

2011 LENTEN SERMON #1 I AM – ALPHA AND OMEGA

Revelation 1:3-8, 21:5-8, 22:12-16

As we begin our serious on the I Am statements of Jesus

We look first at Jesus statement

I am the Alpha and the Omega.

The beginning and the end.

The first and the last.

I believe Jesus gave us this identity because we live in such an insecure world.

All around us revolution and riots are taking place.

The Middle East is tense with turmoil.

Finances in the United States are precarious.

People don't know what the next day will bring.

We have a spring filled with floods and fires

There is a great increase in alcohol and drug consumption,

In prescriptions pills and visits to psychiatrist and counselor.

Worry is the word of the day.

Do you have a worrier in your family?

Ki Ray writes that he and his wife found their whole life turned upside down when their first child was born. The baby seemed to be fussy and every night it cried far more than it slept. Ray said: "My wife would wake me up, saying, 'Get up, honey! Go see why the baby is crying!'" As a result, Ray found himself suffering from severe sleep deprivation.

While complaining to his coworkers about his problem one day, one of his colleagues suggested a book on infant massage. Ray immediately bought the book and that night he tried it. He rubbed his baby's back, arms, head, and legs until the baby was completely relaxed and had fallen into a deep sleep. Quietly tiptoeing from the room he went directly to his own bed in hopes of enjoying a well deserved full night of sleep. No such luck. In the middle of the night, his wife awoke him in a panic. **"Get up, honey!" she said "Go see why the baby is not crying!"**

In a Peanuts cartoon, Linus tells Charlie Brown, "When I hear those coyotes howling at night, it totally depresses me. I start to feel lonely . . . Then I get scared."

Charlie Brown says, "I thought holding onto that blanket made you secure."

Linus replies, "I think the warranty has run out."

That's the problem with most security blankets. Their warranty runs out.

It was into a very insecure world that Jesus came and said:

Fear not. This warranty will not run out.

I. I AM THE ALPHA AND OMEGA

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet.

They stand for the entirety of anything.

The Hebrews said Abraham kept the law from Aleph to Tav (first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet).

The Colonial proverb in America said the same.

"From A to Izzard"

("Izzard" was an early American name for the letter Z).

When Jesus said:

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." Revelation 1:8

Jesus isn't speaking about Alphabet crackers, soup, or numbers.

He is speaking about Absolutes
 He was clarifying what kind of God he is:
who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty. Revelation 1:8

Jesus was with God in the beginning.
 Jesus came here as God
 Jesus dies as God.
 Jesus ascended into heaven as God.
 Jesus sits at the right hand of God the father as God
 Jesus was giving us a certainty.
 That we can trust our lives to him.
 From the beginning to the end.

If you know Jesus
 It doesn't matter
 how bad the world become,
 It doesn't matter,
 how dark the night falls.
 It doesn't matter
 how deep the soul descends.
 He will be there
 when he come to wrap up this world in a final climatic encounter.

Because Jesus is the Alpha and Omega.
 He is here
 Halleluiah.
 That's why the Bible has "fear not" in it 356 times
 One for every day of the year.
 Jesus is the Alpha and Omega.
Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

What amazes me is how people can live and speak as if God doesn't exist.
 God has left his fingerprints all over the universe for us to see,
 We have to be blind not to see them.

Suppose you visited my house while I was out.
 How much could you learn about me just from looking around?
 You might suspect I am a hunter seeing the binoculars, shells, hunting clothes, some guns.
 You might suspect that Donna is a reader, from all books and magazines
 You might suspect from the pictures that we have two grandchildren and a granddog.
 You might not know that I am a pastor,
 But you would certainly know I study my Bible, read daily devotions.
 With all the bibles and books laying around marked and underlined.
 You would see in my closet the many suits I have .
 And probably assess I am either a preacher or an undertaker.
 But you would not assume that no one lives there?
 Or that no one exist here.

Then how then can we in good sense,
 See God's world

Live in it farm it,
 See the stars and the
 The glorious mountains,
 The grand sunsets,
 And conclude God doesn't exist.

Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen. Revelation 1:7

Alpha and omega shows us the stretch of who god is.
 God is

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." Revelation 1:8

But Revelations 21 takes us a step further.

I am the Alpha and the Omega the beginning and the end. Revelation 21:6.

II. I AM THE BEGINNING AND THE END

I BELIEVE THE SECOND PART OF ALPHA AND OMEGA
 turns the focus away from God to us.

It can't mean God

because he has no beginning and end to God.

I am the beginning and the end of your life because he talks about us.

6 He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. Revelation 21:6

Jesus is saying that he is there from our beginning to our ending.

He was there when you had that first great thirst at birth.

He was there when you took that first baby step

He was there

When you skinned your knee, broke your arm, fell off the swing.

He was there,

When you graduated from high school.

He was there

when you walked down that aisle and said your "I Do's"

He was there

when you laid your loved one in the grave.

And wept those tears of grief and pain.

The Alpha and Omega was there in your beginning and end.

He'll be there

When your lungs grow stiff

And your heart grows cold

And you breathe your last breath.

He'll be there

When you stand before the Father in Heaven.

HE IS OUR BEGINNING AND END

We need him,

Because we have an end.

The older I get the more I know it.

Old bones do not get better,

Old hearts do not beat stronger.
 Old minds do not think quicker.
 Old bodies die, decay, fade away

But Jesus says trust me.
 Dwell in me,
 Because I am the end. I will make all things new.

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." 5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Revelations 21:4-5a

We can trust Jesus to do this
 Because he promised it and
 wrote it in Blood in the holy book.

Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." Revelation 21:5b

**This is not something that could happen.
 It has already happened.**

He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.
 Jesus is the God who makes new beginning out of our ends.

**He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.
 Revelations 21:7**

But as powerful and mighty a God we have in Jesus Christ
 He cannot make all people new.
 For the unbeliever, not even God will be able to make a new beginning.
 There will be no do overs.

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars - their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." Revelations 21:1-8

Jesus said it in Prophetic tense
 as though what is still future is now referred to as past tense.
 Showing us it is certain and has already occurred.

**This brings us to the third progression of Alpha and Omega.
 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end,
 the First and the Last, Revelation 22:12-13**

**He is showing us the
 Certainty and unchangeableness of God's eternal promises**

III. I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST.

God is the first and the last.
 There will be no other.
 When an artist makes the first and the last of its kind.
 He breaks the mold.
 It's over.
 The price begins to rise.
 Jesus is the truth.

He was the truth, he is the truth, he shall ever be the truth.
 There is no other truth.

Just as Jesus is the First born from the dead.
 He rose.
 He rose first,
 In a senses He rose last
 There will be no other.

When you embrace him, and his resurrection.
 Wash in the blood of the lamb.
 You open the gates of the city.

14 "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Revelations 22:14

All who claim Jesus as their king
 The leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations.

In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. Revelation 22:2

I struggled with a chest cough and cold for weeks.
 Then I finally got some antibiotics,
 I ate them.
 And I started to heal.
 But I also got some unpleasant side-effects.
 Couldn't stay out of the bathroom.

When you eat of the leaves of the tree of life.
 It's for the healing of the nations.
 There won't be any negative side-effects.
 But before we can enter into heaven.
 We must be healed of all the maladies of earth.
 We must be cleansed of all the sin of the soul
 We must be purged of all the darkness of our Adamic nature.

What is the key to this great city?
 What is the key to eternal life?
 What is the key to seeing Jesus face to face?
 It is the first and the last.

14 "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Revelations 22:14

In what do they wash their robes?

"These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Revelation 7:14

Whether you believe it or not doesn't change its truth.
 This is what God has said who has the first and last word.

But what you choose to believe today will change your destiny forever.

"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. Revelation 22:12

Will you choose to turn from your sin?
 Will you choose to seek forgiveness within?"
 Will you let Jesus touch your life?
 Their will be no second chance, no turning back.

The final judgment will be from Jesus himself.
 Because

The Father has given him authority to Judge, because he is the Son of Man. John 5:27

In the book "Heaven is for Real" A little four year old boy tells of his astonishing story of his trip to heaven and back. He has a burst appendix and dies, but the family is astounded at what this four year old saw and says: But he is adamant about two things. You don't get into heaven unless you know Jesus, and second there is a judgment. Satan was there ready to take those away who didn't know Him.

Friends Christ is real. Satan is real.
 There is a beginning in your life.
 And there is an end.
 And in between is your choice.
 That is why Jesus said:

15 Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. Revelations 22:15

Is it any wonder that

The Spirit and the bride says come.

((17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. Revelatoin 22:17)))

And let him who hears say Come.

Whoever is thirsty, let him come.

Whoever wishes let him take the free gift of the water of life.

But for those who chose to disbelieve
 The atheist, and rebellious,
 Agnostic, and the complacent
 The false preachers and teachers,
 The mocking members of liberalized churches and society.
 Jesus says to them:

18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. 19 And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book Revelation 22:12-19

Jesus is the Alpha and Omega,

HE is the Beginning and the End

He is the first and the Last.

And he would not that you or I should perish

And miss this eternal salvation.

He bet his life on the cross

That you would come.

Come to him. The banquet is prepared

He is the author and finisher of our faith.

Let us trust in him

For this world and the next as the Alpha and Omega.