

When (re)construction is happening...

- **What is it like when (re)construction is happening...**
 - To a highway or bridge
 - To a house or building
 - To a sports team
- **What is it like when God is building His people?**
- **What is it like when God is building you and me? and us?**
- **What is it like when God is at work?**

1

Education research

- Even the brightest students have false ideas based on enduring misconceptions that are not easily changed
- Harvard graduates failed to explain what children learn in elementary school!
- **What if the same thing is true in Christianity??**
- **Lord, please teach us, opening our eyes to the Truth**

2

Luke 24:13-16

“the eleven and **all the others**”

¹³ Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶ but they were kept from recognizing him.

“Divine passive”: God chose to have them not recognize Jesus
 → Sometimes God keeps us in the dark **for our good**

5

Luke 24:17-24

¹⁷ He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?”

They stood still, their faces downcast. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

¹⁹ “What things?” he asked.

Jesus (a *great* teacher) wanted them to tell their ideas

- So they could learn
- So we can learn

6

Luke 24:17-24

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. ²⁰ The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹ but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. ²² In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³ but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. ²⁴ Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”

They knew (most of) the facts

But their wrong assumptions blinded them to the Truth

7

Luke 24:25-27

²⁵ He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

8

Luke 24:28-32

²⁸ As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. ³² They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

Scripture. Explained. Plus an encounter with Jesus

9

Luke 24:33-35

³³ They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴ and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” ³⁵ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

A Conversion Story:

- start of story: left Jerusalem discouraged
- end of story: returned to Jerusalem with joy
- the conversion came when they learned a big idea...

10

The Big Idea

In God's perfect plan to rescue us
 Jesus suffered and died
 before being raised to glory

Jesus said: Follow me
 As the Father sent me, I am sending you

11

- Even the brightest students **Even mature Christians...** have false ideas based on enduring misconceptions that are not easily changed

The false idea

- When God is at work, things are always better in obvious ways: happiness, comfort, ease, growth, ...

The true idea

- God is working ALL THINGS together for good
 - “The supposed ruin of all their hopes was actually their fulfillment.”
- **God uses trouble and hardship to help us** to know Him, to grow, to find His joy, to know His power, to build relationships, ...
- **God uses our weakness to show His power**

12

- Paul was “explaining and proving that it was **necessary for the Christ to suffer** and to rise from the dead.”
Acts 17:3
- They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples...strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. “**We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,**” they said. *Acts 14:21-22*
- Jesus said, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. **In this world you will have trouble.** But take heart! I have overcome the world.” *John 16:33*

13

- We want to escape from trouble
- And we believe that if we live well, pray, obey, and have genuine faith in God, we will experience more blessings
- So when we have trouble, we blame someone...
- Paul prayed 3 times to have trouble taken away

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for **my power is made perfect in weakness.**” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, **so that Christ’s power may rest on me.** That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For **when I am weak, then I am strong.** *2 Corinthians 12:9-10*

14

- Sometimes our best efforts just make a mess!
- Yet it is through those hard times that our skill improves
- **No one gets better at painting without persevering when “the paint misbehaves”**

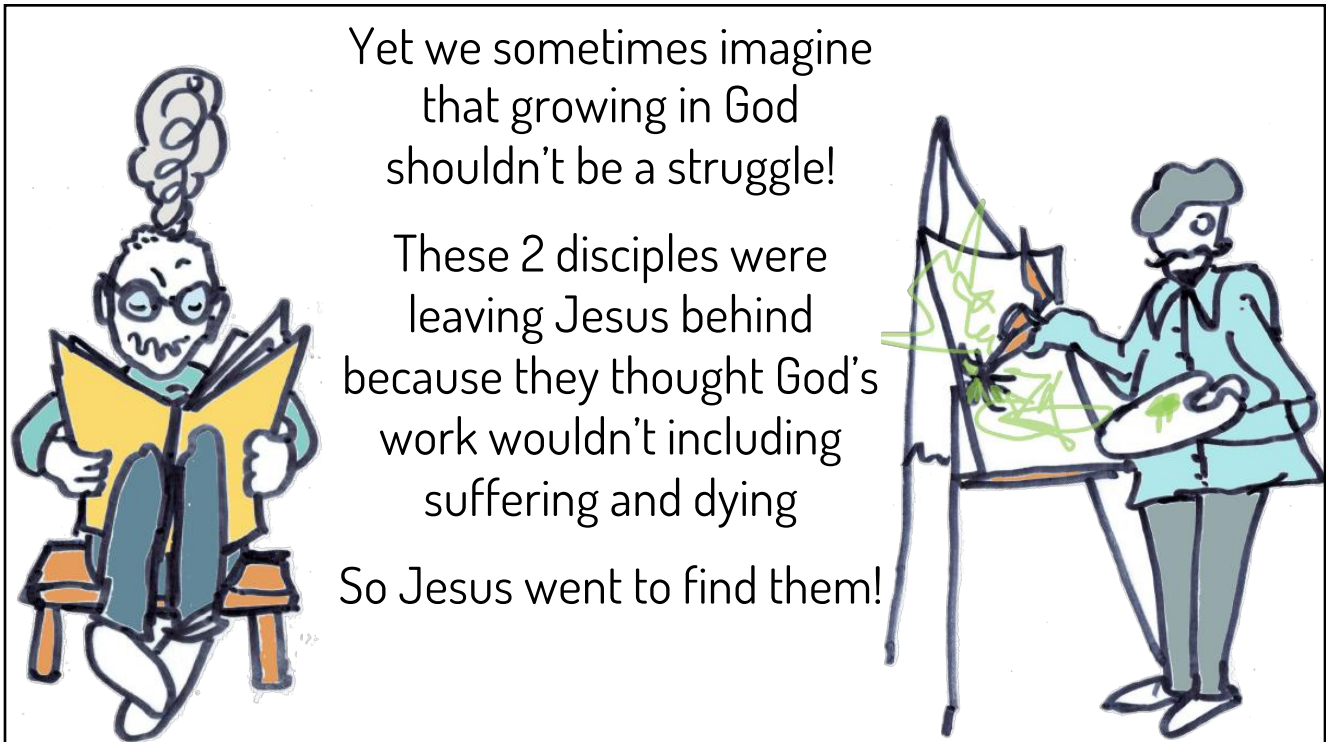


15

- Sometimes our best efforts to learn leave us stuck in confusion
- Yet it is through those hard times that our thinking improves
- **No one really learns without persevering when it is hard to understand**



16



17

The Big Idea

In God's perfect plan to rescue us
 Jesus suffered and died
 before being raised to glory

Jesus said: Follow me
 As the Father sent me, I am sending you

Goal: "...so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. For you know quite well that we are destined for them." *1 Thessalonians 3:3*

18

Application

Follow Jesus

- even when the path is painful
- even when the path is confusing
- **Scripture.**
 - Work to find its meaning, not the meaning we bring to it
- **Explained.**
 - Find good teachers, including those who aren't like you
- **Plus an encounter with Jesus.**
 - Pray, listen, and follow

19

⁷ **Endure hardship as discipline**; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? ⁸ If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. ⁹ Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! ¹⁰ They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. ¹¹ **No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.** *Hebrews 12:7-11*

20

Job experienced great trouble, though he did not deserve it

⁹ His wife said to him, “Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!”

¹⁰ “You speak as a foolish woman speaks,” he told her.

“**Should we accept only good from God and not adversity?**” Throughout all this Job did not sin in what he said. *Job 2:9-10*

21

The Big Idea

In God's perfect plan to rescue us
 Jesus suffered and died
 before being raised to glory

Jesus said: Follow me
 As the Father sent me, I am sending you

So keep following Jesus

22

God says to us: “My grace is sufficient for you, for **my power is made perfect in weakness.**” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, **so that Christ’s power may rest on me.** ... For **when I am weak, then I am strong.**

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. **For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.** So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18