

## Monday, March 16, 2009

Years ago the launch of NASA spacecraft was a national event. Remember when they used to interrupt school so you could watch a launch on TV? Did you find yourself joining "launch control" in the countdown? "10...9...8...7...6...5...4...3...2...1...ignition...blastoff!"

Thousands of people coordinated a perfect process timed to the second. Sometimes things didn't go as planned and NASA put a hold on the countdown, remember?

Have you considered the plan of Jesus' coming to earth, His birth, His life, His atonement death, His redemption resurrection, His ascension and His victorious return from this earth to His Sovereign reign in heaven? Galatians 4:4 says "*when the time had fully come, God sent His son...to redeem...*". God was working on a heavenly countdown, and when He felt events on earth had converged to a precise moment, "*God so loved the world that He sent His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*" (John 3:16).

Jesus' purpose in coming, of course, was to explain God's truth and accomplish God's Redemption plan for our human race. Sadly, then as now, most people took little notice of Jesus! The question of His true identity raged with increasing intensity, right up to our day. Notice in John 10:22-42, and again in 11:45-57, Jesus had to "escape" to the desert for safety. Similar to a NASA countdown, Jesus' death would have its fullest significance in the timing of Jewish Passover, remember John had identified Jesus as "*the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.*" (John 1:29) What do you suppose Jesus did in the desert those days before He began His final journey to Jerusalem? How did He prepare for the events of what we call Holy Week (triumphal Palm Sunday, week of rejection, upper room, trials and beatings, crucifixion, resurrection)? Read again Isaiah 53:1-7, and link it with Romans 4:25-5:21 worship Him today, in deep gratitude!

## Tuesday, March 17, 2009

Our theme for Easter 2009 is "His Wounds...Our Hope", built on the powerful truth found in Isaiah 53:5,6 written about 700 years before Jesus came to earth! It's a clear prophecy of God, giving us some explanation as to the mystery of what is accomplished through Jesus' horrible and sacrificial death on the cross. "*by His wounds we are healed*" is a profound statement!

Dr Luke, the author of the Gospel of Luke (and also the book of Acts) was a physician and therefore fascinated by the miracles of Jesus, especially those which had some "medical" implications. Luke 17:11-19 is one of those, apparently a few short weeks before Jesus came to Jerusalem for that final Passover week.

"Leprosy" was a word often used in Jesus' day for a variety of contagious illnesses which had visible skin distortion symptoms. Isolation was the primary treatment. These people lived away from all others, often carrying a bell which they rang (like a cow bell) to warn anyone who might come near. They were similar to living dead...no work, no family contact, no hope. They were "untouchables".

Ten of these "lepers" had a remarkable encounter with Jesus and were healed! Leviticus 13 & 14 explain why Jesus told them to go see a priest. He would be the one to validate their healed skin and declare them "clean" and able to return into society. (We can assume they were Jewish and understood Jesus' instruction) Do you notice the desperation of their cry...and their hopeful obedience?

The Samaritan leper would have felt least worthy of all, since Samaritans were viewed as "half-breeds" by Jews. Do you sense pain in Jesus' question as to why 9 other lepers did not return to express thanks? How do you begin and end each day? This healed leper's posture of prostrate thanksgiving is a wonderful example! Do you have a quiet "tent of meeting" (Exodus 33:7-11) where you meet privately with Jesus before rushing out into your world?

## Wednesday, March 18, 2009

Mark 5 is one of the most powerful chapters in the Bible, as Jesus deals with three different "untouchable" people...a demon possessed man, a woman suffering from 12 years of bleeding, and a dead girl! If you have the time, I urge a slow reading of the entire chapter. It appears to be one long day in the life of Jesus, and I invite you to walk alongside Him, with His disciples, watching and listening. What would be your written account if you had spent that day with Him? What seems to leap out at you in this remarkable day?

Note carefully the symptoms of the demon possessed man... living among the tombs, he was isolated from society. One evidence of demonic influence is a desire for isolation, another is fascination with death and another is self destructive behavior. God invites us into His family. Jesus loved being with people, and people touched by God have a love for life! What a contrast. What other symptoms do you see of demonic influence in this man? Note please the demons' respect for and fear of Jesus! Also note the complete deliverance Jesus accomplished in this man. What do you conclude?

Do you find it interesting that, even though surrounded by a pressing crowd, Jesus felt the touch of one woman as "power had gone out from Him"? What is that? We can assume many people touched Him. What made her touch unique? Note vs. 28-30. May I call it desperate faith? Do you have it? Do you see it in Jairus (vs. 21-24)? Please notice Jesus' respect for the privacy of the woman. His declaration of her healing affirms her courageous faith while not commenting on her problem. You can trust God to meet your need without shaming you!

Finally, notice that even though Jesus' delay resulted in the death of Jairus' daughter, it provided a greater miracle opportunity, and Jairus' faith did not waiver! Could it be today, you need Jesus to "ignore" what others say, focus on you and your need, and lead you to victory in your untouchable situation? How's your faith? Do you trust Jesus?

**Thursday, March 19, 2009**

Men of Calvary, I URGE you to not miss our annual men's conference which begins tomorrow evening. FEAR is reality for all of us, and we're going to discover some of God's great answers for dealing with it! Call our office today if you don't have a ticket yet (262-245-6294). I think you'll regret it if you miss this weekend...and bring a friend. It will change his life too!

Luke 18:9-14 is a brief glimpse into one of our biggest problems which prevent us from experiencing all God hopes to do in our lives. Check it out! Two men, both at the Temple for prayer...but oh what a difference in their hearts! Do you see it?

Sometimes that which stands as a barrier between us and HOPE is not a terrible disease (Tuesday of this week), nor demon possession or a long illness or even death (yesterday). Sometimes it's our own private issue! Pride is a big one, but not the only one. What about lust, or anger, or jealousy, or deceit, or guilt, or shame...what is it for you? Consider Ephesians 4:17-5:8. Could your issue be "futile thinking" or "hardness of heart" or "given themselves over to sensuality" or...?

Do you see the conviction of Luke 18:9? Note the similarity between what the tax collector said (18:13) and the Samaritan (17:15,16). What do you see as the condition of their hearts? And what is God's response (18:14 & 17:17-19)?

Consider what Jesus does in the next few verses of Luke 18...(18:15-17). Do you ever find yourself frustrated by kids? Look closely, especially at the really young ones (infants, toddlers, preschoolers). Note their innocence, their trust in adults, their longing to be loved, their hunger to learn, their anxiety when left alone...can you make the application? Jesus said "anyone who will not receive the kingdom of heaven like a little child will never enter it." Do we sometimes make our spiritual journey much too complex?

**Friday, March 20, 2009**

This week we've been considering what it means to be "untouchable". I use that phrase to describe people in a place of hopelessness. Look today at Luke 18:18-25 and link it with Luke 12:13-34. Did you know the Bible talks more about money than many other topics? Consider 1 Timothy 6:6-10 as another perspective on these two Luke stories.

Have you noticed financial comfort often dulls our spiritual hunger? Do you find it easier to be generous and compassionate for those in great need, when your heart and mind are worshipful? Why is that?

Look closely and I think you'll find the spiritual battle rages more often in the world of your financial heart than in most any other aspect of your life. If we are not very, very careful, money owns us rather than we owning the money. How can it be some of the most joyful people on earth are those with little to nothing?

Have you discovered the freedom of viewing everything you have as not being yours, but being owned by God and entrusted to you as manager of His wealth? It's not your car, it's God's car on loan to you...care for it! It's not your house, God owns it and is entrusting it to you for a period of time as your residence. Take care of it. And when you finally stand before God, and He says "let's talk about how you took care of My car, My house, My golf clubs, My washing machine that I entrusted to you and asked you to take care of for me..."!

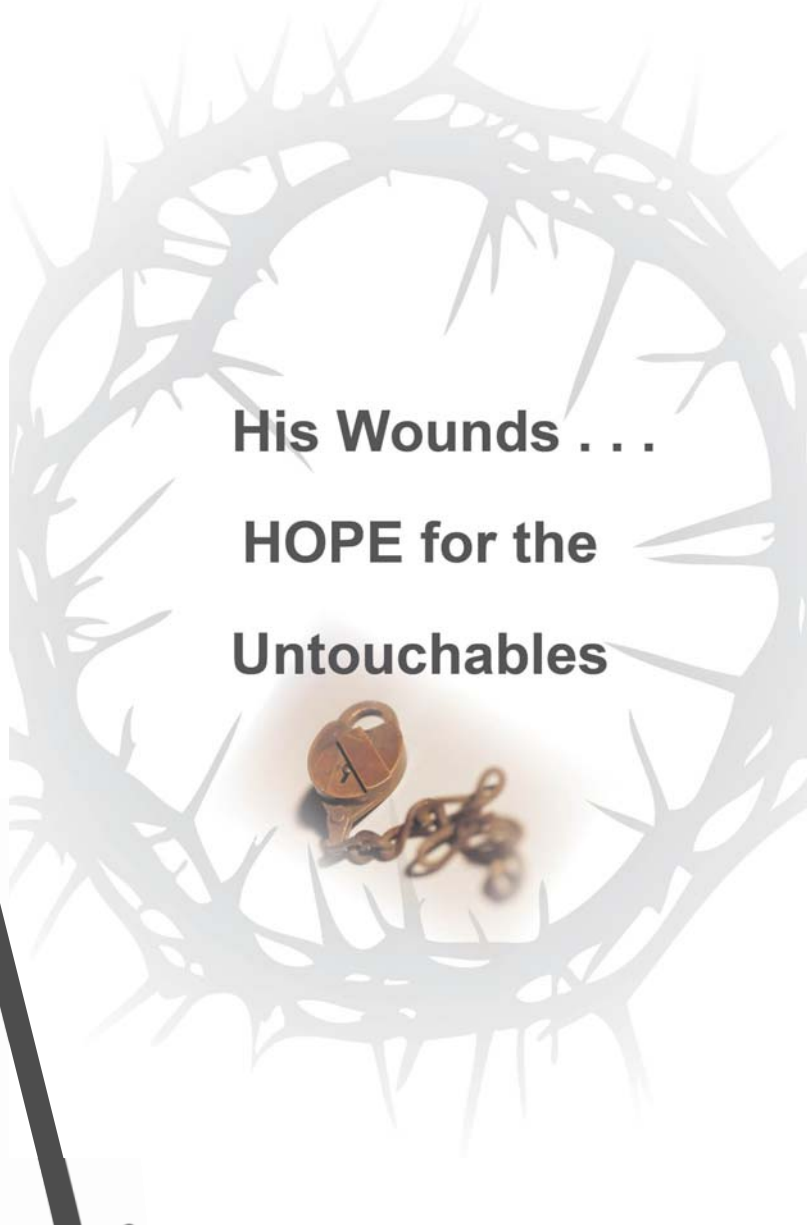
What if you looked at your check book, your savings account, the cash in your wallet, your investments and you saw "God's money" written all over it...would that change how you spent it? What if God had to co-sign every check you wrote? Would that change anything?

In His love for us God provides what He knows you and I need. We live as His ambassadors fully supplied so we can focus on our life mission to honor Him rather than on frantic accumulation of stuff. How are our priorities??



Pastor Doug Anderson

**March 16-20, 2009**



**His Wounds . . .**  
**HOPE for the**  
**Untouchables**



**A Disciplemaking Tool**  
**DIGGING**  
**DEEPER**



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