

The Anchor Holds

Have you ever been at the beach playing in the surf and looked back toward the shore only to realize that you have somehow drifted away from the point where your beach blanket and chair was set-up. There is nothing more troubling, especially when you're a kid and you are trying to figure out where your family went as you come back up on the beach. You see, when you are in the ocean you do not realize the water current is slowly pulling you down the beach. You're playing along in the surf and you do not realize what is happening. It feels like everyone on the beach has moved on you, like they are playing some cruel trick, but in reality they didn't move, you DID.

When it comes to our relationship with God sometimes we experience the same thing. We are bumping along through life and because of all the currents that are tugging at us (the culture, our friends, our jobs, our families, our financial challenges, our hobbies) all of sudden we look up on the beach and we are like, **"Where did God go?"** He was right there when I jumped in (to my day, my week, or my year) and now I can't seem to locate Him as I am looking to dry off, take a break from the rough waves that are knocking me all around, and maybe eat a little snack while I rest. What happened? Well I can tell you this, God didn't move, you did! If God didn't move, then How Did I Get Here? How did I end up where I am now?

The currents of life are always working against us and it is vitally important that you anchor yourself down because when you are in the middle of the surf of life you don't realize when you are drifting down the shore and away from God. The writer of Hebrews reminds us of this fact.

Hebrews 2:1-4 (NIV) We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. **2** For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, **3** how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. **4** God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Welcome to **Week 1** of our new series called **"How Did I Get Here?"** We got the idea for this series from a book written by Christine Cain dealing with this very concept of drifting when it comes to our relationship with God. Over the next Four Weeks we are going to highlight 4 signs to help you recognize when you are drifting and what you can do to make sure you are properly connected to the true anchor of your soul - Jesus Christ so that you don't drift. We in essence want to do what **Hebrews 2** challenges us to do so that we will all finish our faith race well by eliminating our tendency to spiritually drift when it comes to our relationship with God. So as we begin this series today let's **PRAY** together and then we will jump in.

The dangerous thing about drifting is that we can be doing good things and even feel like we are moving forward but actually be drifting and not realize it. We could be working on our education, trying to get a promotion at work, raising our family, attending church faithfully, serving in a ministry, and yet all the while be drifting in our relationship with God. Couple that with the

difficulties of life that we experience as we make our way through life and we could be drifting even further. Such as, trying to faithfully serve God while experiencing things like disappointment with a relationship you thought was solid. Betrayal of a close friend. Being skipped over for that promotion for the third time. Just being tired and worn down by life. Forgetting the vision behind why you do what you do. Or a loss of passion for what you do.

The bottom line is it is easy to drift and it becomes even easier if we stop believing God in the midst of all that we are trying to do. And this brings us to the first sign that we may be drifting when it comes to our relationship with God - **YOU HAVE STOPPED TRUSTING JESUS!** In her Book "**How Did I Get Here?**" Christine Cain says that a true sign you are a drift is that you have stopped TRUSTING and you have started CONTROLLING. Does that describe you? Have you stopped trusting God in the everyday activity of your life? Have you stopped trusting when things don't turn out like you expected them to? Have you found yourself in a place where you have stopped trusting God and you have started to take matters into your own hands? Rather than ask God how He is going to solve your current problem, have you started asking yourself what you are going to do about it. If this describes you, then you may be drifting.

The one thing you cannot afford to do if you want to keep from drifting in your relationship with God is to cut yourself lose from **the anchor of your soul - JESUS.**

Hebrews 6:13-20 (NIV) When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, **14** saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." **15** And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. **16** People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. **17** Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. **18** God did this so that, by two unchangeable things The two unchangeable things are 1) God Himself and 2) His very oath of promise

18 God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. **19** We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, **20** where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. The HOPE being referred to here is the promise of salvation which is secured for us by JESUS. He is the high priest who goes before God into the inner sanctuary on our behalf. No one else has access to Father like Jesus the SON.

If you have ever been out on a boat fishing and you find a great spot where you want to fish then it is important to drop anchor right there. If you don't the boat will drift from the spot where the fish are and pretty soon you will be yards away from the good fishing spot. If you are in the ocean you could end up miles away. When it comes to our relationship with God Jesus is the anchor that keeps us from drifting. What exactly are we anchoring ourselves with? We are to anchor ourselves with the **PROMISES of God made full and complete in Jesus Christ!** Here is the thing about an anchor. Our anchor is only as good as the rope or chain tethered to that anchor. If the anchor becomes disconnected from the rope that the anchor is tethered to then

the anchor is of little use to us. How do we tether ourselves to JESUS our ANCHOR? We tether ourselves to Jesus by **FAITH.**

James 1:6 (NIV) But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. Without faith we will get tossed around by the waves because we are not fixed to the anchor.

Romans 15:13 (NIV) May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Without faith the anchor cannot do for us what it was designed to do. In the case of Jesus the anchor for our soul, He is to fill us with JOY and PEACE through the power and presence of His Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 11:6 (NIV) And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

The Theologian **Charles Spurgeon** said this, ***“The [Christian] believes [God] to be too wise to err and too good to be unkind; he trusts Him where he cannot trace Him (or where he cannot see Him) , looks up to Him in the darkest hour, and believes that all is well.”***

It is by FAITH that we are tethered to the promises of God. It is by faith that we are tethered to JESUS the anchor of our soul!!

But we must be aware of what it is that will try to cut us loose from our anchor. It wants to weaken our chain and cause us to break loose from Jesus and his promises. What is it that seeks to untether us from our anchor?

DOUBT & FEAR! What we need to be aware of is WHAT IF questions that pop up in our heart. You and I begin to drift toward doubt and fear when WHAT IF questions begin to sound off in our life.

What if I lose my job?

What if I never get married?

What if the car breaks down?

What if I get sick?

What if my kid doesn't go to college?

What if... What if..... What if

The WHAT IF question will lead us down a road to doubt and fear and eventually we will start drifting by making decisions based on WHAT IF's that may or may not ever come. We cannot let our thoughts and feelings determine our reality. Instead, we need to be grounded in the truth. Our thoughts and feelings are either signals to pay attention to or noise to ignore. If Fear instead

of faith becomes our motivation then soon we will be a drift and severed from our anchor. When the WHAT IF questions start coming I want you to stop and start asking **WHO IS MY GOD?** You need to stop asking WHAT IF and start saying SO WHAT IF IT DOES and reattach your chain to the anchor of your soul. When WHAT IF starts coming you need to dive into the PROMISES. Promises that remind us that:

God is GOOD - (Psalm 119:68)

God is LOVE, and His love endures forever (1 John 4:7-8 & Psalm 136)

God is FAITHFUL to us and He keeps all His promises (Heb. 10:23)

God FIGHTS for us (2 Chronicles 20:15)

God is KIND and always ready to forgive (Psalm 86:5)

God is in CONTROL (Isaiah 14:24)

God is JUST (Psalm 50:6)

Rather than go down the rabbit hole of WHAT IF, we need to take comfort and anchor ourselves in who God is and say, **"SO WHAT IF IT DOES? IT DOESN'T CHANGE WHO MY GOD IS!"**

Christine Cain says this when it comes to wading through any confusion we may have concerning a struggle we may be going through, ***"My starting point should always be that God is God, and I am not. If I do not understand something God is doing, it does not suggest a problem with God . It just means I don't get it. At least, not at the moment. We rarely have the whole picture all at once. It's as if we are holding a piece of the jigsaw puzzle, and God is holding the other 999 pieces that we don't even know exist yet. Just because we can't see all the things He is doing doesn't mean we shouldn't trust God and should instead believe that He isn't working"***

The bottom line is, if we want to avoid drifting we must stay anchored in Christ by developing an EVEN IF FAITH when WHAT IF questions arise. This is the kind of faith we see demonstrated by Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego in **Daniel 3**.

Daniel 3:14-18(NIV) and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? **15** Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. **17** If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. **18** But

even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Even IF I get divorced, I will trust God.

Even IF the doctor calls and there's something seriously wrong, I will trust God.

Even IF I lose my job, I will trust God.

Even if I don't get married, I will trust God.

Even IF I lose everything, I will trust God

Even IF...., I will trust God.

We must stay anchored to Jesus by faith and not let DOUBT and FEAR sever us from our ANCHOR!

Worship Comes Back Up

Invitation:

Are you drifting? As we close our time together I want to challenge you to do a personal inventory of your RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, your RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS, and of your OWN HEART.

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD:

- Have you stopped pursuing God and started deprioritizing your time with HIM?
- Have you stopped consuming God's Word and started living off of leftovers?
- Have you stopped responding to the SPIRIT at once and started delaying?
- Have you stopped caring and started growing callous about former convictions?
- Have you stopped praying and started obsessing?
-

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS:

- Have you stopped forgiving and started harboring?
- Have you stopped sharing and started withholding?
- Have you stopped laughing and started growing more critical?
- Have you stopped responding with grace and started responding with impatience?

MY OWN HEART:

- Have you stopped dreaming and started settling?
- Have you stopped hoping and started sinking into despair?
- Have you stopped feeling and started growing numb?
- Have you stopped having passion and started having resentment?