

Monday, MARCH 8, 2010

Have you had the privilege of sitting with a dear “saint” who is reflecting on life and looking forward with a genuine sense of anticipation, to their death? The Bible uses the word “Saint” (Eph. 1:1; Romans 1:7) for normal people who have trusted Jesus Christ to be their Savior, and have been spiritually transformed by God as forgiven sinners (Eph. 1:7), indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 14:16,17) adopted as sons or daughters of God (Gal. 4:4-7), reconciled from our status as enemies of God to friends of God (Col. 1:20,21). Are you a “saint”?

This week we finish our 8 week journey which has begun 2010 with a celebration of “Discovering God, The Journey of Life, Living on Mission with God”. I’ve tried to take us systematically, step by step so you can clearly identify where you are in the “journey of life” from a spiritual perspective. So...where are you? Which of these are you confident you ‘own’ and which are still part of your growth journey?

Death...it is the one, absolute certainty every person who is conceived can be sure of! It happens about 80,000 times every day around the world, and even though every one of us has been to funerals, death seems to be one thing few people understand and too many people fear. But not ‘saints’! For us, we understand death is really “departure”! Death is simply the separation of your soul/spirit which God designed to be immortal, from your temporary, earthly body. For those who are “saints”, they ‘depart’ to be with Christ. For those who have never trusted Jesus Christ to be their Savior during their earthly Journey, they “depart” to an eternity separated from God! It’s important we begin by understanding EVERYONE ‘departs’ this earthly life for an eternal life, and there are only two places to go...to be with Jesus Christ or to be separated from Him.

John 14:1-3 are Jesus’ words to His disciples the night before His crucifixion. Jesus promised He is “the resurrection and the life” at Lazarus’ tomb, and then raised him from the dead to prove His authority over death (John 11:25,26)! Remember Paul’s words in 2 Cor. 4:14-5:9 and Phil. 1:20-23. Celebrate all you ‘saints’, Jesus Christ will RECEIVE you!

Tuesday, MARCH 9, 2010

Are you fascinated by little baby’s tiny hands? Do you notice what adults often do as they see a tiny baby...they put one finger close to the tiny hand to see if the baby will grip their finger, and if they do there is almost always a squeal of glee, right? How do babies learn to grip so quickly? May I suggest it’s an innate, God given instinct, much like sucking or breathing. Have you noticed ‘gripping’ is one human trait we develop in adulthood till that which we grip often has a death grip on us?

“Discovering God is Ready” as we approach the end of our earthly life Journey, includes recognizing God is helping us release our grip on the stuff of life, so we can “*depart and be with Christ which is better by far*” (Phil. 1:23). Have you ever seen a person holding so tightly to their “stuff” that it consumes them? Consider Hebrews 12:1,2 “*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, let us fix our eyes on Jesus...*”. Or, “*I have learned the secret of being content in each and every circumstance...*” (Phil. 4:12).

During our human life Journey we build two main things...a legacy and an estate. The estate is stuff, the legacy is reputation. Both outlive you...you leave them behind when you “depart”. While you may develop an extensive estate plan so when you are gone people can follow specific instructions as to the distribution of your “stuff”...there’s really nothing you can do about what is done with all the “stuff” you so highly prized when it was yours. Truth is, no one will ever value your “stuff” as much as you do. Truth is...one man’s treasure is another man’s junk (and visa-versa). I’ve observed God helps “saints” release their grip on the stuff, so they can transition toward “departure” with fulfillment in proper priorities. It happens as Jesus becomes more and more your greatest priority! Consider Luke 12:13-34, 1 Timothy 6:6-10 and Philippians 4.

Finally...your Legacy, your reputation. You build it everyday of your life and it will long outlive you, affecting everyone who has ever known you. How will you be remembered? What impact will your legacy have in 2050?

Wednesday, MARCH 10, 2010

Remember the days when we were riveted to our TVs when there was a space launch? “This is mission control...” we’d hear a voice speak to the astronauts, and we’d wonder about all the complexity of planning and executing a mission into space. How many little boys dreamed of walking on the moon one day?

Have you considered these remarkable statements Jesus made: “*I have brought You glory on earth by completing the work You gave me to do. And now Father glorify Me in Your presence with the glory I had with You before the world began.*” (John 17:4,5) Jesus was nearing the end of His earthly Journey and declaring to the Father that “the mission is nearly complete”! From the cross Jesus said “*It is finished*” (John 19:30), as He declared His atonement mission accomplished, and died. Do you understand what Jesus’ mission to earth was all about? Consider Luke 19:9,10; Mark 1:38; 10:45; John 10:10. What do you see?

Paul wrote “*the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*” (2 Tim. 4:7). When you link that to what he wrote to his Philippian friends in Phil. 3:7-14, and Romans 15:20, what do you conclude about Paul’s sense of mission? As he neared the end of his life, do you see God was giving him a “release” from his life mission? He had done well, he had worked hard, he had accomplished much in God’s purpose for him...and now it was time to pass the mantle to others. Think about that: whatever it is you are pouring yourself in to...career, hobbies, things that you are passionate about...what happens to it all when you come to your time of ‘departure’? If you are living a mission God has called you to...it’s bigger than you, it’s something God will lead you to release to Him so He can entrust it to others. If you’re chasing your dreams and you’ve rarely if ever sought to know how your dreams fit into God’s purposes...then likely very soon after you are gone, they will crumble or at least they will have little eternal value.

Consider Jeremiah 1:5, Isaiah 46:3,4, 10,11. What do you see about God involving you in His purposes?

Thursday, MARCH 11, 2010

We've just come through the Winter Olympics, and soon it will be "March Madness". America is a trophy crazy society. We love competition and crowning a champion...and then very quickly forgetting the champ as we look for another. But with God it's different! Watch this. . .

First, every "saint" (any person who has trusted Jesus Christ to be their Savior and has experienced God's full work of Redemption, Justification, Regeneration, Adoption, Reconciliation etc.) is a living 'trophy of God's grace'! That's right...God holds His sons and daughters up as trophies and calls the angelic world to stand in amazement! Consider Ephesians 2:1-10 (note vs. 6); or Ephesians 1:11-14 (note vs. 12) or 1 Peter 1:10-12 (note last line of vs. 12). When a person is rescued from "the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of the Son He loves." (Col. 1:13) and when a person experiences the transformation of "therefore if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation, the old has gone and the new has come." (2 Cor. 5:17), or when a person is set free from sin condemnation "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1), that person becomes a TROPHY of God's grace, transformed and rescued from the condemnation of sin!

Second, following our human Life Journey, we will each stand before Jesus Christ, the ultimate judge, and our lives will pass in review (2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27). For those who have confessed their sin and trusted Jesus Christ, their sin is unseen, washed away by the blood of Christ. Their "good works" (Eph. 2:10) are celebrated by Jesus Himself and rewards are entrusted to 'saints' for all eternity! Consider Romans 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Romans 2:6-11; Rev. 20:12. What might those rewards be like? The Bible is not explicitly clear, but you can well imagine what receiving a reward from God would be like! Are you living your life in anticipation of heavenly celebration?

Thirdly, consider Paul's confidence that a "crown of righteousness" was awaiting him and all who trust in Christ! (2 Tim. 4:8). Do you see yourself in Paul's confident claim??

Friday, MARCH 12, 2010

OK, so this final week of our study of the "Journey of Life, living on Mission with God" we've looked at Discovering God is Ready to Receive you (at death), Release your grip from the stuff that holds you here, Release you from your mission, and Reward you. One more...God is ready to Transform you at your moment of death/departure!

2 Corinthians 4:14-5:9 speaks of the transformation which takes place at death. This temporary, decaying, too often dysfunctional earthly body will die and decay here. Our soul/spirit is immortal and will continue living. For us as Christians, we go immediately to reside with God in His presence (2 Cor. 5:6-8; Phil. 1:23; 2 Tim. 4:7,8) at the moment of death/departure. When the resurrection takes place (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 with special note of vs. 16) God will create new, eternal, heavenly bodies for our soul/spirit to inhabit, just as He created an earthly body for our soul/spirit during our mother's pregnancy, only this time the new body will be created in an instant! Consider 1 Corinthians 15:35-58, what do you see as Paul's explanation of this resurrected body we'll all have? Do you notice everyone...those already dead and those still alive when Jesus returns, will receive new heavenly bodies (1 Cor. 15:50-53; 1 Thess. 4:13-18)?

Yes EVERY person God has created is designed to live forever and yes EVERY person will receive an eternal body. Those who have Discovered God and all we've talked about these past 8 weeks, will live in their heavenly bodies with God in a new heaven/new earth universe for all eternity future (Rev. 21 & 1 Thess. 4:17). Those who have never trusted Jesus Christ to be their Savior, will spend eternity in their God given new bodies...far separated from God, in a place of eternal torment! Consider Matthew 25:31-46 and Revelation 20:11-15. I realize that is a dreadful picture...but it's important we see it as truth. God's grace, His kindness, His salvation extended to mankind through Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection is ONLY available during our human life journey. Refusal to trust Jesus, earns us eternity separated from God!



Pastor Doug Anderson

MARCH 8 - 12, 2010

Discovering God is Ready

