

Reaching Unimaginable Destinations



Gary Wilkerson January 20, 2020

God Has One in Mind for You

The Bible we read is a book of hope. The hope it gives us is not moderate, average or normal. It doesn't inspire us toward the status quo, to merely survive and get by. The hope of God's Word is expressed in powerful promises that lead to unimaginable results from God's own hand. That hope leads us to destinations far beyond our wildest expectations.

As I study the amazing hope promised in the Bible, God's heart for his people becomes clear. The Bible promises a hope of salvation, of healing from suffering, of deliverance through our trials. It promises a hope of overcoming opposition, conquering sin, defeating insurmountable foes. It promises a hope that love will conquer, peace will reign, joy will overflow and the desires of our heart will be fulfilled.

The Bible is full of people who saw all these hopes come to pass.

The hope of Israel's freedom drove Moses to demand, "Let my people go!" The hope of Israel's future drove Joshua to shout on the cusp of the Promised Land, "Let us possess what God has put before us!" The hope of a house built for God drove David to dream of the Temple in Jerusalem. Years later, the same hope drove Ezra to rebuild the Temple after the city was reduced to rubble.

Not everyone will share the hope and dreams that God puts in us. When Ezra called for the Temple to be rebuilt, the people objected, "It isn't time yet. We haven't even rebuilt the city walls," God told them, "Don't say, 'It isn't time.' The destination I have for you may seem unimaginable, but you will see it fulfilled in my power."

Why does God fill us with hope to see dreams fulfilled? It's because he wants a people who'll say, "There is more to possess. There is more godly authority for us to take hold of, more healing to bring to the broken, more hopeless people to be saved, more shattered families to be restored, more impoverished people to be lifted from despair, more prejudiced hearts to know reconciliation."

In short, he fills us with hope and a driving faith to see his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

God's people should never reduce his greatness to mere moderation.

The world has great *imaginable* destinations. John F. Kennedy imagined putting someone on the moon by the end of the 1960s. Martin Luther King, Jr. imagined children of different races holding hands and growing up at peace. How much more should we expect Jesus to lead us to *unimaginable* destinations?

I have to ask: How did our knowledge of God's wild-hearted greatness lead us to measured lives of moderation? How did the Bible become reduced to a mere rule book, a moral guideline, a spiritual "to do" list? When did God's fiery words get watered down into self-focused religious obligations?

It happens whenever a Christian “settles,” saying, “I don’t want to ask Jesus for too much. I just want to stay secure.”

The prophet Isaiah describes how much more there is for those who love the Lord. In chapter 58, the prophet says godly people dream great things, not just for themselves but for the needy. He speaks of godly people standing up for the lost and serving the outcast:

“You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance, bowing your heads like reeds bending in the wind. You dress in burlap and cover yourselves with ashes. Is this what you call fasting? Do you really think this will please the Lord?

“No, this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people. Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help.

“Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind. Then when you call, the Lord will answer. ‘Yes, I am here,’ he will quickly reply” (*Isaiah 58:5-9, NLT*).

What a beautiful vision of God’s glory manifesting through his people, and what a powerful corrective to our concept of how to serve him. God is calling forth a flame-breathing, faith-inducing, demon-defeating, hope-filling, evil-conquering, love-spreading people. The destinations he lays out for us may be unimaginable to the world, but they cannot be to those who take on his name.

Are you living the “sweet life” promised in God’s Word?

“A desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul” (*Proverbs 13:19, ESV*). “May he grant you your heart’s desire and fulfill all your plans!” (*Psalms 20:4*). Many of us don’t live the sweet life evoked in these verses. Do you wake up eager to see God fulfill the great plans he has for you?

You may say, “I don’t have plans. I just follow God’s leading.” The Psalmist here suggests you *should* have plans because God wants to fulfill them. It’s actually a sign of loving passion to have plans. When Valentine’s Day approaches, we don’t sit back hoping a dinner will mysteriously prepare itself or that flowers will suddenly appear. We make plans because we have a passionate desire for our beloved.

There is the basic problem for a lot of Christians: They’re missing desire. They think things like passion and dreams are flesh-centered, not God-centered. What they don’t realize is there are consequences to not having a passionate vision. “Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint” (*Proverbs 29:18*).

What a consequence! Those who lack a passionate vision end up letting all restraints go. If you’re purposeless with no direction for your life, you have no need of discipline. You don’t work toward anything; your energy isn’t spent toward a dream. In that case, what’s the point of anything?

All those buff people you see at the gym didn’t just stumble into their physiques. They don’t spend their days eating buttercream cupcakes. They have faith that every mile they pedal on the stationary bike is leading to a powerful, healthy body that will serve them well over their lifetime.

The consequences I’m speaking of now are positive.

Your passionate vision to see God’s glory in your life isn’t just some ideal. It leads to very real results, to things of substance. “Faith shows the *reality* of what we hope for; it is the *evidence* of things we cannot see” (*Hebrews 11:1, NLT, my emphasis*).

A living faith brings life-giving results. “Thus says the Lord God: This also I will let the house of Israel ask me to do for them: to increase their people like a flock” (*Ezekiel 36:37, ESV*). As our faith increases, so do the results that God brings.

Do you still believe that your dream of God's greatness in your life is self-centered? If so, how can you expect to have the sweet life he promised?

Jesus doesn't tell us not to aspire to greatness. In fact, he shows us how to achieve it. "He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, 'Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else'" (*Mark 9:35, NLT*). "Want greatness?" he asks. "Serve others."

When your dream, your ambition, your goal is fulfilled, will it be a blessing to many?

In my travels around the world encouraging pastors, I've met a lot of godly men and women who know what true greatness is. I know an African man who felt led by God to start a church in Ukraine. On paper, his dream didn't have a lot going for it. He didn't know anyone in Ukraine. If he wanted to start a culturally sensitive church for Africans, he wasn't going to find many in a former Soviet satellite country. He had a dream, though, and he gave up everything to pursue it.

He gained a hearing with a group of Ukrainian pastors and told them his vision: He wanted to start a church for people who didn't know Jesus. Those godly pastors didn't think he was crazy; they were humbled by his dream. They decided to support him.

Five years after this man opened a church in Kiev, 5,000 people call it home. Almost every one of those people came to Christ at the altar of that church. Some were delivered from alcohol addictions. The homeless got on their feet again. Street orphans were taken in and cared for. People abused or neglected by the government found hope and love in the Savior who cares about their humblest needs and their dreams for a future.

This African pastor was not the right man; he was not in the right place, and he had no qualifications to do the things he imagined. His destination was unimaginable to most people, but his faith brought about the substance of that dream. Now Jesus is receiving glory on streets where despair ruled just a few years before.

Are you running from godly dreams and desires that God has put in you?

Do you long to see his glory in your life? Ask Jesus to lead you step-by-step into the destination he has for you. It will be unimaginable, and the world will never be the same.

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