

(6) Changing the Way You Think “Looking for a Better Country”

I shared with You Last Week That God Revealed to Me Some Deep Things about Myself...
I told my brother I was embarking on my Southern Odyssey

- In Homer’s Epic *The Odyssey*, Odysseus goes through a 10-year struggle trying to get back home after the Trojan War...he battles mystical creatures, monsters, and the wrath and will of the gods...
- There’s something about “home”
 - For many of us, it’s this “place” we try to get back to...
 - My youth was split between Kentucky and Georgia.
 - I visited all the places I had lived...my elementary, middle, and high schools
 - Convenient stores after school, my friends’ houses...
 - Burkes Bakery, the Main Street Pool Hall, the Greenleaf Bowling Alley
 - My grandparents, and my grandparents homesteads...their graves...
 - And I would be lying to say that there was not or is not in me still a deep “longing...”
 - Something I’m looking for...
 - Something I’ve come to grips with recently, that I won’t find again...

Hebrews 11:8-9

It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. ⁹ And **even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith—for he was like a foreigner, living in tents. And so did Isaac and Jacob, who inherited the same promise.**

- **The Irony is that he never found it...that is in his lifetime...**
- Abraham had come from the city of Ur
 - Modern city in that it had running water, libraries, neighborhoods of houses...
 - But he never built a house in the “promised land”
 - Lived in tents, like a nomad...
 - It was only in Genesis 23 that he bought a place to bury Sarah
 - He had to buy land in a place God had promised to him as a gift...

Acts 7:2-6

And Stephen said, “Listen to me, brothers and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, ³ and He said to him, ‘Go from your country and your relatives, and come to the land which I will show you.’ ⁴ Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. And from there, after his father died, *God* had him move to this country in which you are now living. ⁵ **But He gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot of ground...But God spoke to this effect, that his descendants would be strangers in a land that was not theirs...**

- Perhaps a better way of saying it is that Abraham never “realized the promise”

Hebrews 11:10, 13

For he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. All these died in faith, **without receiving the promises**, but having seen and welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that **they were strangers and exiles on the earth.**

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world... I must keep alive in myself the desire for my true country, which I shall not find till after death; I must never let it get snowed under or turned aside; I must make it the main object of life to press on to that country and to help others to do the same."

-- C. S. Lewis

Hebrews 11:14-16

¹⁴ For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. ¹⁵ And indeed if they had been thinking of that *country* which they left, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ **But as it is, they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.**

We are Nomads, Pilgrims, Foreigners, Strangers – “Temporary Residents”

1 Peter 2:11; 1:13-17

I urge *you* as **foreigners and strangers** to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul... So **prepare your minds for action** and exercise self-control. **Put all your hope in the gracious salvation** that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world... But now **you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy.** ¹⁶ **For the Scriptures say, “You must be holy because I am holy,” ...you must live in reverent fear of him during your time here as “temporary residents.”**

Every Day of Your Brief Life Here is Directed by the Lord

James 4:13-16

Look here, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit.” ¹⁴ How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it’s here a little while, then it’s gone. ¹⁵ **What you ought to say is, “If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that.”** ¹⁶ **Otherwise you are boasting about your own pretentious plans, and all such boasting is evil.**

Quit Trying to Make This “Home”

Matthew 6:19-21

“Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

- We struggle with the “tension”
- But I am coming to see that there is not tension...

“I must keep alive in myself the desire for my true country...I must make it the main object of my life to press on to that country and to help others to do the same..”