

Monday, June 15, 2009

Illusion or Miracle?

Hallucination or Reality?

Anchor or Albatross?

As you and I go through life, we find ourselves in situations which are beyond our control, sometimes beyond our understanding . . . yet one thing we know, we can't fix the problem alone, we can't survive the storm without some significant intervention of help. We can speed dial our friends or family, we can call 911, we can expect some government agency to bail us out, or we can look up . . . to a resurrected and ascended Jesus Christ Who REIGNS in supremacy and is positioned to help miraculously just as much as if He were physically standing right beside you, ready to unleash His miraculous power into your storm. Do you believe that?

This week our "Anchor for the Soul" is the REALITY of the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ, because they accomplish this:

- Resurrection PROVES Jesus is God and alive
- Resurrection POWER defeated sin, Satan, death
- Resurrection gives us eternal life and PURPOSE

Today you are reading 1 John 1, if you're tracking the Scripture reading with us this summer. It's a celebration of the reality of Jesus' resurrection and ascension. Do you notice John declaring he personally knew, saw, even touched the risen Lord Jesus ('the WORD of life'). It's the same phrase John used in John 1, remember? 'WORD' is 'logos', meaning all truth and knowledge. It links with Isaiah 45:18,19 and Exodus 3 and Genesis 1. Note "was with the Father and has appeared to us" and link that with Jesus' prayer statements in John 17. His resurrection and ascension made it possible for Him to complete His earthly mission of rescue/ransom of the sinful human race (Col. 1:13,14) and return to His Supreme Reign over all creation (Col. 1:18). Without Resurrection, Jesus' death is meaningless!

Tuesday, June 16, 2009

I'm sure you've noticed we love to honor our heroes in America, even dead ones. Most of our national holidays honor people who accomplished great things, but are dead. The prophet Mohammed died in the year 632, yet Islam is one of the largest religions in the world. He never claimed to be God, never did miracles as Jesus did, his teachings give no assurance of forgiveness of sin or of gaining eternal life in heaven with God. The same is true of all other religions. Have you noticed ONLY Christianity celebrates a RISEN leader/Savior? Only Christianity claims a risen/ascended Savior personally interested and involved in each follower's life!

Today we are reading 1 John 2, a remarkable chapter. If you're in a summer small group or 'sailing tether team', these first two chapters of 1 John provide great discussion, I urge you to dig deeply together wrestling with the great truths, promises and challenges found there.

When tracking the lives of those who were Jesus' closest friends, in the months and years which followed His departure from them, do you notice it was His resurrection which was the centerpiece of their personal strength and their message to others? Consider their criteria for selecting a replacement for Judas (Acts 1:21,22) and Peter's courageous proclamation to more than 3000 people in Jerusalem (Acts 2:22-36)! Please note the immediate response of the people, and then their lifestyle behavior pattern (2:42-47) in subsequent weeks. That my friends, was radical and began to change the city of Jerusalem! Note Acts 3:15 as part of the explanation of Peter and John healing a cripple (3:6-10). Again note the response of the people (4:1-4) . . . soon 5000 men trusting in the risen Jesus!

Saul (Paul) was determined to stop this "movement", yet he encountered the risen and ascended Jesus (Acts 9) and wrote Romans 1:1-17. Read it, let the power penetrate you.

Wednesday, June 17, 2009

While the resurrection of Jesus restored great hope and joy in His followers, it was much more important. In His resurrection Jesus Christ defeated death, the inescapable end awaiting all humanity. Romans 5 & 6 are powerful celebrations of this truth. If you have time I urge you to read all of both chapters. "*since Christ was raised from the dead, He cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over Him. The death He died, He died to sin once for all . . . in the same way count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*" (Rom. 6:9-11).

It means Jesus Christ is the "firstborn" from the dead, never to die again (eternal life) (Col. 1:18). He overcame death, because He is God. His resurrection confirms His ultimate power, and He will resurrect us, His followers, from death when He returns to earth! Do you believe that? It's the clear teaching of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15. Yes, ALL the dead who had trusted Christ before their death will experience Jesus' resurrection! And yes, those Christians who are still alive when Christ returns to accomplish that resurrection, will experience a total transformation as their earthly bodies are changed into heavenly bodies and they too will join with those resurrected to join Jesus in heaven! This great hope offered you and me is only possible because of Jesus' resurrection and ascension! "*This same Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven will come back in the same way . . .*" (Acts 1:11) He couldn't come back to us if He hadn't gone back to heaven (ascension). And He couldn't return to heaven if He had not resurrected! Our entire salvation and hope for eternity hinges on the truth of Jesus' resurrection and ascension.

Jesus also defeated Satan by His resurrection! In His agony and death He had taken the full outpouring of Satan's wrath, and His resurrection overcame it all! Romans 4:25, Col. 1:13,14 and 2:8-15. That power is available to you!

Thursday, June 18, 2009

Leadership confidence is a big deal in every culture. When our confidence diminishes in the leadership of a business we become suspect of their product or service. When confidence in a national leader is lost, the country faces anarchy. You and I can have the highest confidence when facing the storms of life because our Sovereign Reigns! Jesus Christ, Creator of all, Author of life, took upon Himself the full wrath of both Satan and God, died a horrible death, then rose from the dead and ascended BACK to heaven to re-assume His rightful place as Sovereign and Supreme ruler over all! (John 17:5 / Ephesians 1:19-22 / Hebrews 1:3, 4)

It's important we understand, Jesus left His glory, His Sovereign Reign in heaven and came to earth in the miracle of incarnation (what we celebrate at Christmas). His purpose in coming, of course, was to declare God's truth; to live a sinless life among humanity; to die an atonement death; to raise triumphantly over death thus defeating Satan and return back to heaven resuming His reign over all! Right?

So what is Jesus doing now? Consider Romans 8:34 and Hebrews 4:14-16. What do they tell us about Jesus' interceding for us right now as a High Priest? Yes, Jesus is speaking to God the Father on our behalf. The Father and Jesus have sent the Holy Spirit to live with and in those of us who have trusted Jesus to be our Savior, remember last week's message? (John 14:16-17, 26, 27; 15:26; 17:7,13)

Jesus is also accomplishing salvation (redemption) for thousands of people daily. Consider Hebrews 7:24-25, 27!! Perhaps as many as 100,000 people DAILY are trusting Jesus and His truth, His death and His resurrection to be enough to save them, and as they pray to God repenting of sin and asking for Salvation, Jesus steps in, interceding for them offering His atonement death as full payment, and God accepts Jesus' death and resurrection, extends forgiveness for their sin, grants them eternal life and adopts them as His!

Friday, June 19, 2009

So this week we've been considering this "Anchor for your Soul": The truth of Jesus Christ's resurrection and ascension. His resurrection proved His identity as God and defeated sin and Satan once for all. In His ascension He reclaimed His position of unlimited Power. He reigns as Sovereign over the entire universe, including over you and me and our "storms"!

In His position of resurrected, ascended Sovereign, Jesus stands available and ready to receive us into God's throne room at any time with any problem (storm). Consider Hebrews 10:11-14, 19-23. That, my friends, is a powerful "anchor for your soul" in the storms of life! You might even want to write those verses in your summer log book and tab that page for future and frequent reference!!!

Now, take this whole week . . . boil it all down to its core . . . get in your sailboat for the journey of life ahead, and hold tightly to Hebrews 12:1, 2, 3!!! *"therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."* The cloud of witnesses is those from Hebrews 11, and all those who have trusted in Christ since! We run our race of life with them cheering us on to victory over sin and Satan by the power of the risen and resurrected Jesus as our Lord and Savior. *"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

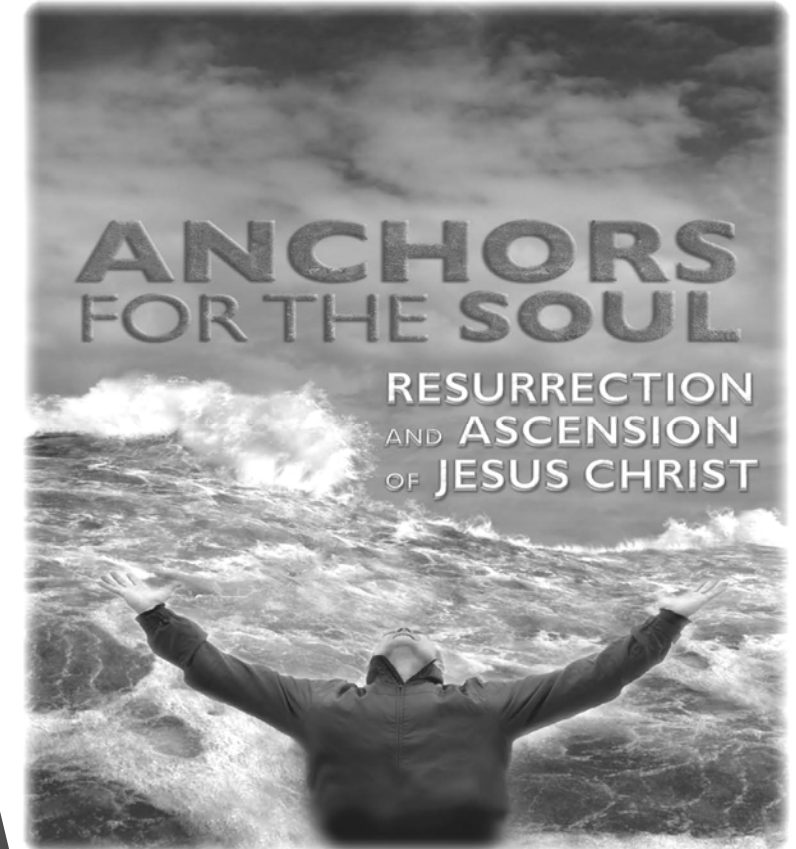
It was in His resurrection and ascension that Jesus completed His mission of redemption and became the "perfecter" of our faith! His position at the "right hand of God" is His Sovereign Reign!

"Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." Notice how similar to our theme verses of 2009 (Exodus 9:16 and Isaiah 40:28,31). Now, I suggest you spend some time in worship!



Pastor Doug Anderson

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