

Acts: 1:1-11 a devotion by Rev. Lisa

Today's reading marks the change in the Ministry of our Lord, as on this week we celebrate the good news that Jesus has ascended to heaven, and as promised in last week's reading were given the promise of the Holy Spirit. Now as you make your way through these scripture readings, I want you to think about what would have been going through the minds of Jesus first followers. How would you feel knowing that Jesus was leaving? Even though he has promised to come again and send you the Holy Spirit? What do you think it would be like to see Jesus going up to heaven? And how long do you think it would take for him to come back again? These are important questions for us to ask ourselves, because we were still in the time between Jesus going up to heaven, and Jesus coming back in glory, and we as his followers are still struggling how to live in these between times.

What are some of the instructions that Jesus gave to his followers before he ascended to heaven? What do you think that Jesus would say to you before going back to the Heaven Father? What would you want to hear Jesus say to you? Words of hope? Give you a detailed message of all that is going to happen so that you could be prepared?

Why do you think that Jesus told them to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit? Where in your life have you felt that God was asking you to wait for something before acting? Do you find it easy to wait, or hard?

What does being baptized by the Holy Spirit mean to you? It is a phrase that is often used in scripture, but what does it mean to you to be filled with God's Holy Spirit? To be made new in God's love. How has this changed your life? And where do you think it could continue to change your life?

The disciples ask Jesus if now was going to be the time when he restored the kingdom of Israel, for them it meant going back to the good old days of King David, when Israel one powerful nation, ruled by a good king. What does a restored kingdom of Israel mean to you? Is it only peace in the Middle East, or something more?

How do you feel when Jesus tells them that they that that they are not to know God timetable? This is often the hardest part of our faith life, is to not know when God is going to come and save his people? But there is a reason for this, how different would you and everyone else act if they knew that next week God was going to come and save everyone? Do you think that people would change over night, or do you think that people might be tempted to fake their way for a week or two because God was coming. I think this is why Jesus does not give his follower in the past or even now to day the knowledge of when God is about to do something great in our world, because He wants us to live each day as if he is going to do it, so that we may live each day in service to one another, and allow ourselves to be come the signs that people are looking for to know that God is with his people.

When was the last time you caught yourself watching the sky to see if Jesus is coming back? It's not something that we in this day and age tend to do. But it was something that early believers would often attempt to do, as they wanted to be the first to see Jesus return in glory, as they believed that it could happen any day now? What are some of the way in which people today watch the sky?

What do you think Jesus would want you to do during this time gap between his going up to heaven, and his great return? Make yourself a list of all the things you think that God might want you to do in this in-between times, and make this your to-do list for the year.