

## Monday, April 20, 2009

In all of human history, no event is more significant than the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If only a fable, then it is easily discarded and the life, ministry, teachings and even “miracles” of Jesus can be set aside as interesting but insignificant. If, however, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a factual event, confirmed by many. . .then it is the premiere event in history for:

- It confirms Jesus’ identity as God living on earth in a human body . . . “Immanuel, God with us” (Matt. 1:23)
- If He is God among us, then all His spoken words are direct communication from God to mankind and are therefore the most significant words ever spoken. (John 14:10)
- His death on the cross is far more than simply an execution . . .the implications of the “atonement”, sinless Jesus dying at the hands of sinful men, are mind boggling! (1 John 4:9,10; 2 Cor. 5:21)
- His return to heaven returns Him to His role of supremacy over all creation, and additionally supremacy over death, sin and Satan! (Col. 1:15-18; John 16:10,11,28; 17:1-5)

In the weeks following that Easter weekend, the risen Jesus confirmed His resurrection with physical, tangible appearances to His friends so they could tell the world as eye-witnesses. Paul confirms the essential importance of Jesus’ resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 12-26). John gives us glimpses into four of these appearances: To Mary in the Garden (John 20:10-18); to His disciples on that Easter evening (John 20:19-23); to Thomas and the disciples one week later (John 20:24-31); and to 7 disciples on the shoreline of Lake Galilee (John 21). You can add: Matt. 28:8-10 and 16-20; Luke 24:13-35; and Acts 1:4-11. Are you convinced?

Can you write your resurrection declaration?

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## Tuesday, April 21, 2009

I value thinkers. . .people who don’t take everything at face value, but ask deeper questions, seeking to identify and understand truth. I admit it. . .pessimists frustrate me, as do skeptics who refuse to grasp truth when it is evident.

I’m not sure I have a full grasp on Thomas “the twin” as yet, but I’m fascinated by him, what about you? While all the Gospel writers name him as one of the Twelve and you’ll note Matthew, Mark and Luke (the ‘synoptic’ Gospels) name him in the second group of four with Matthew, Philip and Bartholomew. Only John gives us more insight into Thomas.

John 11:16, Thomas seems flippant, but he speaks truth, for Jesus had fled Jerusalem not long before (John 10:39) and Lazarus’ home, Bethany, was only over the hill from Jerusalem. Surely those wanting to kill Jesus could find them there and finish their plan!

John 14:5, with Judas having just left the upper room, and Jesus finished washing their feet, is it any wonder there is confusion among the men as to the significance of what Jesus was doing and saying on this night before His death? Now Jesus was speaking of going to where the Father lives and preparing places for them. . .seems to me even the most astute student would need further explanation, and I celebrate Thomas’ courage in asking the questions! His question set up one of Jesus’ most significant statements!

John 20:24 is the story we’re looking at this week.

John 21 places Thomas in the fishing boat with 6 other disciples as they see a lone figure on the shore of Lake Galilee, and discover it is Jesus with breakfast for them! Thomas is eye witness to the reconciliation of Peter and Jesus.

While not named again in the Gospel accounts, historians trace Thomas’ travels all the way to India where many churches bear his name, and he is reported to have been martyred and buried in Chennai (Madras), India. His questions answered, Thomas became a passionate apostle!

## Wednesday, April 22, 2009

Easter Sunday we were challenged to consider Jesus’ words in Luke 24:38. *“Why are you troubled and why do doubts rise in your minds? LOOK at My hands and My feet. It is I Myself! TOUCH me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”* We left Easter Sunday with these words ringing in our ears: “when life gets complicated, where do you LOOK and what do you GRASP as you seek hope?”

Note Jesus’ invitation to Thomas (John 20: 27) which is in response to Thomas’ bold proclamation of demand for proof of the resurrection claim. Do you see the same “look, touch, be convinced” theme? Please note Jesus makes Thomas feel valued in his “skepticism” and invites his careful investigation. Watch that . . .God welcomes our honest questions, and delights in providing answers which are verifiable! Frequently archeologists are discovering “miracle debris” which validates accounts in the Bible which most have long discounted. I love it when that happens! What about you?

John 20:28, of course, is one of the most significant conclusive statements in history! Link Thomas’ statement with that of Peters’ in Matthew 16:16, and Martha’s statement at Lazarus’ tomb in John 11:27, and John the Baptizer’s statement in John 1:29. . .what do you see?

Now, add to that the angels’ announcements in Matthew 1 and Luke 2 about the newborn baby Jesus; and the voice from heaven at Jesus’ baptism (Matt. 3:17) or Jesus’ transfiguration (Matt. 17:5) . . . what do you conclude?

The true identity and nature of Jesus Christ is a central question which every human being must answer. In fact, may I suggest the single most important question in life for every person is this: WHO is Jesus Christ and what is your relationship with Him? Your eternal destiny hinges on your answer! Heaven and hell hang in the balance with that question. Thomas’ declaration re-defined his life and his life purpose. From that moment, Thomas lived true “followership” . . . following Jesus in a worship relationship!

Thursday, April 23, 2009

Yesterday I used a word I introduced to Calvary Church within the first few weeks I was here . . . “Followership”. I invite you to consider this as an essential element of “Calvary Culture” as we go forward together. Let’s unpack it . . .

“Follow”. We all understand “follow” as we watch children walking with their parents or adults they trust. We watch young athletes developing skills under the watchful eye of a good coach or apprentices under the watchful eye of a craftsman. The airplane captain following instructions of the air traffic controller, the builder carefully following the architect’s specs, the surgeon carefully making incisions . . . We understand the significance of careful following and the skill development which is a natural by product.

“Worship” is something we’re learning well at Calvary, do you agree? It’s not music, or drama or a choir singing anthems. It’s people giving adoration, acclaim to God through authentic ‘engagement’ with Him! As we praise Him, He responds by the power of His Holy Spirit healing our pain, lifting our hopes, inspiring our thinking. As we repent in worship, He forgives and cleanses us through the application of the atonement death of Jesus Christ. As we honor His holiness and sovereign supremacy, He awakens our sense of privilege to be His redeemed, chosen people, and we celebrate our trust of Him . . . our protecting, providing, guiding Sovereign King!

“Relationship” with God is our design, for God intended an authentic, fulfilling, love relationship with each human being! We understand this in the fulfillment of love relationships within our family.

Now put all three words together, and you have “Followership”. . . following Jesus Christ in a worshipping relationship! It results in our living a satisfied, fulfilled, purposeful, spiritually maturing life!! When you do that in community with others who are doing the same, then you have the essence of “ecclesia” . . . a ‘Church’ of God’s people!! Now, how does God want that to look in your life?

Friday, April 24, 2009

Have you every asked yourself if there is more about Jesus’ life that could have been written? John tells us YES! In John 20:30,31 he makes it clear the Holy Spirit led him to write only that which would be most helpful to the reader in understanding WHO Jesus Christ is . . . the Son of God. Are you convinced? You’ve noticed, I’m sure, that John’s Gospel is dramatically different from the other three Gospels, right?

What does John mean when he writes “. . . *and that by believing you may have life in His name*”? (John 20:31) Is it fair to say, THAT is the reason Jesus Christ came to this earth . . . lived, taught, died and rose again? Remember what Jesus said in John 10:10 . . . abundant life, and His offer of life in John 3:16 or John 5:24? Do you have it?

Now the issue of “His name”. . . consider these powerful Scriptures . . .

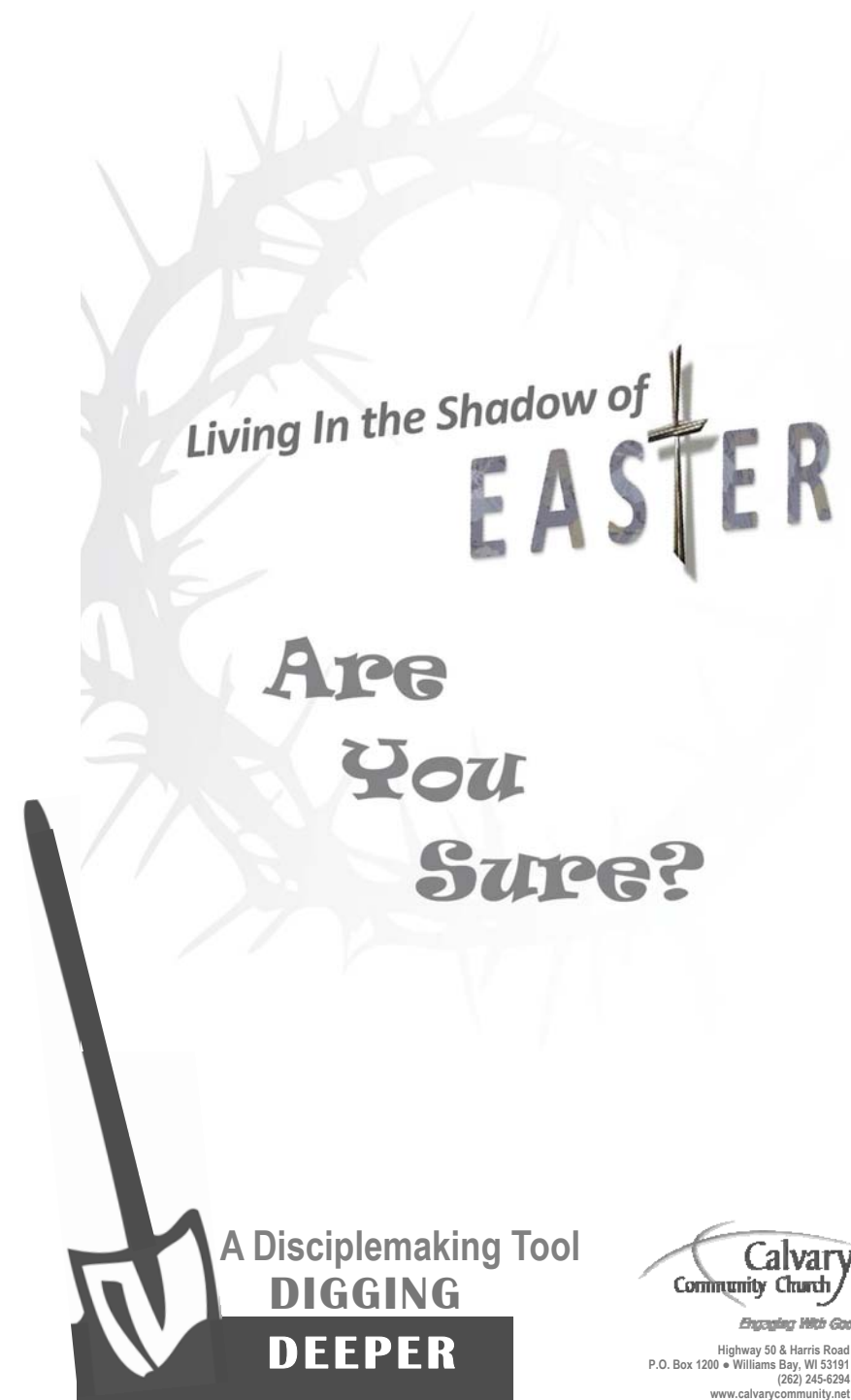
- Acts 4:12 “*there is no other name under heaven by which men may be saved*”. Look closely at the context of that statement . . . What do you see? Link it with John 14:6 and do you see the clarity that there is ONLY ONE WAY to an authentic, forgiven relationship with Holy God and it is through Jesus Christ?
- Phil. 2:9-11 “*Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*” Link it with Isaiah 45:22,23 . . . What do you see? Do you see nothing in all existence is above Jesus in importance or supremacy?

Thomas changed that day, from being a friend of Jesus to one living “followership”. As he took his personal experience to the world, empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:31) Thomas became a fearless proclaimer of “new life in Christ” and helped root the Gospel in the people of India!!



Pastor Doug Anderson

April 20 – April 24, 2009



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