

Monday Morning Rewind – February 23, 2009

Good morning! On Sabbath we “restarted the heart” of our worship service after taking seven weeks to give intense focus to sharing the gospel through our Community Conversations Live meetings. As we resumed a regular schedule, we took time to study some “mountaintop experiences” in the Bible in order to learn how to avoid the “let-down” effect following our most recent spiritual high point.

The Transfiguration (Mark 9:2-8)

The glorification of Jesus on Mount Tabor in the company of Moses and Elijah was a foretaste of heaven for the three disciples who witnessed it. We can hardly blame Peter for not wanting to leave that place. He was so frightened and awed at the same time, that without thinking he said, “Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (Mark 9:5)

Here we encounter the first risk to revival: A risk to revival is that we’ll make an idol of the experience itself instead of allowing the experience to lead us to God. Staying on the “mountaintop” is tempting, but ministry happens in the valley. Self-centeredness and irrelevance is the lot of those who would follow Peter’s suggested course.

The solution? Pay attention to Jesus! (Mark 9:7) Don’t become distracted by things of lesser importance. Let’s keep our eyes on Jesus and hear Him. And the best way to “listen” to Jesus is to pray.

The Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)

After the resurrection, two despondent followers of Christ are joined by a stranger on their sad walk home. The stranger opens the scriptures to them and helps them understand the prophecies concerning the Messiah. The moment of truth happens in verse 28: “As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther.” Either they will let Jesus go on or ask Him to stay.

A risk to revival is that we will be content with a visitation from Jesus and not ask Him to abide with us. What did these men do? “They urged him strongly, ‘Stay with us...’” (verse 29). This simple act was rewarded when their “eyes were opened” as Jesus broke the bread and blessed it. You see, along the road their hearts “burned,” but their eyes remained closed *until they asked Jesus to stay*.

The solution to the problem of spiritual contentment? Ask Jesus to stay. The difference between revival and reformation is that in revival, Jesus comes for a visit; in reformation, Jesus moves in. Revival must not be limited to the excitement of learning something new. It must be followed with an invitation for Jesus to stay and help us apply what we’ve learned to our lives. Rewind to James 1:22-25 to understand this key principle.

But these two disciples did more than ask Jesus to stay. “They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem....Then the two told what had happened on the way...” (Luke 24:33). The lesson is clear. If you want to preserve a revival, invite Jesus to stay and then get up and *go!* Don’t keep the experience to yourself. You’ve got to tell somebody.

Resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:43, 44)

A favorite quip I like to share is, “Nothing messes up cemeteries like resurrections.” But the reverse is also true: Nothing spoils a resurrection faster than refusing to leave the casket.

Jesus called Lazarus back from the dead. It was the pinnacle of His ministry to that point. The dead man came out of the tomb, but he was still wrapped in the grave clothes. A risk to revival is staying entangled in the old life instead of walking in the new one. The solution? Remove your grave clothes.

Jesus said, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go” (verse 44). If you’ve found new life in Jesus, don’t go back to a life dead in trespasses and sins. “Lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily entangles.” (Hebrews 12:1)

Kadesh (Numbers 13:26-33)

A risk to revival is being afraid of the new thing God is doing and wanting to go back to what is familiar—even *if it’s bad!*

Fear of giants and mistrust in God led the Israelites to demand a return to Egypt (see Numbers 14:3) even though slavery and the lash awaited them there. What a tragedy to let fear prevent you from possessing God’s promise! What’s the solution? Take a cue from Caleb (Numbers 14:24). Ask for courage and follow God wholeheartedly.

Whether you are a new believer or you've walked with God a long time, the danger is the same—failure to go forward in Christ. Rewind to Philippians 3:12-14 and let's determine not to go back to "normal." God is calling us all onward in Christ. With Paul, let's be "off and running" to receive the prize He has for each of us.—Pastor Randy

p.s. Please continue inviting your friends and coworkers to church. Our Wednesday night meeting will continue to focus on faith that matters in the end times. This week's topic is the millennium. And please let me know if you'd like to start a Home of HOPE small group. Our need at present is for a Boise group.