

SOARING THROUGH THE BIBLE

1 PETER 1:22-2:10

SEPTEMBER 2, 2010

DANGEROUS CHURCH

It seems quite ironic to me that many a great man has lived a futile life attempting to find life's great answer only to perish never realizing the answer utterly engulfed every portion of his existence. There is only one true answer to the human condition and that is God. Yet, never recognizing this truth man searches far and wide in vain: he sees the trees but grows every more frustrated in that he can't find the forest.

We are all familiar with the legend of the Fountain of Youth. Juan Ponce de Leon, a Spanish conquistador is said to have explored endlessly for its existence believing that anyone who drank of these waters would enjoy restored youth. In fact, it is believed Florida was incidentally discovered by Ponce de Leon in his quest to find the Fountain of Youth. In the end, of course, he never found what he was searching for. The truth is that the One who created the azure waters and spectacular sunsets characterizing Ponce de Leon's travels is the true fountain. Further, this fountain of God flows freely to anyone who should believe and far exceeds in greatness and glory

any fabled spring created by the colorful imagination of human intellect.

We, brothers and sisters, have a living hope!

Good morning today is Thursday Sept 2, 2010 and today we are discussing 1 Peter 1:22-2:10. 1 Peter 1:3 tells us of the glorious truth we have in our living hope. Jesus conquered death at the cross! Our hope is not in vain, it is not dead. Because of what Jesus accomplished we can be absolutely certain and confident in God's plan to restore us to proper relationship with Him and therefore eternal life. Now THAT'S a fountain!

So our scripture for today delineates the proper response to receiving this wonderful free gift that, by the way exceeds even the most fanciful fantasies emanating from the most gifted of human writers. A quick aside here, I recall just after the movie *Avatar* was released many were profoundly depressed because they wanted so desperately to live in the beautiful fantasy world of Pandora. Gosh! If they only knew the place Jesus has prepared for us their depression would give way to unbridled joy in an instant!

But, I digress. Let's explore Peter's very clear discussion pertaining to our responsibilities as believers to the wonderful free gift of salvation. God's grace and the work of the cross is a free gift that renders all men candidates for salvation. However, candidacy does not confer salvation. Action is required on the part of the believer (or, believer-to-be I should

say). We must respond in faith to receive this gift and convert our candidacy, rendered possible by God's grace, to salvation. God did the heavy lifting for sure, now we must get our minds around "faith" so we can be assured of our salvation and therefore live victoriously. As Pastor Frank Burns made clear this past Sunday, "faith" is not simply reciting a prayer. There actually needs to be a measurable change in the mind and life of the faithful. In God's foreknowledge He knows each of our hearts and who is saved after placing their trust in Jesus. We humans, of course, have no such foreknowledge. Further, lest I be misunderstood, we are NOT called to judge the eternal state of another. Please don't think I am claiming to have a salvation barometer; I do not. Nor do I go around making assessment of another's eternal security, Heaven forbid! I am unqualified. That is God's job alone! However, there are some Biblical truths worth heeding here. The uncomfortable truth is that unrepentant and unregenerate living is NOT consistent with holy living and therefore calls into question the eternal state of that particular person. Now, these words sound alarm bells and sirens in this sinner's mind. Scripture such as this at once brings me to the sober position of reverence and fear and therefore instantly restores humility which is the proper perspective of a believer. How many times have I laid awake at night and cry out to our Lord: "Oh my how so ever short I fall, I

am a wretched sinner and so unworthy...”? I realize, after all, that each day I am breathing is yet another day to which I have been extended grace.

Faith therefore is manifested by our response to God’s free gift. Like the wind, we cannot “see” faith *per se*, but we can see its fruit. So, in 1 Pet 1:22-25 we read that Jesus’ work on the cross necessarily leads to regeneration: a new birth and a transformed character. This new character is to faith as the swaying palm trees are to the wind. It is an outward manifestation that is readily observable.

1 Pet 2:2-3 reads: *Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation-- if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.* So growth is anticipated in those who have “tasted” God’s grace. What is the spiritual milk we long for? It is God’s word. We cannot and will not grow outside of His nourishing word. Chuck Smith talks about people craving sensationalism and cool experiences. They want to taste the hot fudge sundaes of life and want to draw their spiritual experience from such. However, such things nourish us not. Hot fudge may taste good but it leaves us feeling weak and anemic. We need the pure spiritual milk of the word. It is extremely vital that I understand as a believer that God’s word is my lifeline! Furthermore, to grow by the word I need to receive it with a certain attitude of heart; I need to have an honest, humble heart that is free of

malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy and all evil speaking.¹ If we have experienced God, tasted God's grace, then we should crave His word.

Healthy babies do not need to be admonished to approach the breast!

As we move into 1 Pet 2:4-8 we learn that we are gloriously identified in Christ in an intimate way, we are identified as God's own. We are the living stones of Christ's spiritual temple. We, as the Jews, have a temple. Ours however, is a spiritual temple. Further, we are a holy priesthood and we offer ourselves as spiritual sacrifices. As living stones we do not function very well alone, we must be in relationship so that we help form the spiritual temple that is right now being built for the Kingdom of God.

We read that the Jewish leaders rejected Jesus and in doing so rejected the chief cornerstone of the superior spiritual temple. This cornerstone has become their stumbling block. So, what should have been their salvation is now their great woe².

Finally, in 1 Pet 2:9-10 we learn that we are a royal priesthood, we are His special people. So, in response to this Peter is very clear what our mandate is: we are to declare the God's goodness to the lost. This scripture brings us front and center to South Shore Community Church's mission and

¹ Guzik, David, *BLB*, Commentary 1 Peter 2

² Time and space do not permit a full discussion on the fascinating topic here but note the following scripture for your reference: Psalm 118 and Jesus as the cornerstone; Isa 8 and Jesus as the stumbling stone; Isa 28 and Jesus as the founding stone; Dan 2 and Jesus as the supernatural stone; 1 Cor 10:4 and Jesus as the rock that gave Israel water in the wilderness.

vision: We are to GO TO the unchurched and hurting in our neighborhoods, marketplace and schools with the love and acceptance of Jesus Christ. So, as we journey forth in our Dangerous Church series I pray that we keep in mind not only the awesome promise and free gift our faithful God has bestowed upon us but balance that with the sober reality that we have the responsibility to be disciples and grow in our faith through the nourishing of the word that will manifest in our love for one another and holy discontent for the lost in our community. I pray for the wisdom and discernment of all our pastors and each and everyone of my South Shore family.

So, lets each invite someone to church this week! I would encourage you to contact me with any questions or comments you may have about today's Soaring or the Dangerous Church series at jmoritz@southshorechurch.com and also let me know if you have any interest in a blog site where we can dialogue on Soaring topics. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this! Until next week, have a blessed week, this is John Moritz signing off, over and out!

Blessings,

John Moritz
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