

Theme for 2020

I AM WHAT ‘YOU’ SEE!

‘LORD, Open My Eyes, Help Me Believe, I Am What YOU See.’

“Your eyes are windows into your body. If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light... Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out; you formed me in my mother’s womb. I thank you, High God—you’re breathtaking! Body and soul, I am marvelously made! I worship in adoration—what a creation! You know me inside and out, you know every bone in my body; You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit, how I was sculpted from nothing into something. Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth; all the stages of my life were spread out before you. The days of my life all prepared before I’d even lived one day. Your thoughts—how rare, how beautiful! God, I’ll never comprehend them! I couldn’t even begin to count them—any more than I could count the sand of the sea. Oh, let me rise in the morning and live always with you.”

Matthew 6:22 (MSG); Psalm 139:13-18 (MSG)



This Week’s Thought – August 23, 2020

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12 (NIV)

“We’re ALL in this TOGETHER.” For most of my life, this verse got a lot of traction in the area of apologetics and as a defense of the Christian faith against the other religions of the world. As such, the focus was almost always on the centrality of Jesus and the unique nature of salvation in Christ alone. Yes, while I fully affirm and stand by this truth, in all the efforts made to defend the priority and centrality of Christ, I do wonder if we ever actually stopped to ask “why?” Why is it, in fact, that it is only in Christ that salvation is to be found? What is it about Jesus that is so profoundly unique that He alone is the source of salvation for the whole of humankind?

Increasingly, I am convinced that our ability to answer this question is entirely tied up in our definition of salvation. The contemporary Church around the world runs a great risk of embracing a reductionistic view of salvation, seeing it as no more than “fire insurance” (as I often heard growing up), a ticket out of hell and into heaven. When viewed this way, our focus as Christians is less on the transformation of the whole of life into the life of Christ and is instead often limited to a singular point of conversion.

In response to this, I think of a line I once heard in seminary, “Jesus didn’t come to make bad people good, He came to make dead people alive.” Thus, any definition of salvation that is not centered on the resurrection of Jesus runs the risk of claiming the Name of Christ while failing to encounter the transformative power of Christ.

The Christian faith is not a “superior philosophy”, neither is it simply a compelling set of rules or an integrated moral code. None of these in and of themselves would have been sufficient to cause the religious leaders of the day to arrest the disciples and do all they could to silence and suppress their message. No, as verses 1 and 2 in the same chapter Acts 4 reminds us, *“While Peter and John were speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came to them, much annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming that in Jesus there is the resurrection of the dead.”*

The scandal of the gospel is that a man who was dead and in his grave for 3 days came alive and took a breath. This was not only true of Jesus in and of Himself, but His victory over death is meant to be shared and experienced by all who call upon His Name. It is by the power of His resurrection that the sick are healed and the broken made whole. As Peter powerfully reminds us, *“Let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead.”* (Acts 4:10)

The issues that plague our world are neither small nor inconsequential. They are truly matters of life and death. Yet for this very reason, may we never lose sight of what is truly and beautifully unique about our Lord Jesus. That He alone conquered death, and in His Name we will do the same.

“I am who You say I am! I am God’s workmanship, created in Christ unto good works. (Ephesians 2:10) I am an ambassador for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). I am part of a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people (1 Peter 2:9). I am greatly loved by God (Ephesians 2:4; Colossians 3:12). I AM WHAT ‘YOU’SEE!”

Application: Despite all that is happening in and around the world, fully focus your heart and mind on Christ today and find great hope and encouragement in His victory over death.

Prayer of reflection you might pray this week: “Father, I thank you for Christ’s victory over sin and death, and trust that by Your Spirit You are working that same victory in me. May I be faithful to share the message of salvation today with others who are yet in darkness. This is my prayer in the matchless, wonderful and compassionate name of Jesus, Amen!”

Yours in Christ, Pastor King