



STUDY GUIDE

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[set up]

When you were a child, what did you dream of becoming when you grew up? Why did you have this dream for your life?

Did you achieve that childhood dream? Why or why not? Are you glad you did or didn't do what you dreamed about as a child?

[digging deeper]

This Sunday we looked at Acts 6-7 and Stephen's speech before the Sanhedrin about the "Jewish Dream." The dream for every Jewish boy and girl was about a Place, a Person, and God's Presence. Their dream was to live in the Promised Land under a Ruler and Redeemer with the presence of God in the temple.

As Americans, we too have dreams for our lives, and these dreams include arriving at a certain Place in our lives (out of college, into my career, retired, married, etc.) where we will finally find rest and peace. We look to a Person (spouse, child, friend) to deliver us from our discontentment. We want God's Presence in our lives, and we try to achieve this through doing more good things than bad things. But, we find that this pursuit never truly satisfies.

Pastor Josh asked us this question: Place (stage of life), Person, or Presence (morality), what is most likely to draw your eyes off Jesus?

The gospel tells us that Jesus is our Promised Land, our Redeemer and Deliverer, and the presence of God. When we go to Jesus in repentance, he exchanges our dreams for our lives with His vision for our lives. His vision is always greater. The work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to remind us that the way of Jesus always brings greater joy and peace.

Has God ever told you to do something but you did not do it because it would be disruptive to your life and your personal dreams?

Why is it hard to surrender our dreams for our lives for Jesus' vision for our lives?

Have you ever been obedient to God, though the obedience was very disruptive to your life? Were you glad that you were obedient?

In the last three weeks, have you experienced the empowering of the Holy Spirit in a specific way?

The result of Stephen's obedience to Jesus was a brutal and painful death by stoning. But what was the result? Read Acts 8:1. Because of Stephen's obedience and death, the disciples went to Judea and Samaria to share the gospel, thus fulfilling part of the Great Commission found in Acts 1:8.

[living it out]

Is there something you need to do tangibly in your life to make sure your eyes are on Jesus and that you grab hold of Jesus' vision for your life? Is there anything that needs to change about your current life stage, your relationships with others, or your personal, spiritual exercises?

Easter is this Sunday. Is there anyone you have intended to invite to hear the gospel but have yet to do so? What is keeping you from inviting that person to hear the Gospel this Easter?

Extra Study:

Read Daniel 7:13-14, Matthew 26:63-66, and Acts 7:55-58. Why did the people kill Stephen and Jesus for referring to Jesus as the "Son of Man"? Why was that so controversial?