

05/02/10

Who Are You #4 – Adrift or Anchored? 1 Corinthians 15:58

- I should probably warn you in advance that the tale I'm going to use to introduce our message this morning is a bit gruesome...it's a true story, and the fact that some of the elements are so horrible actually makes the potential spiritual applications easier to grasp...
- **[pic #1]** -- Debbie Kiley was an experienced sailor who by age 24 had already won world-class awards in her sport...she was actually the first woman to finish the Whitbread Round the World race...which was quite an accomplishment...
- Debbie was hired by a company to transport a yacht named "the trashman" **[pic #2]** -- from Maine to Florida...
 - I think if I owned a yacht like that I would have come up with a better name [perhaps "visitation," so anytime someone was looking for me, my professional assistant could say – well, he's out on visitation...]
 - but anyway, Debbie and four other people were hired to deliver this yacht to its owner on Florida...
 - The designated skipper for the voyage was a man named John, who was a skilled sailor but also a renowned drinker...he also brought along his girlfriend Meg who knew practically nothing about sailing...
 - then there was a man named Mark who was very similar to John – very familiar with both boats and booze...
 - and then Brad Cavanaugh, the only person that Debbie knew very well...
- when they left Maine, the weather report was clear...but on the evening of the second day, things deteriorated rapidly...and they were facing 35 foot waves and wind gusting to 60 knots...
 - for perspective, that would be waves higher than the roof of our gymnasium...so think about being on a yacht, with waves higher than the top of the gym...
 - the other problem was that John the skipper, and Meg and Mark were down below boozing it up...
 - in fact, they left Brad and Debbie on watch for 11 straight hours because they were too drunk to come relieve them...
 - in those conditions, that's practically unheard of...
- Finally the three of them staggered up on deck and allowed Brad and Debbie to go down and try to rest...
 - the storm was still raging, but because they were completely exhausted, Brad and Debbie actually fall asleep...
 - the next thing Debbie remembered was Brad waking her up and saying – C'mon, we're going, we have to leave now...
 - she figured the others had somehow contacted the coast guard and they were being rescued...
 - as soon as she got out of her bunk, she found that she was already knee deep in water...
 - what had happened was that the other three decided they couldn't stay awake any longer with their hangovers, so they tied steering wheel off and went back to bed...and the yacht was now sinking...
- they tried to deploy an inflatable life boat...as soon as they did it just blew away...
 - they did the same with a second emergency craft...which they couldn't even turn right side up...

- so they jumped off the yacht onto the upside-down life raft and hung on, literally for dear life...
 - Meg, the skipper's girlfriend, got caught in the yacht's rigging and suffered severe cuts which were intensely painful in the salt water and also attracted sharks...
 - they finally were able to turn the life raft right side up...and get everyone in...
 - as they were doing so, Mark kept telling Debbie – stop kicking me --- only she wasn't kicking him...they later realized it was the sharks...
- now they're in a tiny raft...in a terrible storm...with very little hope of survival...
 - I'll spare you all the details...but on day three the two men who had been below deck drinking couldn't stand the thirst anymore, so they drank salt water...
 - Debbie said that by the next day...in her words, the two men were "raging nuts"...
 - you can read the details if you wish in Debbie's book Untamed Seas...**[pic #3]**
 - but John believed he saw land, even though they were over 100 miles from shore, and he jumped out of the life raft and into the shark infested waters...
 - later Mark was cold and believed he could warm up by getting in the water and met a similar fate...
 - on the fourth night Meg succumbed to blood poisoning due to her injuries...
- so here's Debbie and Brad drifting and bobbing in tumultuous seas, having watched three of their crew members perish...
- Amazingly, a Russian freighter spotted them in the ocean...
 - **[pic #4]** this is the first picture taken by a Russian man on board the ship...
- the crew threw out a lifeline to Brad and Debbie, and since there wasn't any signs of additional sharks, they actually got out and swam to the lifeline...**[pic #5]**
 - imagine what that would have felt like, for the first time in days...to have something to hold onto that was stable...that was secure...that was tethered to an object that was solid and secure...
 - they went from being adrift to being anchored...and they were rescued...
- that's the question I want to pose to you this morning from a spiritual perspective...**are you Adrift or Anchored?**
- with that in mind, please open your Bible to 1 Corinthians chapter 15...[page 138 of the back section of the Bible under the chair in front of you...]
- we're in the middle of a 7 week series entitled **Who Are You? – Coming to Grips with Your Identity in Christ.**
 - we've been trying to point out that we all have different lens, or ways we choose to think about ourselves...answers to the question, who are you?...
 - and once those glasses are on, they impact the way we respond to the people and events around us...
 - and the truth of the matter is...frequently, those glasses contain ideas that are patently wrong...and therefore whatever else flows out of that is going to be skewed as well...
- so the point of this series is to encourage you to take a careful look at your glasses, at the way you would answer the question "Who are you?..."...and if any of those answers are incorrect---to replace those lens with biblical truth...
- in our first study, we looked at Zechariah chapter 3, and asked...are you...**Ashamed or Forgiven?**
- then Pastor Green posed the question from Romans 6, are you **Bound or Free?**

- last week we looked at Ephesians 1 along with a couple of other important parallel passages and asked, are you **Rejected or Adopted?**
- for followers of Jesus Christ, we've identified 3 very important answers to the question we've posed – who am I?...I'm forgiven, and I'm free, and I'm adopted...and the goal is to respond to the circumstances around us in a way that is consistent with that proper view of self...
- let's read 1 Corinthians 15 – the great resurrection chapter in the Bible...and we're heading to verse 58 – but to get a running start, let's begin in verse 50...
- **read 1 Corinthians 15:50-58...**
- so we're asking – are you **Adrift or Anchored?**...and with the time we have remaining, let's consider **3 ways to think about our stability in Christ.**

I. Who You Were

- we'll eventually do some specific work in our key verses in 1 Cor. 15 – but we're going to start with several parallel passages we'll just have on the screen for sake of time...
 - but please think with me about the ways that you and I were adrift prior to coming to Christ...
 - and every person's story is different...but for many of us, these concepts will resonate with days gone by...
 - maybe we weren't drifting around in a lifeboat in shark-infested waters hopelessly looking for some kind of anchor or lifeline...or maybe we were...for one thing, we were...

A. Morally adrift.

- one of the challenges to not knowing Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is – how in the world do you determine right from wrong?...
- and even if you could somehow answer that question, how do you find the power and motivation to do what is right?...
- and the response to both questions is – you don't...
- we were morally adrift...
- the apostle Peter said a lot about this in his first epistle...consider these verses:
 - 1 Peter 1:14 - As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,**
 - your former lusts – the things you wanted so badly you were willing to sin in order to get them...or you sinned when you did not get them...
 - would anyone here want to say – I never had any of those?...
 - 1 Peter 2:11 - Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.**
 - this isn't a calm sea on which men and women are pictured as lazily drifting along...this is a war--raging in the inner man and creating all sorts of conflicts within and without...and the problem is – there's no anchor...no lifeline...no reliable way to determine which desires are right and which ones are wrong...
 - 1 Peter 4:2-3 - ...live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.**
 - how hard would it be to find illustrations of this all over our culture...

- an NFL quarterback is suspended for 6 games for his lewd behavior with a woman in a bar and it doesn't even faze us...
 - one of the best known golfers of all times trashes his marriage and his career and that costs him a month or two off...
 - CNN comes to Purdue this week to report on, of all things, a group of girls and their body parts...
 - I don't mention illustrations like that to shame others or elevate ourselves, but just to point out the terrible condition of being morally adrift...
- then there's the issue of being...**B. Emotionally adrift.**

- you may have already been thinking about this passage...

James 1:5-8 - But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

- without a personal relationship with God, how do you manage your emotions?...
 - what do you do with the doubts that are raging in your soul?...
 - and how do you make decisions?...that's the point of the phrase "double-minded..."
 - you're going this way, and then that way – maybe this is right/maybe that's right...
 - maybe I should say this/maybe I should say that...[etc]...
 - you could also bring in the issue of how effective the world's treatment of emotional problems seems to be...
 - If you read the NY Times, you may have noticed an article this past Monday entitled Mind Over Meds written by a psychiatrist named Daniel Carlat.
 - Dr. Carlat was lamenting the fact that his profession has degenerated into brief 15-20 minute conversations with patients followed by a prescription for a psychotropic drug...
 - other studies, by the way, have shown that the actual discussion time with many prescribing physicians is more like 3-4 minutes...
 - He said, of his own profession..."**It may be time to consider whether the term 'psychopharmacologist' is actually doing damage to the field of psychiatry...In a recent article, three Harvard psychiatrists have pointed out that no other medical specialty has carved out a separate 'pharmacology' subspecialty. Good doctoring, they remind us, involves perfecting all the skills relevant to healing and deploying them when needed.**"
 - in one especially transparent moment, Dr. Carlat said, "**When I started to probe my patients, I realized I barely knew most of them.**"
 - I realize that's a controversial topic – but the point I'm trying to make is – it is possible to be emotionally adrift...feeling like you're being "driven and tossed by the wind."
- now, let's drill deeper...what's the source of being morally and emotionally adrift?...

C. Theologically adrift.

- think about these concepts....

1. Halting between two opinions of God Himself.

- you may remember that passage from the book of 1 Kings...
- in fact, if you are reading through the Bible using the study guide we distributed at the beginning of the year, you read this text on Tuesday, the very day I prepared this message...

- where the prophet Elijah brought the people together along with King Ahab who had allowed them to worship the god Baal...
- so Elijah had them round up 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel – do you remember that?...and he said...
- **1 Kings 18:21 - Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people did not answer him a word.**
- see, that’s what we’re talking about – theologically drifting...not even able to decide what you believe about God...and what’s amazing about that text is – even when the prophet laid the issues out there in clear and undeniable terms...the people would not even answer him...what a terrible state for the so-called people of God to be in...

2. Being tossed around by different religious ideas.

- you have probably also been thinking about this passage...
- **Ephesians 4:14 - As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;**
- see, apart from a relationship to Christ and a commitment to biblical truth, we’re liable to believe whatever religious idea might be blowing in the wind...
- and as a result, there’s our metaphor again, we were tossed here and there by waves...

3. Spiritually lukewarm.

- do you remember what Jesus said to the people in the church at Laodicea?...
- **Revelation 3:14-16 - To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. ‘So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.**

- so that’s the picture of unregenerate man...morally adrift, and emotionally adrift, and theologically adrift...nothing secure to hold onto, no anchor...being tossed here and there like that group of 5 people we talked about the beginning of our time together...
- and one of the reasons I used that story was to point out --- none of us are in this boat alone...are kids are watching whether we’re going to reach out for a lifeline...whether we’re going to try to find an anchor...
 - there are friends and family members in this boat with us...
 - being adrift is an extremely dangerous position for everyone involved...
- that is why a believer in Jesus Christ ought to be so very thankful for this fourth answer to our question Who are you?...because it is possible for you to have a life that is anchored in a relationship and in truth that will never let you go...
- the challenge is...beginning that relationship requires repentance...
 - remember, James spoke about being double-minded in chapter 1 of his book...
 - he used that phrase again in chapter 4 when he gave the solution...
 - **James 4:8-9 - Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.**
 - because it’s that kind of brokenness over your sin that leads to reach out for the life-line of the cross...

- and that's where this key verse from 1 Corinthians chapter 15 comes into the equation...after the most extended discussion of the resurrection of Jesus Christ found anywhere in the Bible, what do we read as the great conclusion?...[read 15:58]...
- so if you know Christ, who are you?...

II. Who You Are

A. Steadfast and immovable

- don't you love that concept?...
- instead of being adrift on a raging sea...you can have stability in your life because of your relationship with Christ...you can be anchored to something that will not fail...
- one of the great themes in the Bible is that our God is a Rock...you can tether your life to Him...
- **Deuteronomy 32:4 - The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He.**
- **1 Samuel 2:2 - There is no one holy like the LORD, indeed, there is no one besides You, nor is there any rock like our God.**
- **2 Samuel 22:47 - The LORD lives, and blessed be my rock; and exalted be God, the rock of my salvation,**
- **Psalm 18:2 - The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.**
- **Psalm 61:1-2 - Hear my cry, O God; Give heed to my prayer. From the end of the earth I call to You when my heart is faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.**
- when we talk about being anchored, we're not simply talking about being anchored to a concept---we're talking about being anchored to a person...
- [if time, could talk about how important it is to be tethered to a rock that is reliable – cf. you and Kris being in San Francisco, Alcatraz, Barney Fife referring to the prison in Mayberry as “the Rock”...]
- Paul says that you are...

B. Able to always abound in the work of the Lord.

- you say – how is that?...
- well, if Jesus Christ really is alive...and salvation is truly through His shed blood...that simplifies a lot of things...because now my life is focused on “the work of the Lord...”
- so consider the areas of instability we thought about at the beginning...
 - being morally adrift...
 - well, that's solved if Christ is your anchor...because the issue now is, what would be most pleasing to my Savior?...
 - it's not about my desires anymore – it's about His...
- it's not that I don't have any desires...it's that I filter them...
- the world doesn't get that...so many people think, well, to be true to myself, I have to act on whatever desire I can conjure up...that's moral suicide...
 - you need a filter...a way of deciding which desires should truly be acted upon...

- when you anchor your desires in the Person of Christ and the truth of His Word...you're not drifting around anymore...you're focused on conforming your desires to His...
 - what about being emotionally adrift...
 - you don't have to be a double-minded man who is constantly in doubt...
 - God has given us, in His Word, all we need for life and godliness...
 - **Psalm 19:7-10 - The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.**
 - this allows you to "abound in the work of the Lord" because there is no question about what the work of the Lord is...
 - and you don't have to be theologically adrift...
 - all of this gives you a sense of security and direction...
 - **Psalm 40:1-3 - I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me and heard my cry. He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay, And He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; many will see and fear And will trust in the LORD.**
 - contrast that to the feeling of being adrift in raging seas...I'll take having my feet upon a rock any day of the week...
 - what was the last part of the verse?... (knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord...)
- C. Finding Joy and Purpose in our toil.**
- sure, some of what God calls upon us to do is hard...
 - but you don't mind doing things that are hard if you've latched onto the lifeline...
 - in fact, Debbie and Brad had trouble getting up to the freighter because it wasn't equipped for rescue...
 - so they would get close to the ship, and of course they were exhausted...
 - and the undertow from the ship would pull them under the water and pull them along the barnacles on the bottom of the ship and tear their skin...
 - but you better believe they weren't letting go of those ropes...
 - [could develop challenging things the Lord has called upon some of us to do---but if we're anchored, we'll be steadfast, immovable, always abounding...relate this to the concept of having the right eyeglass lens on]

III. Where You're Going

A. Anchored in your hope.

Hebrews 6:17-20 - In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both

sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us...

- [if time, tie to our commitment to sound doctrine – discuss the upcoming BCC meeting and tie to the NY Times article...]

B. Anchored in your love.

2 Thessalonians 3:5 - May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.

- many of you who grew up in church have probably had this hymn going through your minds...

We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.

[tie to last week's Ladies conference...]

- [could also tie to where we are in the Capital Campaign and why people would give that sacrificially...]

C. Anchored in your purpose.

- Having this answer to the question "Who Are You" greatly simplifies your life...
- stability is a very good thing