

Sunday, October 5, 2014

Rekindling Our Passion – Living with Passion for Jesus

Philippians 1: 12-26; Colossians 1: 24 – 2: 7

End of our series on Rekindling Our Passion,
But a beginning point in living passionate lives centered in Christ Jesus.

Over the years I have come to discover that Life is Passion
– and for me Life, to live, to live with passion
– is Christ!

I think you know that Christ is central to all that I am

- central to my theology,
- central to my way of being,
- central to how I pastor,
- central to all who I am,

But you may not know why.

My life verse – my confession is this:

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live. The life I live now, I live by Christ who loved me and gave himself for me.”
(Gal. 2:20)

But I want to talk about resurrection today, rather than crucifixion.

Although Christ was resurrected once,
I have been resurrected at least 3x's in my years.

There is so much we face in our day-to-day existence that robs us of life and we become comfortable trying to eke out an existence in the face of that.

But life was never meant to be eked out
– Jesus came to give life abundantly.

**Life is meant to be lived,
And lived with passion!**

As I stated, I have been resurrected at least 3x's
– not the kind of resurrection that involves going towards a white light, having an out of body experience
– but a resurrection, non the less.

I was once asked by one of our young people, can't we just believe in Jesus' teachings, do we need to believe that he was resurrected from the dead?

My response was this:
“What's so hard to believe about resurrection? Resurrection happens all the time when life conquers death, when living overcomes eking out an existence.”

So, let me share with you my stories of resurrection, my stories of life, my stories in which passion has been rekindled in my life.

I have shared these stories, here and there, but here they are shared together in one place.

These are stories of resurrection that come after futile attempts of eking out a life:

- (1) My being embraced by God after coming to the conclusion that God did not care for me. Included call into ministry, etc.
- (2) At Fuller, struggling with faith questions and not fitting into my “faith box.” Rather than putting my faith in faith, place my faith in Christ!

- (3) After a long period of restless journeying – UMC, NAB, TEDS, NBTS (and though God blessed with gifts of life in these times – I struggled with living with passion). In 2005 – Honeymoon to Maine
In 2006 – courage to leave Northern
and In 2006 – learning for the first time to really trust God (what God requires God gives).

You have been a part of that journey of my current resurrection experience.

And I am now at a place where I am living life in the fullest, in abundance (yes there are problems – but they are not the kind of problems which overcome me).

Now you know why Christ is so central to me.
I would have no life without him.

I live, because I live in Christ

The reality is that we are all confronted by situations in life that seek to rob us of life, of passion – and too many times they have their way with us and our passion for living is diminished.

But when that happens
– and it does
– I urge you to receive the resurrection power of God in your life.

Be raised from an existence of eking out life.

Refocus your life in Christ

Re-center yourself in Christ

Be re-created through Christ

Rediscover that to live is Christ.

Won't you join me in living life together!