

Monday, APRIL 5, 2010

Today you have to decide . . . the Resurrection of Jesus Christ which the world celebrated yesterday: fact or fiction? A preposterous story, a religious tradition, a wonderful holiday that brings families together and gives children a “spring break” from school . . . or the single most significant event in the history of our planet?

In the days following that Passover weekend in Jerusalem about 2000 years ago, hundreds of people faced the same dilemma. Matthew 28 tells us the guards who had been at the tomb went to report what they saw, and leaders devised a major cover-up scheme. What do you think about that?

John 20 tells us Jesus appeared near the tomb to Mary Magdalene and later that evening to many of the disciples. We can assume Mary and some of the other women and friends were probably there too.

Luke 24 tells us Jesus had appeared to two men walking along the road to Emmaus and later over dinner they recognized Him.

So by Monday morning . . . can you imagine the “rumor mill” that was running through Jerusalem? With the great Passover weekend completed, thousands of visitors would still remain in Jerusalem for a week or more (Deut. 16:1-8) and thus the followers of Jesus were likely frightened and confused as they tried to put it all together. Palm Sunday . . . the upper room . . . the Garden of Gethsemane . . . the trials and beatings . . . the crucifixion . . . burial in Joseph’s tomb . . . dark, confusing Saturday . . . and then came Sunday!!!! Try to put yourself in their “sandals”. Even if you had seen Jesus once or twice yesterday . . . would it be enough to convince you it was true, or honestly now, would you still be doubting what you had seen and possibly even touched? He had been absolutely dead, horribly killed . . . and now . . . could it possibly be true? Dead people don’t come back to life. What could be the explanation? And how could Jesus’ body be so “healed” from the brutality? What have you decided is the truth?

Tuesday, APRIL 6, 2010

Our Easter theme is “The Call . . . His Passion for ALL”. This Easter weekend I focused on the “Passion” part of our theme, by suggesting to you that God’s reach to humanity through Easter is fundamentally His “Love Initiative”. John 3:16-20; Romans 5:8; I John 4:9,10; John 10:11-18 and finally John 15:5-17 all speak of God’s love as being the primary motivator for Jesus’ coming to earth for the purpose of rescuing humanity from our sin. Please grasp this friends: God-style love is not gushy, melodramatic love . . . God-style love is powerful, extreme, unconditional and is extended from God to EVERY human being regardless of lifestyle, ethnicity, culture or even morality! That’s why Romans 5:8 is so powerful! Have you fully grasped the primary motivation behind Easter? LOVE! In fact Easter Love becomes the high water mark, the template, the definition of true love! You can’t love more deeply than Easter-style love. Have you ever seen the movie “The Passion of the Christ”?

So if God’s primary motivation for Easter was His love for a human race which was killing us in deep, dark wickedness . . . what is this remarkable Plan of Rescue He devised? I gave you five things this weekend that comprise it:

INCARNATION . . . God had to come here, placing Himself in humanity, in order to be among us. (John 1:1-14)

RELATIONSHIP . . . While here, God made Himself fully available to humanity. He loved, taught, healed, fed, served . . . built real relationships here! (Mark 1:16-39)

ATONEMENT . . . Jesus’ death on the cross paid the full sin debt price so God could forgive anyone and everyone of our sin! (Romans 3:10-24)

RESURRECTION . . . Jesus had to come back to life to defeat death, sin and Satan. Then He could reign victoriously again from His heaven! (Eph. 1:18-21)

ASCENSION . . . Jesus returned back to heaven to assume His present role as intercessor for us and Sovereign authority over all! (Hebrews 1:1-4)

Wednesday, APRIL 7, 2010

The Gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) are essentially silent about the week that followed what we call “Easter Sunday”. Only John tells us Jesus’ friends were gathered together again the following Sunday evening when Jesus appeared to them. This time Thomas was with them. Read it and see if you would have reacted much as Thomas did . . . John 20:24-31.

Paul, when writing to the Corinthian Christians, gives a short synopsis of the events of these days in I Corinthians 15:1-8. It’s obviously not a chronological order of Jesus’ appearances after His resurrection, nor does it necessarily match the Gospel accounts. Does that trouble you? Notice in vs. 5 Paul uses the term “the Twelve”. Matthew uses the same phrase in Matt. 26:14. But you’ll recall, Judas Iscariot had deserted the disciples and hanged himself (Matt. 27:1-5) thus leaving 11. Perhaps you recall after Jesus had ascended to heaven, His followers chose Matthias to replace Judas (Acts 1:21-26). So when Paul uses “the Twelve” either he’s simply using that common phrase to represent the men whom Jesus had chosen and had been with Him for those many months, excluding Judas who was dead, or Matthias was there also, since one of the criteria for his selection was that he had been part of the entire journey.

We also have no record in the Gospels, of a large gathering . . . “He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living . . .” (I Cor. 15:6). So, what about the inconsistency between Paul’s account and the four Gospel writers? What about Matthew telling us there were guards at the tomb, and the other three don’t mention them? What about the differences between the number of angels or the number of women at the tomb that resurrection morning? My friends . . . if the resurrection is the cornerstone of the Christian faith, are you concerned that the accounts don’t match each other? You’ll notice, the accounts do not contradict each other but rather each gives a different perspective on the remarkable events. They are all correct and when taken together form a very clear picture of what took place! Right?

Thursday, APRIL 8, 2010

Yesterday we looked at some of Paul's commentary on Easter (1 Corinthians 15). He states the risen Lord Jesus "appeared to me also . . ." (1 Cor. 15:8). Do you remember when and where that happened? Consider Acts 9:1-19 with special focus on vs. 3-9. Blinded by a bright light, hearing an audible voice which identified Himself as Jesus . . . Saul, the persecuting Rabbi, had experienced a life-changing encounter with the risen Jesus Christ! During the three days of blindness (vs. 10-19), we can conclude Jesus spoke truth into Saul's mind and he came to understand his wrong thinking, wrong behavior and his new calling "This is My chosen instrument to carry My name before Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel . . .".

Knowing that Jesus' ascension followed His resurrection by 40 days (Acts 1:1-3), and the persecution broke out against Jesus' followers almost immediately, we can assume Acts 9 took place within a few months after Easter Sunday.

Between Easter Sunday and Jesus' ascension, the Gospel accounts are relatively quiet regarding Jesus' other appearances and the disciples' activities. It's clear they remained in Jerusalem this first week since they were together the Sunday evening following Easter (John 20). But John 21 shows them back in Galilee fishing when Jesus appears to them along the shoreline, and Matthew 28 gives us the great scene of their commissioning to take His story globally (Matt. 28:18-20). Dr. Luke tells us they evidently met a few final times in Jerusalem again, just prior to Jesus' ascension back to heaven (Acts 1:1-11).

40 days . . . that would take us to mid May this year. That's how long Jesus appeared repeatedly to His friends to confirm His resurrection, to teach some final truths that they would take to the world, and to assure that His mission of redemption was fully accomplished. Would you consider John 17 today? Jesus' final prayer with His friends, before His horrible betrayal, beatings and execution, gives us His perspective on the completion of God's Redemption Plan. It was imperative the disciples were convinced before Jesus left. Are you?

Friday, APRIL 9, 2010

It's been almost a week since Easter, does it seem far away? Last weekend, I gave you four powerful things Jesus' resurrection accomplished, do you remember?

First, His resurrection proved His IDENTITY as the Son of God. Consider Romans 1:4 "who was declared with power to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ." Second, His resurrection makes it possible for God to forgive us of our sin and declare us righteous . . . it's called Justification! "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our Justification." (Rom. 4:25).

Third, Jesus' resurrection positions Him to be our ADVOCATE in God's presence. "Christ Jesus who was raised to life is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us." (Rom. 8:34, Hebrews 1:3) And fourth, Jesus' resurrection provides SALVATION for every sinful person who recognizes their need for a Savior and "if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9,10).

This is why Paul writes to the Corinthians that "if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile: You are still in your sins. Those who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ we are to be pitied more than all men." (1 Cor. 15:17-19). But we are confident Jesus Christ did rise from the dead, did show Himself many times to many people, did ascend back to heaven and is alive today as Sovereign King over all!

Colossians 1 and Ephesians 1 are both powerful chapters of confidence regarding the certainty of what Jesus Christ accomplishes in our lives through the power of His resurrection . . . We gain NEW LIFE in Christ, as our sin is forgiven and a new spiritual life begins at the moment of salvation. We gain PEACE with God through the resurrected Christ and we finally gain POWER that is only available to us through the resurrected Christ. At Calvary Church it is our passion to know the risen Christ, and experience all His resurrection has achieved for you! If you have any questions please contact us. We long to help you know Jesus Christ!



Pastor Doug Anderson

APRIL 5 - APRIL 9, 2010



THE CALL

HIS PASSION FOR ALL

RESURRECTION



A Disciplemaking Tool
DIGGING
DEEPER



Calvary
Community Church

Engaging With God

Highway 50 & Harris Road
P.O. Box 1200 • Williams Bay, WI 53191
(262) 245-6294
www.calvarycommunity.net