

- I. My Notes ... WWC message 9/6
- II. Series: A Disciples Life – Our Daily Journey
 - Title: The Commission
 - Text: Acts 1
 - Quote: I don't want the world to define God for me. I want the Holy Spirit to reveal God to me. A.W. Tozer (Pastor, Author)
- III. Introduction
 - Isaiah 40:31 stands out as a verse that continually offers strength and guidance, forming a foundation for the life of a disciple. It emphasizes the significance of waiting on the Lord and relying on His promises each day. During personal prayer and devotion, reflecting on this passage encourages a deeper trust in God, who is always faithful. Choosing to trust God may not always be easy, but it is consistently the right decision. In our walk of faith, hope and trust work together—hope allows us to look beyond present troubles and endure, while trust anchors us in the certainty of God's promises and plans.
 - To gain a fuller understanding, it is helpful to consider the entire passage. *“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, Yet those who wait for the Lord Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.” (Isaiah 40:28-31 NASB).* Isaiah's words remind readers of God's nature and power, and of our own dependence on Him. Within these verses lies a remarkable promise of renewal and transformation for those who trust in the Lord.
 - Have you ever been in a place where the burden was so heavy that you didn't think you could move? Life can be overwhelming for many of us. There's no shame in that admission and there is no reason to try to find somewhere to place the blame – it doesn't resolve the situation. This discussion ties into the

place that we are in Acts. I think about the roller coaster ride the Disciples must have been on over the last several weeks. Jesus telling them that He had to go away, to a place they couldn't follow. Then His crucifixion and the sorrow and fear that accompanied it. Three days later, there was another change in the situation. The promise that Jesus had made came to pass ... Resurrection Day. There must have been a myriad of emotions. They were probably worn out but happy because the Messiah was with them once again. Well, we know that this wasn't about to be a permanent thing. 40 days have passed – perhaps the Disciples were beginning to think, this is the time that Jesus is going to make everything “right” ... Israel would be restored to prominence, and the Disciples would have their “rightful” place in this New Kingdom. Often, it's our expectations that add to the weight of the burden that we carry.

- This is where the Disciples stand at this moment in their journey. A place of weariness and hope. A place where their expectations were evident, but uncertainty was the undercurrent. Jesus wanted them to soar. And He understood this was the beginning of that process.

IV. The Question

- **Acts 1:6-8 NASB**

6 So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; 8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

- Let's look at what brought out this question. Jesus has just spent the last 40 days appearing to various disciples since His resurrection. He was teaching them about the Kingdom of God. It would be easy to think that these 40 days were just about proving He was alive. But Jesus was giving them a mission statement. He was preparing them for the next steps of their journey. Jesus had just reminded them about “another Helper” (see John 14:16) and now things were going to change.

- The Disciples (like many Jews) wanted change. It may be amazing to us that they didn't seem to comprehend the message that Jesus had been telling them. Our viewpoint is different. We have seen all that they accomplished as they stepped into the role that Jesus had prepared them for. It had yet to happen to them at this point. So, the question echoed their expectations.
- The response Jesus gave them was another essential lesson about faith. God's timing is perfect. Are your expectations getting in the way of God's perfect timing? Think about what you will accomplish as you step onto the path that the Lord has laid out for you. Present circumstances don't define you – your bond with God does. Past failures and hurts aren't your identity - your identity is that you are one with Jesus Christ (John 14:20; Romans 8:17). Because God's purpose is different from our expectations, we learn to trust Him throughout our journey.
- It comforts me to know that the journey the Disciples were about to begin started with misaligned expectations. They were looking for a political answer to the problems they saw. Their question shows the limits of their thinking. I believe that we gain life lessons from Scripture. Can we get some insight or understanding from this question and relate it to today? I have a couple of thoughts. The first is that it's ok to ask our Lord direct questions. It doesn't bother Him. Even when we don't fully grasp the situation, we can ask. Our expectations can get in the way of our understanding of God's plan. That doesn't change His plan. He patiently guides us and directs us in a way that we are able to grow to a deeper understanding, a mature viewpoint.
- Notice that the answer Jesus gave probably wasn't exactly what they wanted to hear. They were in a rush to get their rewards for the sacrifices they had made in the last three and a half years.
- I don't know if this is the right place to put this thought in but here we go. God has a plan to redeem the world. He desires for all of Creation to be in balance with Him. Throughout the NT we can find that God wants all people to come to a knowledge of His love and grace. To receive the salvation that He offered at the Cross. People get so narrow-minded that they miss the role they play in this. The role of the Holy Spirit is misunderstood. People hear about power and authority and that tickles their ears – they want that. Speaking tongues,

prophesying, miracles of any kind are exciting and will get attention. But the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) is not something that is pursued. Love is seen in our actions and attitudes. Love is lived out with joy and peace. It is seen in patience and acts of kindness. Love helps us find good and consistent (faithful) ways to serve others with a strong and gentle manner. And love helps us keep “us” in check.

- The answer to the question is seen in the transformed life of a believer. It's one that is lived out daily. (Can you say Discipleship?)

V. The Promise

- Vs. 8 – **but you WILL ...** These are Jesus' words to tell His Disciples what to expect. If God tells you something, it is going to happen. It is a lesson that the Disciples learned on the Sea of Galilee, during a storm. Jesus challenged their faith (Matthew 8:26). If Jesus says you are going to get there, you will ... it might not be the way you expect but God doesn't fail. Jesus has just told the Disciples (and us too) that there are things that only the Father knows. Trust that!
- Here was what was in store for them (this applies to believers today too). The power that comes through the Holy Spirit. It is the same power that raised Christ from the dead. So, it is significant. It's the power to love and serve those who don't agree with you. It's the power to stand firm and walk worthy when it seems like everything is going wrong or against you.
- But you WILL love the unlovable, serve those who are difficult, and help those who are hurting. You will do this while facing problems and persecution. This will happen when you are tired, sick, and broken. When there doesn't seem to be any other help or hope, you will be called on to show the love of God.
- Jesus said, **“you shall be MY witnesses** (the Greek term is *martērus*. We get the word martyr from it) **both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”** The world was going to hear the message of God's grace, the Gospel of Truth, because of what the Disciples would begin to do.
- The power that Jesus spoke of was the power to live the words of Jesus ... **34**
“I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you

are also to love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34-35 CSB). To be known by God’s love says that kindness and compassion rule our lives. People usually take statements like this to extremes and measure kindness and compassion by their standards, not Gods. Love is the key, and love is the action of treating others the way that God has treated you. Forgiveness, mercy, and understanding are the starting points.

- This is what Jesus meant by His Disciples being witnesses to the entire world. Being a witness points to active participation in the life of someone else. It isn’t just shouting “REPENT.” It’s about demonstrating what the kindness (another word for grace) of God looks like. Remember what Paul told believers in Rome. *“Therefore, every one of you who judges is without excuse. For when you judge another, you condemn yourself, since you, the judge, do the same things. 2 Now we know that God’s judgment on those who do such things is based on the truth. 3 Do you think—anyone of you who judges those who do such things yet do the same—that you will escape God’s judgment? 4 Or do you despise the riches of his kindness, restraint, and patience, not recognizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?” (Romans 2:1-4 CSB).* There can be reasons to criticize or find fault in just about anything. My Mom told her boys frequently, “when you are pointing at someone else, there are 3 fingers pointing back at you.” It’s not about assigning blame – there is plenty to go around. It is about realizing that each of us has been called out of the darkness that surrounds life and into God’s “marvelous light” (see 1 Peter 2:8-9).

VI. It Begins

- **Acts 1:9-11 NASB**

9 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. 11 They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into

heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

- After Jesus told the Disciples what was next, their fear became reality – He left. He ascended to Heaven. It is reminiscent of descriptions in Ezekiel and Zechariah of the glory of the Lord leaving the Temple and then when it returns (Ezekiel 11:23; Zechariah 14:4).
- Angels testified to what would happen in the future. It must have been inspiring to see this and then hear from the Angels that God’s promise would come to pass. Think about this ... the writers of the New Testament believed that they were living in the Last Days – that the return of Jesus was about to happen at any moment. Though they didn’t know the exact timing, they lived like it was the very next moment.
- I can say with confidence that this inspired the next steps in their faith journey.

VII. Last Words

- I have taken the first steps in our journey through Acts slowly. I believe that it is necessary to understand the building blocks of discipleship. Belief in Jesus as Lord, understanding His message of God’s love and grace, and living with this trust evident in each step of our daily lives. Discipleship means that we choose to stop waiting for ideal conditions and start walking in divine commission. It means we trade are longing for relief of the present circumstances for active obedience while facing these circumstances. The disciples were looking for restoration—but Jesus was pointing them toward transformation. Not just of Israel, but of the world. You and I are part of this equation today.
- Be open to what God has for you today. I can assure you that you will have a chance to show His love and grace in some way.
- Let’s Pray
- Grace First, Grace Always