

5-28-23 Pentecost Sunday With Communion

Sermon: Don't Just Stand There Gawking

Scripture Acts 1:1-14, CTW Psalm 50:1-6

Hymns: 697, 544, 533

Theme: After the disciples left the Mount of Olives, they returned to Jerusalem to obey Christ (Verse 12-14). There they did the only thing they knew to do. They gathered together and prayed. Out of that meeting the church was born. **The early church expected to be used for the good of the kingdom. So should we.**

I. Introduction: Is the End of the world here? In light of the recent events in the world I have heard and wondered about the question: "Is this the End of the World?"

A. Maybe not the end of the world, but is it the end of our nation as we know it?

The residents of Europe in 1939 may have asked themselves the same question about their own nations. Even a generation earlier in 1914 people speculated about the end of the world. For many it was.

B. Should we be worried about these things? Should we at least be concerned? The apostles also asked a similar question about their day after the Resurrection of Christ.

The other week we looked at what sets Christianity apart from every other religion, namely that **Christ is alive**. In today's passage, Luke says that **Christ gave "many convincing proofs"** (v. 3). It was during these forty days that he explained to the apostles the kingdom, and what it would mean in light of his resurrection.

Then he gave them similar instructions as the ones he gave before.

II. We are to wait for the power (vv.4-5).

A. He had preached about the kingdom of God for three years. Now he tells them to wait.

He connected his ministry with John the Baptist. John had begun preaching a baptism of repentance to prepare people for Christ's ministry. Jesus validated it and amplified it.

Jesus was going to give them a different baptism. He had predicted it in **John 14-16**. It would be coming soon.

Many years ago, I heard the phrase, "Do something even if it ends up being the wrong thing...in other words, look busy." And we often tell ourselves, "Don't just stand there. Do something."

B. However, when it comes to doing God's work, we should not just do anything that comes to mind. We need to wait to see what God is doing and where he is working.

Have you ever noticed how uncomfortable some people feel when there is a break in a conversation and no one says anything? Have you noticed that sometimes we feel as though we must always be doing something for God?

Remember the story of Mary and Martha? Martha busied herself in the kitchen while Mary sat at Jesus' feet. Which one received commendation?

We need to focus on our prayers to prepare.

III. Then we are to follow through and appropriate the Power (vv. 6-8).

A. Don't get sidetracked by distracting issues. How many times have we heard about the end times in recent years? Blood Moons, catastrophes, earthquakes? Jesus said these things would come but the end is not yet.

Jesus did not tell them when those things would be. He had already told them before in **Matthew 24**.

God's people need to get on with what he told us to do.

One of the first things we often want to do is go charging off under our own power.

Let us "be occupied as in the parable of the **ten minas in Luke 19:11-27**, where a man who was going away called his ten servants together and warned them to not just "take up space," but "be busy at work." In other words, we are to put the time God gives us to good use...Occupy ourselves with Godly things until Jesus comes...be about his work seeking and saving the lost.

B. He gave us that plan in the Great Commission..."go into Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the whole world", and He gave us the power—to be witnesses.

The end times are interesting studies, but we can get so caught up in studying prophecy and end times that we do not concern ourselves with those who will be left behind to face the wrath of God without a savior.

While we do not know when the Rapture might be or when Armageddon will occur or the Millennium will begin, we do know that each person will face "personal eschatology." (The part of theology that deals with death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul and humankind.)

Will we be ready?

The primary task of the church is to witness for Christ. The power to witness comes from the presence of the Holy Spirit. When you let the Spirit control and fill your life, he will also fill your mouth.

Avery Willis in "**The Biblical Basis of Missions**" points out that the Great Commission is never mentioned again after the Holy Spirit comes. Once He has taken control, there is no need to remind Christians of the Commission, we have the Holy Spirit within us to remind us of our responsibility daily!

IV. We are to work in the power (vv. 9-11)

A. Christ told them how he would return, bodily and visibly.

He did not tell them **when** he would return. In fact he told them the opposite...that we were **not meant to know when**.

However, he did tell them that when he comes there would be no doubt—**“For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” Matthew 24:27.**

B. His coming will change the world as we know it.

Therefore, being aware of His coming should **change the way** we live in our world. “And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” **(1 John 3:3)**. So when someone tells me the end is coming soon, I am tempted to ask them what they have been doing differently **because of that?**

Our waiting for his return is not to be idle. Growing up I had the tendency to daydream...especially in school. It made my parents crazy when the teacher would comment on my Report Cards that “Keith needs to make better use of his time...**he tends to spend too much time just “gawking!”**

Years later I looked the term “gawking” up in the dictionary and it means to stare openly and stupidly...imagine my shock and dismay at my teachers comments...especially when years later in college, in order to “find ourselves,” we were encouraged to spend time gawking at all sorts of things!

V. Conclusion: Witnessing becomes easier when you realize these truths. Any work for God becomes easier when you expect him to work through you. Then you become a channel, not the source.

After the disciples left the Mount of Olives, they returned to Jerusalem to obey Christ (Verse 12-14). There they did the only thing they knew to do. They gathered together and prayed. Out of that meeting the church was born. The early church expected to be used. So should we.

Points to Ponder: What are some current events that trouble you today? How should the church address those issues?

I. Wait for the Power (vv. 4-5)

What were the disciples to do while they were waiting?

How difficult do you find it to be to wait?

Think of how you felt at a time when you had to wait for something important. How could you have done things differently?

II. Appropriate the Power (vv. 6-8)

What are some issues that distract us from doing what Christ commissioned us to do?

Are they good or evil? How can we stay focused at times like that?

III. Work in the Power (vv. 9-11)

How will Christ return? Do you know the Scriptures?

When will Christ return? How should the truth of his return affect our lives?

IV. Witnessing Becomes Easier When you know the Power (vv. 12-14)

How would you describe the atmosphere of the upper room?

What does this whole scripture passage teach us regarding the Holy Spirit? LET US PREPARE TO COME TO THE TABLE OF GOD!