

What Now?

Sunday 4/15/07

Opening story: Church Signs

Bible Reference [Isaiah 53:1-6](#) Read

History lesson ... The War of 1812

- Called the Second American Revolution
- A war the U.S. was not prepared to fight ... military forces reduced only 12,000 scattered troops
- American seamen kidnapped and forced to serve aboard English war ships (Impressment) keelhauling
- Native Americans encouraged to attack American settlements
- The Capitol and Presidential mansion set on fire by the British ... the mansion was repainted white to cover scorch marks and would forever be known as the \_\_\_\_\_
- A little known writer named Francis Scott Key etched a poem he called the Star Spangled Banner
- The final battle of the war, the Battle of New Orleans, after a treaty of peace had already been signed ... because of poor communications they failed to realize that the war had already won the war!

Last week was Easter Sunday, a day most Christians more correctly call **Resurrection Sunday**, the day that Jesus triumphantly arose from the grave.

Even we recognize Easter Sunday as the moment of triumphant exultation the real victory occurred three days earlier while Jesus was still on the cross.

**Among Jesus' last words** were these ... (in Greek) *It is finished*, it is done, completed!

The war was over the price paid in full ... But all his followers could see was death, Jesus had been swallowed up by death and them along with him.

This was the emotional reality they tried to make sense of ... their heartbreak and confusion was real!

Read text: [Isaiah 53: 1 – 6](#) reread

The old expression the more things change the more they stay the same rings true.

In the 2000 years since Jesus was here much about the way we live our lives has changed.

Using science and technology we have tried to insulate ourselves, taking preventive steps to protect ourselves against every outcome and possibility.

In a type of rebellion we have unsuccessfully attempted to separate ourselves from the need for God, wanting to control own destiny and be the masters of our universe.

Yet we still experience the same uncertainty the same pangs from the sudden and unexpected trials of life.

And they come in so many shapes and sizes ... illness, personal attack, emotional break down from overload or the threat of financial ruin.

As Christians we often feel confused, especially when we factor in the idea that we are his children ... why isn't he helping us ... why did he allow this why is this happening?

We lose sight of God accomplished ... because we are consumed by pressing problem

Part of our problem is our **attitude** part is **our understanding** of who God is.

1. First our attitude ... God is not our servant; he is not the genie in the bottle waiting to grant your every wish. We are not his master ... he is ours.

Jesus said to his closest followers ... If you do the will of my father I no longer call you servants but friends.

Second our understanding of God as our father is often skewed as well. Perhaps because we have spent so little time seeking Him and so much time asking him for requests.

In his book [A Heart Like Jesus](#), Max Lucado speaks of some friends of his (see page 34)

God is looking for a willing heart for a listening ear for a dedicated heart  
But He wants more!

God will allow us to go through the fires of testing to get our attention to fashion into the instrument for his purposes not ours.

[Isaiah 43: 1-3](#) has hung in my school locker for more than 15 years.

It was a constant reminder to me of the under girding power of God in perhaps the darkest moments of my life.

A time for a while that I lived in constant fear and wondered if God had abandoned me.

God brought me through those years with a new understanding of Him based on personal experience forged through fire.

God wants us to know him not in convenient way not with a casual heart. God longs for those who will follow him out of conviction with hearts that burn to know him.

Paul the apostle wrote in Romans ... that I may know him and the power of his resurrection ... but added and the fellowship of his sufferings.

God wants us to follow him for who he is not for what we can gain by being his disciples.

This past month has been a difficult one for my family. On March 30 Jennifer was at her doctor's office getting the news that she had diverticulitis while I was at the cardiologist having just completed a stress test and being told that I had two perhaps three major blockages in the arteries leading to my heart and that I would need angioplasty invasive surgery and at least two stents to open up the heart.

I was floored yet somehow calm and I asked the same questions we all do ... WHY?

It didn't seem to make sense, it didn't seem to go along with God's personal promises and plans He had spoken to me about.

**But only is God is God**, there will be times that we are not going to understand him and no amount of kicking and screaming or tantrum throwing is going to change what you're going through.

Jennifer continued to suffer with the condition for another couple of weeks missing work and a scheduled paid in advance flight to Iowa and a family reunion to celebrate her parents 80<sup>th</sup> birthdays. I would find myself on the procedural table of Dr. Lin awake for a procedure that I would be awake for.

Looking back now it is so clear how God was working on my behalf through this entire ordeal. The doctors and surgeons selected the hospital the timing for appointments even having my son in law John Dobrie present to observe and later share what happened during the procedure.

I discovered that all three were more than 80% blocked and the central descending artery ... known as the widow maker was 97 – 98% blocked ... John shared with me that had I suffered a heart attack I would have probably not recovered.

Was God in control? To make sure that I understood the point this past Thursday coming back from a dental appointment ...

God knows what will happen in the next few seconds and every moment for the rest of our lives.

The question then is will you trust him when you go through the fiery trial will you allow him to develop you into the person that he is able to use into a person whose heart burns to serve him.

[Jeremiah 29: 10 – 11](#) For I know the plans I have for you says the Lord, plans for good and not for disaster to give you a future and a hope.

