

Where Are You?

Recap: Series called "Ascend:

- Using the primary image of a mountain
- Bottom of the mountain is 'basecamp' and a lower-level of experiencing God
- Top of the mountain (the SUMMIT) is the maximum amount we can experience God in this life - it's much greater than most people recognize or realize

Last week:

- Introduced fact there is MORE of God we can experience in this life - don't settle for less
- God's love language is OBEDIENCE (can't ascend in friendship without obedience)
- We are able to experience God's "MORE" as we ascend the mountain and grow in intimacy and relationship with God
- **Jeremiah 29:11-12 New International Version (NIV)**
11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.
 - God says in **Jeremiah 29:13** "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Tension:

- The People of God are not seeking God with their whole heart
- The People of God are settling for less of God
- Self-awareness of that we are not where we 'think' we are on the mountain

Our focus today is the question, "Where Are You on the Mountain of God?":

- Are you in Egypt?
- Wondering in the wilderness?
- At 'basecamp'? Basecamp is not just accepting Jesus Christ is historically real, but that Jesus Christ is your Savior and Lord.
- Partially ascended?
- Halfway?
- At the top [Summit]?
- How do we know?
- Important because "Where you are determines the next step to take." Or "can't get to where you want to be if don't know where you are".

Exodus 19:1-6 shows the progression of the Israelites on their journey:

Exodus 19:1-6 New International Version (NIV)

19 On the first day of the third month after the Israelites left Egypt

- No longer in Egypt
- Out of slavery
- Crossed over the Red Sea
- On their way to the Land that had been promised to their forefather, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
- Our promised land= closest relationship we can experience with Jesus, not a physical destination

—on that very day—they came to the Desert of Sinai.

- More progress - out of Egypt and entering the Desert of Sinai - about a roughly 150 mile journey;



- Not a straight line, our path to Jesus is not a straight line, shortest distance between two points.

2 After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain.

- Camped
- Stuck- get unstuck and ascend

3 Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what

you are to tell the people of Israel: **4** 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. **5** Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, **6** you[a] will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

- Words of Intimacy:
 - I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself
 - Out of all nations, you will be my treasured possession
 - You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation
 - The desire that God had to be close to God's chosen people hasn't changed! Through Jesus, God has chosen you. God's desire to be close to you as He had desire to be close to the Israelites
 - The story of the Bible is a story of relationship

Like able to chart progress of Israelites on a map, can we chart (so to speak) where we are on a map of the Mountain of God?

Have goals for a lot of things in life - have goal for growing in faith and knowledge? Able to look at status and progress in faith like plotting journey on a map? Journey not remotely close to linear but going to imagine it that way for simplicity sake. So if your closeness with God was Mt. Everest, where would you be?

Where are you on the mountain of God? To get to where you want to be, you have to first know where you are (like 'my location' on google maps)

Everest:

Summit (top); Christian perfection; entire sanctification

Camp IV?

Camp III?

Camp II?

Basecamp [camp I]

Everest base Camp

At Everest Base Camp, climbers will often spend 4 - 8 weeks, acclimatizing to the altitude. During that time, the "Icefall Doctors" will set up ropes and ladders in the notoriously unstable Khumbu Icefall. Seracs, crevasses and shifting blocks of ice make the icefall one of the most dangerous sections of the route. Many climbers and Sherpas have been killed in this section. To reduce the risk, climbers will usually begin their ascent well before sunrise when the freezing temperatures glue ice blocks in place. **Above the icefall is Camp I at 6,065 m (19,900 ft) Camp 1 is mostly a temporary camp with most climbers just spending one night at this camp.**

Camp II

Base Camp II, Advanced Base Camp (ABC) is established at 6,400 m (21,300 ft). The Western Cwm is a relatively flat, gently rising glacial valley, marked by huge lateral crevasses in the centre which prevent direct access to the upper reaches of the Cwm.

Camp III

From ABC, climbers ascend the Lhotse face on set ropes up to Camp III, situated on small ledges at approximately 7,200 m to 7,400 m. From there, it is another 500 metres to Camp IV on the South Col at 7,920 m (26,000 ft). From Camp III to Camp IV, mountaineers are faced with two additional obstacles: The "Geneva Spur" and The "Yellow Band". The Geneva Spur is an anvil shaped rib of black rock named by a 1952 Swiss expedition. Fixed ropes help climbers in scrambling over this snow covered rock band. The Yellow Band is a section of sedimentary sandstone. The route from the base of the Lhotse face to the Summit is almost always completely fixed with static line.

Camp IV

From Camp IV, mountaineers will start their summit push from 20:00 to 02:00 with the hope of reaching the summit (still another 1,000 m above) within 10 to 12 hours. Climbers will first reach "The Balcony" at 8,400 m (27,700 ft), a small platform where they can rest and gaze at peaks to the south and east in the early dawn light. Continuing up the ridge, climbers are then faced with a series of impressive rock steps which usually forces them to the east into waist deep snow. At 8,750 m (28,700 ft), a small table-sized area of ice and snow marks the South Summit (Peak).

Tenzing and Hillary were the first mountaineers to rise to this step and they did it with early ice climbing equipment and without fixed ropes. Now, climbers will ascend this step using fixed ropes previously set up by Sherpas. Once above the step, it is a comparatively easy climb to the top on fairly angled snow slopes - though the exposure on the ridge is extreme especially while traversing very large cornices of snow. **After the Hillary Step climbers also must traverse a very loose and rocky section that has a very large entanglement of fixed ropes that can be troublesome in bad weather. Climbers will typically spend less than a half-hour on "top of the world"**

[summit] as they realize the need to descend to Camp IV before darkness sets in, afternoon weather becomes a serious problem, or supplemental oxygen tanks run out.

Mountain climbers could save time and energy if they reached the summit in a helicopter, but their ultimate purpose is conquest, not efficiency. Sure, they want to reach a goal, but they desire to do it by testing and deepening their character, discipline, and resolve.

God doesn't make us fully Christlike the moment we're born again. He conforms us to the image of Christ gradually: "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

John 3 describes 'basecamp' as being 'born again'. And Nicodemus exemplifies how we can think we are one place on our journey while in reality we are somewhere else entirely (so how do we know -Holy Spirit affirmation to our Spirit that we are a child of God?)

John 3:1-8 New International Version (NIV)

3 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."

3 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.[a]"

4 "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

5 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit[b] gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You[c] must be born again.' 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases.

You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”[d]

- Has become a somewhat strange and awkward spiritual description

Born Again means: George Melton: Born again is a phrase used by many Protestant Christians to describe the phenomenon of gaining faith in Jesus Christ. It is an experience when everything they've been taught as Christians becomes real, and they develop a direct and personal relationship with God. Spirit of God affirms in human spirit that he or she is a child of God - like John Wesley 'heart strangely warmed' and he knew Christ died for ME (quote)

Born again:

- Spiritual birth
 - Like baby goes from darkness to light, from 'existing' to Living; eyes open end to a reality that you didn't know was real before - in this case a spiritual reality
 - Gods love becomes real
 - Easily swayed by the wind/Spirit, like a balloon
 - Results in change - like a baby, can't go back to where you were before

Basecamp is the beginning of journey, bottom of the mountain like Israelites camped at Bottom of Mt. Sinai. Basecamp is true conversion. Being at Basecamp is like waking up. Bible scholar N.T. Wright uses the analogy of waking up in the morning for how some people come to Christ through a dramatic, instant conversion and others come to Christ through a gradual conversion

Waking up offers one of the most basic pictures of what can happen when God takes a hand in someone's life. There are classic alarm-clock stories, Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, blinded by a sudden light, stunned and speechless, discovered that the God he had worshipped had revealed himself in the crucified and risen Jesus of Nazareth. John Wesley found his heart becoming strangely warm and he never looked back. They and a few others are the famous ones, but there are millions more.

And there are many stories, though they don't hit the headlines in the same way, of the half-awake and half-asleep variety. Some people take months, years, maybe even decades, during which they aren't sure whether they're on the outside of Christian faith looking in, or on the inside looking around to see if it's real.

As with ordinary waking up, there are many people who are somewhere in between. But the point is that there's such a thing as being asleep, and there's such a thing as being awake. And it's important to tell the difference, and to be sure you're awake by the time you have to be up and ready for action, whatever that action may be.

N.T Wright, Simply Christian

People like Nicodemus (Pharisees) were not where they thought they were - they would probably say that they were at the summit; Jesus would say, you haven't even made it to basecamp.

Guidance for Life's Adventure:

- Sure you are at Basecamp?
- Knowing where you are so that you can get to where you want to be
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- Going to church does not make you born again or get you to basecamp
- Believing that Jesus existed historically does not make you born again or get you to basecamp
 - Even the demons believed and knew Jesus existed
- Matthew 7:21-23 Some will say Lord, Lord, but Jesus will say, I don't know you