

Monday, April 27, 2009

In the weeks following that first Easter, the Risen Jesus appeared multiple times to His friends. Luke tells us it was 40 days from Easter morning to the day Jesus ascended back into Heaven (Acts 1:1-11). Paul tells us Jesus appeared many times to hundreds of people (1 Corinthians 15:3-8).

Matthew was one of Jesus' disciples. His invitation from Jesus to "follow Me" occurred at his business office! He records it in Matthew 9:9-13, and Dr. Luke's account is Luke 5:27-31. Compare them. What do you see of interest?

Matthew's Gospel account has several striking uniquenesses. With a name "Levi" you can imagine his parents had high hopes that Matthew would follow in the line of the dedicated and sometimes decorated (famous) Rabbis. Young Jewish boys all began in Rabbinical school. Only the best survived . . . Saul later known as Paul was one of those (Galatians 1:13,14; Philippians 3:4-6; Acts 9:1-3). Those who "washed out" pursued skilled careers, sometimes those unable to find an "apprenticeship" to develop a respectable career, sought employment by Rome. They would be viewed as "traitors", of course, and the worst of the lot were "tax collectors" . . . Matthew was one of those! Likely he went by the name Matthew so as not to be continually reminded of his "failure" as a "Levi". Levi, you'll remember, was the son of Jacob from whose family line Moses and Aaron were born. The tribe of Levi . . . the "Levites" were the spiritual men of Israel, the ones privileged to care for the Tabernacle and all its sacred contents (Numbers 3,4,8). From the tribe of Levi, came the High Priest (descendants of Aaron).

Matthew wrote his Gospel to the Jewish audience, and boldly proclaims Jesus is "The Christ" (Messiah). He gives Joseph's perspective on Mary's pregnancy and the story of Herod's murderous attempt. Matthew gives us Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and the "end times" (chapters 5-7, 24, 25). Matthew's resurrection account is unique (chapter 28) and his Co-Mission hillside account is our focus this week.

Tuesday, April 28, 2009

While we do not know the exact chronology of all Jesus' appearances during the 40 days between His resurrection and His ascension, we presume the Galilee hillside encounter (Matthew 28:18-20) likely happened either between John 20 and 21, or after John 21.

The exact location is uncertain, although there are several hills around the Sea of Galilee which Jesus frequented with His disciples, and the one where He fed 5000 as He taught them (Matt. 14), has good potential, as it would have a wonderful "overlook" of the entire Galilee area. I would imagine Jesus spoke with His friends about some of the memorable experiences they shared around that lake.

How many could you name?

- His invitation to "Follow Me" extended to several of the disciples (Mark 1).
- His frequent visits to Capernaum (Mark 1)
- His walk on the waves (Matt. 14), or His fishing expeditions (Luke 5).
- His expulsion of a legion of demons from a man (Mark 5), and the pigs drowned in this lake.

When Jesus appeared to His friends on the hillside that day, Matthew tells us "they worshipped Him but some doubted." (Matt. 28:17) What do you suppose that means? Aren't you glad the Bible is honest? We presume they had all seen the risen Jesus at least two or three times by now, yet still some doubted! What about you? Over the last two weeks I've suggested you write your own "declaration" regarding what you really believe about Who Jesus is and especially about your explanation of the resurrection. Have you done so? If not, I urge you to try it now, in this space:

No statement you ever make will be more important!

Wednesday, April 29, 2009

Some say the President of the United States is the person with the greatest "authority/power" in the world. Matthew reports that Jesus said, "***ALL authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me***" (Matt. 28:18). What did He mean?

Colossians 1:15-20 contains several staggering statements about Jesus Christ. Dig deeply, and filter them through Col. 2:9. Do you see:

- Jesus Christ is God in all His fullness.
- Jesus Christ is Creator of all that exists, visible and invisible, in heaven and on earth.
- Jesus Christ pre-exists all things, and holds all things created together in perfect harmony.
- Jesus is "first-born from the dead", meaning the first to rise from the dead never to die again.
- Jesus has supremacy over all things at all times

While Jesus was here He performed many miracles, and they gave evidence of His authority/power. Think about them . . . do you see they proved His authority over life and death (healing illness, raising the dead to life) and all natural laws (calming storms, healing from a long distance away, multiplying a little lunch to feed thousands)?

Jesus proved His authority over the Satanic kingdom by casting out demons from people (Mark 1:23,34; 5:1-20; 9:14-32, etc.) and according to Colossians 2:15, Jesus defeated the demonic kingdom through His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. The final picture of Jesus reigning supreme and casting Satan into eternal punishment is very powerful (Revelation 20).

John tells us Jesus existed in the beginning (John 1:1-3) and is the origin of all. He also records Jesus' prayer (John 17) in which Jesus makes frequent statements regarding His glory and authority. His Matt. 28:18 statement is the power basis of His commission to His friends and all believers in Christ, to take His life changing message of Salvation to the world! Remember "Ambassadorship"? 2 Cor. 5:14-20

Thursday, April 30, 2009

What is your most significant value to our world, your most important role in our world today? I suggest it is your role as an ambassador of Christ (2 Cor. 5:20), if you have trusted Jesus Christ to be your Savior!

“Therefore, as you are going, make disciples of all peoples” (Matt. 28:19) is profound! “Therefore” refers to Jesus’ preceding statement of unlimited authority. “Go” is better translated “as you are going”. It has the sense of “as you are living your normal life, going wherever your life journey takes you . . .” rather than “leave here and go far away”. It is ALL inclusive of every follower of Christ, rather than to be applied selectively only to a small group of courageous people we call missionaries, who leave home and family for distant places. It’s a daily experience, a normal life experience . . . in fact it’s a life style I call “followership”, remember? When you trust Christ to be your Savior, He invites you to live a life in vibrant relationship with Him / daily dependence upon His leadership and Lordship in your life, therefore you are daily following Him / living worship of Him continually. Does that fit with how you are living? If not, why not begin today? It’s the life you have been created and designed to live!

The second part of that statement is a wonderful command to live influentially! Yes, just as you are living “followership”, true “followership” is not complete unless you have someone (or a few) following you as you follow Christ!! Did you get that? Jesus said **“make disciples of all peoples”** that means live “followership” contagiously . . . each of us helping at least one other person know and follow Jesus! Notice how Jesus did it . . . He had many following Him whom He taught, now He invites them to draw others to follow them, as they continue to follow Him . . . that is reproductive Christian living. Remember, Christianity can die in one generation, if we refuse to pass it on to those coming behind us. So . . . who are you learning from as you follow Jesus, and who are you leading as you help them follow Jesus? WRITE THEIR NAMES:

Friday, May 1, 2009

Grasp these three concepts: Followership / Ambassadorship / Stewardship . . . it’s life lived to the fullest!

Yesterday I again unpacked “Followership”. Paul challenges us with “Ambassadorship” in 2 Corinthians 5:20! All Christians (followers of Christ) are commissioned by God to make “His appeal to the world”! We understand the role of an ambassador from the USA to another country . . . it’s exactly the same for us! You and I represent God to our world . . . every where, every day, every word or action! Frightening isn’t it? I’m sure you see good Ambassadorship living requires very good Followership living!

Grab this . . . Followership and Ambassadorship living are possible because of Stewardship living! **“As you are going make disciples . . . My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus.”** (Matt. 28:19 and Philippians 4:19)

Psalm 139 explains it well . . . you and I exist by God’s desire and design! Our existence is sustained daily, hourly, by Jesus Christ’s authority and power (Colossians 1:15-17). The Holy Spirit empowers us for Godly living (Romans 8:5-17). Stewardship living means I live fully aware, CONSTANTLY, that every breath I take, every moment I live, every thought I think, every penny I receive, or talent I have, are all RESOURCES entrusted to me by God . . . NONE of it is mine! I have no right to assume I will receive any of it tomorrow (James 4:13,14; Matt.6:19-34; Luke 12:13-34).

Not only is ALL of what I have God’s resources which He chooses to entrust to me . . . He calls me to be a “steward”, a “manager” of that which He entrusts to me! We understand careful responsibility for those things which are not ours but are entrusted to our care . . . it’s the same with your life! You did not create yourself, nor sustain yourself. Life is a gift entrusted to you by God . . . and He invites us to learn to live it with responsibility for we will give an account to Him one day (2 Cor. 5:10) for the “stewardship” we exercised with all the resources He entrusted to us. Get it?


Pastor Doug Anderson

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