

The End or the Beginning

We have all seen movies where it is stated or just implied that this isn't the end but only the beginning. We see it in movies from Pearl Harbor, Gone With The Wind to the Star Wars Series, to Biblical subjects such as The Passion of Christ, The Greatest Story Ever Told, even Jesus Christ Superstar and with one movie ending with the cross and the caption, "The Beginning."

We certainly see it in the Bible when Christ is crucified and rises again. We experience it every Easter from Good Friday to Easter when we celebrate the risen Christ. Have you ever had that type of experience? I think we all have. From Marriage, the end of being one and becoming two. The birth of a child is an ending of expectation and a beginning of a life, from graduations to baptisms, to joining a group or even making a friend. We have a lot of beginnings in our life and a lot of endings. In Christ we have them daily. Every time we ask forgiveness, we have the chance to begin again. Every morning is a new beginning, and every night is an ending of another day. Even death brings us an ending and a beginning. The disciples didn't know that an ending and a beginning were coming. They were visiting the villages around Caesarea Philippi.

Mark 8:27-33 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah and still others, one of the Prophets." "But what about you?" he asked, "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ." Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law and that he must be killed and after three days, rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and rebuked him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter, "Get thee behind me Satan!" he said, "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

The Disciples loved Jesus, but they didn't accept him as Jesus Christ until after the resurrection. Thomas even demanded the proof of the holes in his hands and feet. That was the day their journey truly began. So, it is with us. I accepted Christ into my life many years ago but that was not the end of my quest but the beginning. I continue to seek him out to understand more fully, to love more completely, and to trust in his promises. As Christians we are all on a journey to do his will, to make disciples to follow Jesus, to live lives that reflect his teachings so that others will see the living Christ in us.

Lord, we thank you for our beginnings and endings. May we see them as opportunities to serve you more. Be with those who grieve and those who are ill and those that are alone. Be with our sisters and brothers in Haiti and Afghanistan. May they know your comfort, love, and peace. Guide us as we seek to help them. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry and watch over him and his family. Be with our Staff and Leaders, may they feel your love and comfort as they seek direction for our church. In Jesus name we pray, Amen

Grace Epperson