

Monday, APRIL 26, 2010

By the time you read this, 44 of us from Calvary should be over the Atlantic Ocean heading for Israel. Few things are more impactful than actually being in the land of the Bible! We'll walk the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee where Jesus had breakfast with 7 disciples as we studied last week (John 21). While walking the streets of Jerusalem, we'll see people from around the world and be reminded this city is "home" to three major religions in the world: Judaism, Islam and Christianity. The question so often raised is: "who has the truth"? While Jews and Muslims both acknowledge the historical figure Jesus, neither consider Him God incarnate. For Christians, Jesus, of course, is God come to earth incarnate, teaching God's truth, sinlessly living God's power over sin and Satan, dying an atonement death for sinful humanity, raising victoriously from the tomb defeating death and Satan, and returning to heaven as advocate and redeemer for any repentant person. Right?

This week I'm asking you to consider the world changing work and words of Jesus as He left this world, ascending back to heaven, entrusting His Gospel to people just like you and me. Jesus had invited Peter to follow Him (John 21:22) and indicated John would also be His follower. Individually they would be developing their "followership" relationship with Jesus, and together with hundreds of others, they would be a Community, a living movement of Christ followers. He also indicated when "commissioning" them in Matt. 28:18-20, that their life purpose would be to naturally 'make disciples of Jesus Christ' as they went along in life, regardless of their profession, age, family status, education or their geography. Do you see the "dynamic" of this? This isn't formal religion, it is living relationship. It's not institution, it's a living movement. It's not organizational structure, it's the freedom of individual experience joined in common and shared truth all focused on one Person, Jesus Christ. Read John 21 again, then Acts 1, watch for the dynamic of the individual and shared relationship with Jesus. Watch for the movement from 'you' individual, to 'you' many people "together". Is it you?

Tuesday, APRIL 27, 2010

In the weeks following that Passover when Jesus was crucified and raised to life, risen Jesus appeared several times proving to the world that He was alive and giving important instructions to His followers about their role after His departure. Dr. Luke investigated and wrote the book of Acts, as an account of what happened in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and even the far reaches of the Roman Empire in the few years following that Passover. This week I'm asking you to think deeply about your part in a "Commissioned Community".

Old Testament Israel is in some ways the model, remember? A people chosen by God with common lineage from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Christians are a chosen people (1 Peter 2:9) but each with a common, direct relationship to God through Jesus Christ (Gal. 4:4-7).

God purchased His people from Egyptian slavery and brought them to freedom in their promised land Israel. The Passover lamb's blood on the doorpost and the angel of death passing over Egypt killing all unprotected firstborns, caused Pharaoh to free his slaves. Christians have been purchased by the atonement blood of Jesus Christ, and our sin bondage has been broken (1 Peter 1:18-21; Col. 1:21,22) freeing us to live in forgiven, reconciled relationship with God through Jesus.

God invited His people to trust Him, follow Him, rely upon Him, worship Him in every aspect of life. He promised to lead them, protect them, provide for them as He loved them. Isn't that what Jesus offered His followers? Consider John 15.

God desired that His people would live in a manner so unlike the rest of humanity, the world would be drawn to desire a similar relationship with God (Ez. 36:23). Isn't that God's desire for Christians in our day?

One major difference between Old Testament Israel and Christ followers is the Holy Spirit's presence within each person who has trusted Jesus to be their Savior. Consider Acts 1:4-8. Remember what Jesus had promised in John 14:16,17, 26,27; 15:26; 16:7-15 about the Holy Spirit? Is this Holy Spirit alive within you in POWER as Jesus promised? What evidence?

Wednesday, APRIL 28, 2010

You'll notice Jesus' death and resurrection took place during the biggest week of the year for Israel and Jerusalem, Passover. His departure back to heaven and His sending the Holy Spirit occurred during the second biggest festival in Jerusalem, Pentecost. Both times Jerusalem was filled with Jews from around the world! Do you see the strategic significance as God reaches to the world with His Redemption Plan?

Do you notice what the followers of Jesus did after He ascended from the Mount of Olives, outside Jerusalem, back to heaven? Consider Acts 1:12-14. What would you have done? For many months their entire world had revolved around following Jesus from place to place...now He was gone. What should they do? What did God want them to do? Only one way to find out...ask Him!! So they gathered together, united by their individual and common relationship with Jesus Christ, and talked to God / listened to God...Jesus called it 'prayer'. How often do you pray...and how authentically, how fervently, how desperate to know God's answers for your life? Luke 11:1 is the only time the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to do something as He did it...what do you see?

Consider Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:23-8:2; 10:11-23. Do you see the present position and role of risen Jesus Christ? How do you describe what Jesus is doing right now? What is God's desire for you to come often into His "throne room" for conversation and worship?

Friends, if there is one thing most North American and European Christians do not understand or value it is this unbelievable privilege and power we have to converse with God...anytime, about any subject, without appointment or human mediator. The God of the Universe is always ready to talk with you, guide you, teach you, protect you, help you know what His perspective is on what's going on in your life!! As you speak to Him learn to listen...His Holy Spirit will speak into your mind and heart. Then with Bible open...read, and His Holy Spirit will speak God's answers to you. It's Heb. 4:12,13!

Thursday, APRIL 29, 2010

In recent weeks we've seen tremendous 'God power' unleashed around the world with earthquakes, volcanoes, tornadoes, rain caused floods, even meteor showers. The best human minds and strongest human powers have stood by immobile, unable to do anything but watch and wait. Cities have been crumbled, air traffic paralyzed and the lives of millions of people directly affected...it's a glimpse of God's power! Rev. 6:12-17 does not seem quite so preposterous now does it?

So when Jesus promised His followers, "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you", what do you understand it means? Consider Acts 1:4-8 and chapter 2. Add to it Acts 3:1-16. What display of power do you see and how does it compare to an earthquake or volcano? People speaking languages they have never studied, a crippled man suddenly walking and jumping...what power is that? It's God's power placed in normal people like you and me, to do and say the types of things Jesus did! Remember what Jesus had promised about the Holy Spirit (John 14:16,17, 26,27; 15:26; 16:7-15)? Here's a key question... did Jesus intend this Holy Spirit to be ONLY the experience of those followers who had been with Him, or is this the same Holy Spirit God offers to each follower of Christ in 2010 anywhere in the world? Is there any difference? What Biblical support do you have?

Have you considered the Holy Spirit came upon people in the Old Testament and they too did amazing empowered things? Consider Joshua, the assistant to Moses (Numbers 27:18) or Gideon (Judges 6:34) or Samson (Judges 14:6) or Saul (1 Samuel 10:6,7) or David (1 Samuel 16:13) or Ezekiel (Ez. 2:1,2) or Micah (Micah 3:8). What does that tell you about the Holy Spirit of God working in people who know and follow God down through history?

Finally, consider Romans 8:5-16. It's very powerful. What do you sense the Holy Spirit saying to you about His role in your life? I urge you to talk with God today about this!! Do you have any idea what God wants to do in your life?

Friday, APRIL 30, 2010

This week I've invited you to consider how normal folks who followed Jesus experienced life transformation when the Holy Spirit of God came upon them and then in community with each other, He began changing the world through them!

Consider Acts 2:42-47 and chapter 4 of Acts. What stands out to you as hallmarks of this new movement of Christ followers...remember Jesus was gone and they had no Bible, no pastor, and no church building or programs. How do you understand and explain what was happening?

Take some time today and this weekend to look closely, first at yourself, then your family, then your church, then churches all around our county and country. Compare that to personal stories we've been hearing and pictures we've seen of Christians in earthquake ravaged Haiti or similar desperate situations around the world. What's the difference?? What is this power many seem to have to find joy in the midst of total devastation? How can they worship for long hours when having lost everything, including even family members? How can they find strength to face another day, week, a lifetime of what many would call despair...quoting Paul in Phil. 4:4-13?? *"I have learned the secret of being content in each and every circumstance."*

Now look around...how many content people do you see? Why?? How much spiritual strength? What's the problem?

When you read Acts 4 earlier today, what did you see? Skeptics, religious pride, refusal to recognize Jesus' truth, refusal to allow the Holy Spirit to do His powerful work...but also you see confident, courageous Peter and John refusing to crumble, and you see a house full of prayerful people empowered by the Holy Spirit, celebrating God at work in them and among them. That is a "commissioned community" of Christ followers shaking their world. Have you ever been part of something like that? Are you living it now?

Here's a few keys I've learned having lived in many places of our world: STUFF will always draw your heart away from God! BUSYNESS will always drown out the voice of God. SELFISHNESS will always push the Holy Spirit away.



Pastor Doug Anderson

APRIL 26 - 30, 2010



THE CALL

HIS PASSION FOR ALL

COMMISSIONED

COMMUNITY

THE MOST DYNAMIC FORCE IN THE WORLD IS A HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERED COMMUNITY OF RANSOMED, JESUS CHRIST FOLLOWERS! ARE YOU UNAWARE, A BYSTANDER, OR FULLY ENGAGED IN GOD'S MOVEMENT?



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Calvary
Community Church

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