁶*He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,* ⁴⁷*and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.* ⁴⁸*You are witnesses of these things.* ⁴⁹*I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.*

b. We find God most clearly where lost people are

Matthew 9:10-13 TM *Later when Jesus was eating supper at Matthew's house with his close followers, a lot of disreputable characters came and joined them. When the Pharisees saw him keeping this kind of company, they had a fit, and lit into Jesus' followers. "What kind of example is this from your Teacher, acting cozy with crooks and riffraff?" Jesus, overhearing, shot back, "Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? Go figure out what this Scripture means: 'I'm after mercy, not religion.' I'm here to invite outsiders, not coddle insiders."*

III. The pursuit of God requires focus

a. If we misunderstand God's primary focus, we will likely misuse the gifts he has given to us

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b. Our engagement with the gifts of the Spirit must reflect God's focus

c. Choosing to speak the common language of the people