

Lesson 3: Increase & Glory

In our last class, we talked about how, in the book of Genesis, God created things necessary for plant life in the first three days of creation. Before God created, He said the earth was empty. Then on Day 1, God created darkness and light. On Day 2, He made the atmosphere. And on Day 3, God created land and sea. Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth seed and seed bearing plants." We said that God created the Earth to be filled, first with seed on day 3. And on the next three days of creation, God fills the earth and sea with animals and birds and fish and man.

And so this is like a parable, a type and shadow, of something important in God's design and purpose. People are also made to be filled. The earth, like our souls, is empty. God has made it possible for Life to grow in that empty place. **He** has provided everything. To the earth, He has created light, air, soil and water. To us, He has provided the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son so that we might be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19). Numbers 14:21 But *as truly as I live*, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.

This week we are going to talk about what God has provided for His Life to grow in our hearts. We said that it was the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. I'm going to read to you Jesus' words about His dying.

John 12: 23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

27 ¶ Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

28 Father, glorify thy name...

Jesus said, "It is time for me to be glorified." For Jesus to "be glorified" He was to fall into the ground and die (the cross) so that He would not be alone- the only Son of God, but that in dying, He would "bring forth much fruit." That "much fruit" is an increase of the One, "bringing many sons to glory (Heb 2:10)." I want us to try to understand that word glory. For Jesus to come to the purpose of being on the earth, He had to die. Think about a plant. If you plant a seed, when do you feel like the plant has come to its purpose? You might think that when it flowers- and we all like the look of flowers. But purpose isn't found in flowers. Flowers are for **seed**. Plants come to their purpose when they have come to be an increase of the seed they began with. Plant a corn seed, and we are not happy with tall stalks, only when we have an ear of corn. Plant tomato seeds, but don't pull the little yellow flowers off and be happy with little flowers. No, wait for the fruit, with the seed inside. This is glory. The seed has come to purpose.

Was Jesus excited about dying on the cross? "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name..." That sounds like Jesus is saying, "My soul doesn't like this- but this is my purpose. Father, increase." You see, God's increase is going to mean a decrease of self. We may sometimes feel God moving in our hearts, bringing His Life to

work death to that which is not Him, and we may feel like, “I don’t like this...” But God’s nature is one of increase. Like a seed in the ground can’t help grow toward increase, God’s Life in us is toward increase. We can say, like Jesus, “My soul doesn’t like this- but this is purpose.” For us, purpose is not dying the death of the cross- only Jesus could do this. Our purpose is His Life living in this vessel, filling this vessel that was always meant to be filled with Him. And that means that He is conquering, bringing to an end, that which is not Him.

Let me read from the Old Testament, and I want you to notice what happens when God’s glory fills His house.

Exodus 40:34, 35 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

2Chronicles 7:1, 2 Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD’S house.

Revelation 15:8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

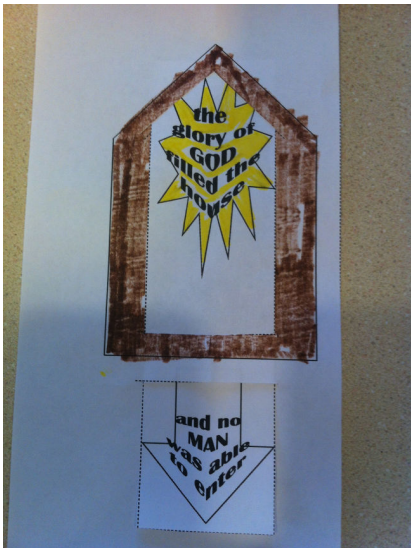
When the glory of God fills His house, His vessel, there is no room for man. In the heart of those who desire Him, His increase will work a decrease of that which is not of Him. God tells us that this is His way- NOT so that we will try to “make more room in our hearts for Him”, or try to get out of the way so He can fill us. No, this is HIS work. If you had a splinter and I was going to take it out, I might talk to you and explain what I was doing so that you could cooperate with me. I would tell you that it’s going to hurt for a little bit, but hold still, and as soon as I get the splinter out, it won’t hurt anymore. Knowing what I plan to do may help you to understand the pain and to be patient and trust that it’s all for you benefit. If you allowed me to remove the splinter, you could not say that YOU did it, only that you cooperated. But you could also decide NOT to cooperate, and wiggle and pull, and refuse to let me remove the splinter.

I’d like to mention one thing that I am NOT saying. I am not saying that hard circumstances that we go through is God working increase in us. I am talking about His work in our hearts. We are soil, dirt for the seed. Sometimes our hearts desire God and... God plus something else, like dirt full of rocks and thorns. As we follow on knowing the Lord, He works to remove these rocks, if we let Him. Soil cannot remove its own rocks and thorns. It is totally dependent on the farmer to do that. God’s nature is increase (Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end. Isaiah 9:7). Let us not pray, ‘Father, save me from this’, but ‘Father, be glorified.’

Follow-up Activity:

Print or copy one activity page for each student. Children can color the house and the “glory” starburst. Then have children cut on the dotted lines. (To cut slits in the house, folding the house in half is helpful.) Using the craft, show students how His increase becomes our decrease (displacement). John the Baptist said, “He must increase, I decrease.”

Picture of completed activity.



Cut on dotted lines. Insert strip below into the slits in the house.

