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Come, There is Much to be Done

Toward the end of *THE LAST BATTLE*, the final book in C.S. Lewis' *NARNIA* series, there is a line that always sends shivers of joy down my spine. This is the only happy ending I've ever seen where everybody dies at the end. But all find themselves resurrected in "Aslan's Country," a renewed cosmos that includes Narnia, England, and all the other marvelous worlds He has made. And as the characters marvel at all this, Aslan says: "Come, there is much to be done."

Why does my heart quicken, why does my mouth involuntarily smile when I read that line? Perhaps because it's so different from so many popular visions of a "heaven" in which there is precisely nothing to be done. Our God is an awesome God, but our destiny with Him is greater than awe.

While I wouldn't mind an eternity of sitting still with the Trinity, it seems they have something else in mind: "Come, there is much to be done." Maybe we can add a new line to the song: "Our God is an active God." God is love—the Father, Son and Spirit acting towards one another in love. And the gospel is that we've been included in that infinite dynamic alive-ness. All human action lives, moves and has its being in the action-packed life of the Triune God.

Compare your reactions to these gospel presentations:

1. If you make a decision for Christ right now, you will go to heaven when you die. You don't have to do anything, because you'll be saved by grace, not by works. And whatever heaven is, it will be more of the same—spending forever doing nothing but being loved by God.
2. Father, Son and Spirit are saving the world. You have an irreplaceable role to play. You have already begun playing it, whether you know it or not. God's life of unbounded creativity is making the cosmos into what it was always meant to be—beautiful and good. And you and I have been invited to share in that work, more and more and more deeply, forever.

Number 2 stirs my heart in a way Number 1 does not. Now don't get me wrong... I would love to sit still forever with God. Just like the Narnia characters would have been content to just sit in the grass and marvel at their glorious surroundings. And when I read the Bible, I do see repose and rest in our life with God, both now and forever. But I see more than just that. I see a God who says things like "Let us do this," and "Let us do that." "Come, there is much to be done."

Our life with God is a lot like the life of Bilbo the Hobbit. Yes, we have the homey pleasures of Hobbiton—leisurely conversations shared over beer and pipeweed, and long nights in our comfy hobbit-holes. But, there are also adventures to be had, treasures to seek, and dragons to slay.

Our hearts respond to that, because deep down we know that adventure—creativity, risk, problem-solving, sweat, aching muscles, *WORK*—is essential to the joy of being human. And if we want our gospel message to gain currency in a world that is pathologically bored, perhaps we could try casting a vision of God's missional creativity expressing itself human flesh. As I try to do this, various themes pop up:

You are already sharing in God's work.

When you love your daughter and take care of her, you are feeling God's feelings for your daughter, and you are caring for her with God's care. When you go to work and [manufacture clothespins, fix cars, sell Salad-Shooters, crunch numbers, whatever], you are participating in God's ongoing work to make the world beautiful and good. When you find joy in doing what you love to do, you are tasting the life of God. God loves doing stuff with you, and forever invites you to do even more.

2. Non-Christian are already sharing in God's work.

Why do we see such joy when we look into the eyes of Gandhi, or the Dalai Lama? Because they are participating in the life and work of the Triune God. They are doing good, and they are loving it. I think there are things they misunderstand about God, but they know his goodness when they see it. This is why I, as a Christian, am happy to work arm-in-arm with Buddhists, Muslims and Atheists in projects that aim to make the world a better place.

My church exists to help people enter more deeply into God's work.

Whether you believe what we believe or not, we'd love for you to take part in our efforts to serve our community. We serve food at the soup kitchen, we run an after-school program downtown, we give out free Cokes at the 4th of July parade, we do all kinds of neat things. Remember last month when the mosque downtown got vandalized? We partnered with the local synagogue to help clean it up and repair it. Not only was it great fun, I made some really interesting new Muslim friends. If you want to make the world a more just and beautiful place, my church wants to help provide ways for you to do that.

As you share in God's work, you will know him more and more.

Working shoulder-to-shoulder with God is a wonderful way to get to know him. So all I'm suggesting is that, as you do all the wonderful things that you're already doing, imagine that what you're doing is part of something bigger than the universe. That you're being part of something cosmic, world-changing, and personal. THAT is a taste of the kind of God I've been talking about.

~ John Stonecypher