

**Acts 1:1-11**  
**Ascension Day Weekend**  
**May 22 & 23, 2022**

If you think about it, we spend most of our life waiting.

- Waiting for an appointment to see the doctor.
- Waiting for the results of the tests at the doctor's office.
- Waiting to be accepted into college.
- Waiting to graduate from college.
- Waiting for your first real job offer.
- Waiting for the last day you work before retiring.
- Waiting to see if the bank will give you a loan for your first house.
- Waiting to see if your house will sell quickly.
- Waiting for the right time to start a family.
- Waiting for your prayers to be answered.
- Waiting for your spouse to come home after that business trip.
- Waiting for the Lord to call you home to him.

Waiting is one of the hardest parts of life. We spend a big chunk of our lives waiting for things to happen. For every green light, there seems to be 5 yellow lights or a dozen of red ones. We all have to wait, whether we like it or not. Jesus knew that as he left that small group of men on that mountain top, waiting would be hard for them.

However, Jesus had prepared his disciples for his leaving. For 40 days after his Resurrection, he continued to instruct them. He was instructing them about many of the same truth that he had been teaching for the past 3 years. But now those truths took on new meaning in the light of His Resurrection. Luke writes in our text: **"After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God."** Jesus wanted his disciples to know beyond any shadow of a doubt that he was alive. His mission was accomplished. When he cried out on the cross, **"It is Finished!"** he had made payment for sin. The salvation that this world had been waiting for since the Garden of Eden was now done. The world was saved. Then Jesus looks them straight in the eye and says: **"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."** I wonder what went through the disciples' minds when he spoke those words. Perhaps, they thought: *"How are we going to do that?"* Eleven men were going to be commissioned to take this message of Jesus to **"the ends of the earth."**

Therefore, I think it is easy to see why the disciples would ask the question: **"Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"** When we first hear the disciples ask the question, we might be tempted to just roll our eyes up and think: *"Don't you get it?"* Why would they ask that question? They heard him answer that question many times over the past three years. They had seen him die and rise from the dead. They had seen countless miracles to show that Jesus would have the power to do whatever he might wish to do. **"Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"** Really?

Yet, what is even more interesting is Jesus' answer to the question. It is not what you would expect from him. This isn't the first time that they asked that question. Even the mother of James and John had asked Jesus to place one of her sons on Jesus' right and the other on his left when he would rule in glory. They had asked Jesus which one of them were the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. How would Jesus respond? *Oh, you of little faith.*

But this time, his answer is different. He doesn't put his face into his hands. He doesn't say: *"No, no, no! Do you still not get it?"* Here Jesus is going to use their question and redirect them in a different direction. Here Jesus' answer is going to say *"no"* and *"yes."* What is Jesus' answer? **"It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."**

Their question was looking for the “*when.*” Jesus’ answer was going to say “*here is how.*” He says “no.” *Don’t worry about timetables. That’s the Father’s business.* That’s the NO half of his answer. Then comes the YES part of his answer. The kingdom of heaven is restored and it will be restored to the ends of the earth. *It will be restored in a greater way than any of you can imagine.*

To understand what Jesus is saying here we can look back to the promise that God had given Abraham. God had promised Abraham that through one of his descendants, the entire world would be blessed. That promise was fulfilled through Jesus. Every single promise of God is YES in Jesus. There is no plan “A” for the Jews and plan “B” for the Gentiles. As Paul says to the Galatians: “<sup>26</sup> **So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,** <sup>27</sup> **for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.** <sup>28</sup> **There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.** <sup>29</sup> **If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.**” (Gal. 3:26-29) The kingdom of God has been restored through Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Yet, the Father is just getting started. He is going to use his witnesses (his disciples – both then and now) to take this kingdom out to the “**ends of the earth.**” This kingdom is going to be much greater than the nation of Israel. They are going to go out and make disciples of all nations. They would not be alone. We are not alone. His answer is the same for them and for us. We may not know the timetable, but we know the how. As we wait, may God help all of us to carry out his mission together. Amen.