

This morning we continue on our journey Climbing Mountains:



We're climbing to see what the Lord wants us to see and experience in our lives. Do you feel like you're climbing...like you're growing in the Lord, or are you still sitting at base camp at the bottom of the mountain? Deciding to climb means you have decided to suffer. It means you are willing to do the hard things in life. Most Christians never climb. Base camp is littered with people...masses and masses of people and when you look up at the mountain...very few are actually climbing. Why? Because it's painful...it's dying to yourself. It's seeking the Lord above anything and everything else in life.

For me...over the last several weeks...I truly feel I've been climbing. No there's nothing good in me and I realize that and that's why I left base camp. I want Jesus. And honestly...I've truly been experiencing the presence of the Jesus and His Spirit working in my heart and life like I've literally never experienced before in my life. On my climb, I've seen things about myself, about my life, I've never seen and I'm grateful...because I'm winning victories in my life because I've surrendered areas I didn't even realize needed surrendering...my thought-life...my motives...my family, even you and this...the ministry...EVERYTHING to Him. It's wonderful! How 'bout you today? Are you climbing? Are you experiencing the presence of Jesus?

Church, in my spirit over the last several weeks...I've been through a deep refining process...a truly gut-wrenching process of losing everything...just to have it given back to me. And that's exactly what Jesus said He would do:

Matthew 16:24-25

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. **25** For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

That's what it means to climb! You lay it all down so you can climb! Singularly focused on Jesus!!

Today we continue on in that journey by looking to Hebrews chapter 4 and seeing Jesus is our High Priest. What we'll see this morning will culminate in the sharing of Communion, the Lord's Supper together at the end of the service. Follow along with me...

Hebrews 4:11-16

¹¹Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. ¹²For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. ¹⁴Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Rest...isn't that what we all want? Rest...that's another word for peace...BTW...isn't that what we do when we get done climbing to the top of the mountain...REST...

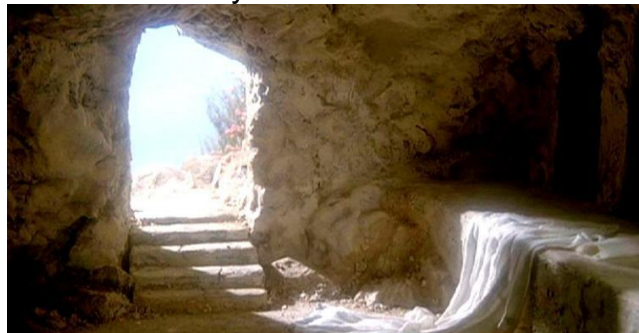
That's what Pastor Dale talked about last week. But, we'll never rest in this life apart from the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. Yet, many people try to find happiness and meaning and REST apart from Jesus and they're doing is just putting water in a bucket with holes in it. Like this. Is this you?



Folks, that's futility!

Let me tell you what Jesus does...He fills the holes...and only HE can fill the holes! Why is that the case? Because Jesus is THE LIFE and He is the ONLY One who can fill our lives. Money won't fill your life...nor will: sex, power, success, fame, people... Religion won't fill your life...nor will Buddha, Confucius, Joseph Smith...or even attending a church service. Only Jesus can fill your life!

And I'll tell you why...because He's the only One that did this...



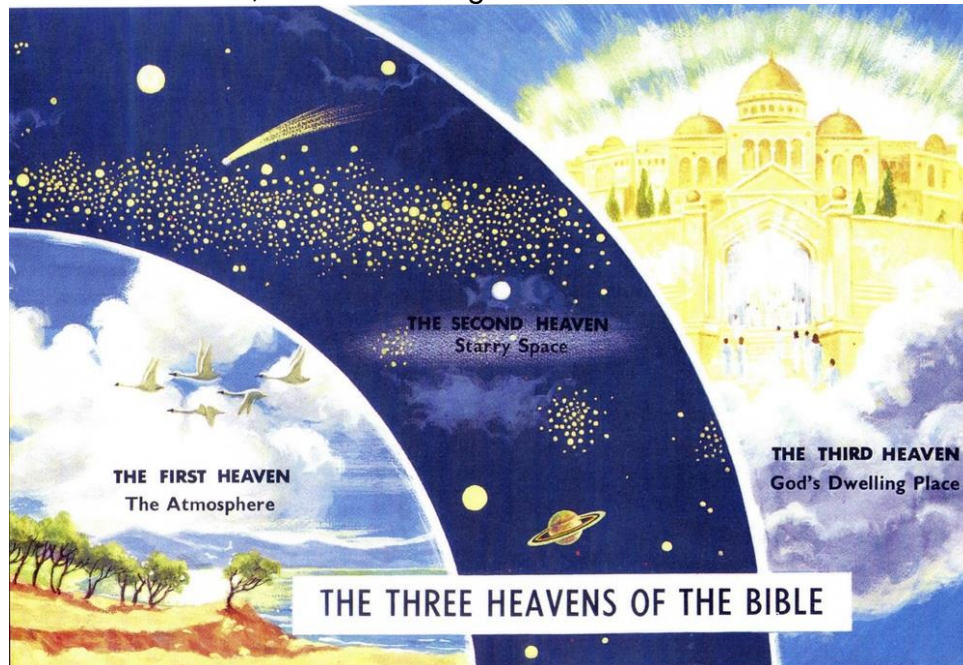
He rose from the dead...and NO ONE ELSE has ever done that.

Church...let me be clear, I'm not the sharpest knife in the drawer and I might have been born at night, but it wasn't last night... and here's what I've come to know and am convinced of: *If a man can rise from the dead...I need to listen to what He says*, don't you think? Hey and think with me...**and what did Jesus do after He rose from the dead**...40 days later? He rose right into the sky...He ascended through the heavens back to His throne in glory! **And that's verse 14...watch this as we take more ground climbing the mountain!**

Hebrew 4:14

14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

When Jesus rose from this earth, He went through the three heavens. What are they?



We talked about this Wed. night...we're talking about heaven...6:30 pm...This Wed. we're going to look at what it's going to be like to see Jesus face to face!

Listen now, the first heaven is the atmosphere of this earth. The second heaven is the domain of the sun, moon and stars, and the third heaven is the dwelling place of God. You see, when Jesus left this earth, He didn't have a jetpack, and He wasn't riding on the back of the Space Shuttle...no...His body lifted off this earth and went to heaven and one day, there will be millions upon millions of people who will do the same when the Rapture takes place. Jesus literally led the way!

How did He do that? Because He is "Jesus the Son of God." **Did you see that in verse 14?** You have there the name that represents His humanity and His deity. Jesus...His earthly name...and "Son of God," representing His deity! He is the God/Man.

Now knowing all of this...the Apostle Paul, (in writing to those Hebrews/Jews, turned Christians), tells them to **"hold fast to their confession!"** And hasn't that been the issue. Remember as we've studied together how some of these folks Paul has been writing to have considered walking away. Just like the children of Israel in the Wilderness desert who wanted to go back to Egypt when there was no water. DON'T DO IT!! That's the plea offered to those people in the first century and to

those of us in the 21st century. Hold fast...keep climbing! Don't stop! And why don't we stop, Church?

Hebrews 4:15

¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

We don't stop because Jesus is climbing ahead of us...He's blazed the way! He's our Sherpa. See this man on the left in red...



That man is from Nepal and he takes people up to the top of Mt. Everest. You see, on our climb in this life...we don't have a man from Nepal...we have the God/Man from heaven, Jesus! He's leading the way because He knows the way to heaven...because He's there now!

Listen, after Jesus rose from the dead He went to heaven and showed His Father the sin-debt had been paid with His own blood. And He did this in the role of the High Priest. What is a High Priest, well, we'll go into this in much more detail next week, but for now, let me show you this picture...



That's a picture of the High Priest. What did a High Priest do? Once a year, he would go into the inner most part of the Temple called the Holy of Holies, passing through a massive veil and he sprinkled blood on the ark of the covenant to make atonement-payment for the sins of the people.

Why? Why did he have to do that? Well, we've got to go back to the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were given the choice as to whether or not they would love and obey God or if they would go their own way. Obviously, they chose to disobey and in so doing, sin came into the world and we have all been cursed by this sin. So, what did God do? He put the eternal plan in place to send His Son to pay for that sin...but, first, He covered the sin of Adam and Eve with the skin of an animal...



And so, obviously, what does that mean...there was the shedding of blood. And from that point forward...Adam and Eve passed down to their sons the proper sacrifice was via the blood of an animal. And so, this continued throughout the Old Testament for hundreds and hundreds of years...millions and millions of lambs, bulls, goats sacrificed...blood...and more blood... Why?

Hebrews 9:22b

without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

But, could the blood of an animal EVER cover the sins of human beings? No! It would take a human to do it! And who is the only One who could do that? A perfect, sinless spotless-Lamb of God, HIM!



And it's because of that sacrifice...he became our Faithful High Priest! See it again:

Hebrews 4:15-16

¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Listen carefully and we'll be done... This will make sense to you. Listen...most ancient rulers were absolutely unapproachable by anyone except their closest advisors. Forget about getting a meeting with the King. It would be like us trying to get into the Whitehouse to see the President, by just thinking we could walk in there. Are you kidding? Forget it! But, that's not the case with our King... He says, "Come," and don't just come...but come boldly because you are family!

Listen, to these Jews turned Christians, this was an astounding fact, because as an Israelite, they could never come to the High Priest for help at a moment's notice. That would have been impossible. And they certainly couldn't go inside the Holy of Holies.

But, oh listen church family...do you know where the holy of holies is today? It's not in a Temple...it's the throne room in heaven and Jesus says, "Come boldly...come NEAR the throne of WHAT?" Did you see it in verse 16...GRACE... What is grace? **It's getting what we don't deserve!** And guess what...once we get there...and get grace...do you know what else is there (vs. 16)...MERCY. And what is mercy? Is NOT GETTING what we deserve! I want you to see this again...



Folks don't ever forget what Jesus offers to us. No, He's not distant... or aloof... or unapproachable... NO! He says, "Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I'll give you rest!" You see church family, He's our Sherpa...remember...



He's ready and willing to clip to you and show you the way! But will you clip to Him? Will you leave base camp and climb?

Here's the thing...this is critical...this is the double-edged sword of the Word in verse 12. If you clip to Him...you get life, peace, rest... But, if you don't clip to Him...here's the other edge of that sword...you are left without hope and that's the same as being left at base camp...and the earth opening up and swallowing everyone there.

Church family, when we began this morning, I showed you this verse...Matthew 16:24... we'll end here...

Matthew 16:24-26

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for

my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

And that's Hebrews 4:13, we'll all give an account. Hey...come...don't wait! Jesus is waiting today with open arms.
