

Meanwhile • Acts 1:4-11

I. INTRO

A. *Waiting*

1. Do you like to wait? Like lines at the store? To be seated at a restaurant?
 - a. We're in the holiday season now, when it seems everyone & their brother is shopping.
 - b. On Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, I make it a point to *stay away* from the stores because I do *not* enjoy waiting in line.
 - c. I enjoy shopping – but I *loathe* waiting.
2. The worst is being on hold on the phone!
 - a. As you know, the cable company recently changed in several cities & we have to change over to the new system.
 - b. Lynn & I decided to alter our cable service a bit so we went online to figure out the best deal.
 - c. But we had a question we couldn't find the answer to so I *called*.
 - d. After punching 1 for English, 3 for Customer Service, 2 for cable packages, 7 for other, 2 for information, & 5 for a live operator, I was put on hold for 15 minutes, after which I said "Phooey" & hung up.
3. The desire to escape the curse of waiting is seen in everything from broadband to microwaves, to the ever faster computers.
4. Our hi-tech society seems to have made a *freedom from waiting* one of our inalienable rights many think they're *owed*.

B. *Waiting for Jesus*

1. In light of that, there's something we followers of Christ need to be reminded of.
2. This life is one big WAIT! We're *waiting* for the Return of Jesus!
3. But the wait isn't like being on hold on the phone, or in line at the store.
4. It's a wait *filled* with important action; with work that prepares us for the day He comes.
5. Our passage today speaks about what we're to do while we wait for Jesus to return.

II. TEXT

A. *Vs. 4-5*

1. During the 40 days following the Resurrection, Jesus *repeatedly* appeared to & taught the disciples.
2. These verses bring that time to an end.
3. Remember now, these were *young guys*. Peter was probably in his mid 20's; the rest in their late teens & early 20's.
 - a. As disciples, they'd anticipated at least 15 years of training with their Rabbi.
 - b. To be told after only *3 years* He was leaving --
 - c. And that *they* were going to take over His mission was a *shock* they didn't know how to deal with.
4. This is why they were so *troubled* at the Last Supper. Jesus said it was time

- for Him to leave.
- a. The idea that after *only 3 years* they were *ready* to assume His mission was overwhelming.
 - b. And it's why Jesus told them about the Holy Spirit Who would give them what they'd needed.
5. So here over a month later, as Jesus says goodbye, He tells them they're *not to begin* their task of carrying His message to the world *until* they've been baptized with the Holy Spirit.
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6. There's an *important reason* Jesus *links* the work of John the Baptizer to the work of the Holy Spirit they'd soon experience.
- a. The key is in His use of *baptism* as a picture of what the Holy Spirit would do.
 - b. Under John's ministry, Jews, who were *already in covenant* with God, went out to the Jordan River to express their desire to follow God more closely.
 - c. Baptism was **NOT** something *Jews* submitted to. It was for *Gentiles* converting to Yahweh.
 - d. John's ministry was *radical* because he was calling *Jews* to be baptized.
 - 1) His message was that it *wasn't enough* to be *born* into one of the tribes of Israel.
 - 2) Being Jewish didn't automatically mean one believed in or followed God.
 - e. Baptism was a way for people to say, "Not only am I *physically* Jewish, I'm *spiritually* Jewish."
 - f. "I don't just want to enjoy the benefits of the covenant with God, . . .
 - g. I want to take an *active part* in it; in making sure *others* enjoy it too."
7. People went out to the Jordan by the thousands so John could dunk them.
- a. As they came up out of the water, returning to their friends & family,
 - b. Their soaked clothes & dripping hair were an obvious token they'd taken a step of personal commitment to God.
8. Jesus links the baptism of the Holy Spirit to John's baptism.
- a. Just as the Jews were *already* in covenant with God, the disciples were part of the *new covenant* through faith in Christ.
 - b. But the baptism of the Holy Spirit would bring them into a new reality & experience of that covenant. It would enable them to carry on Jesus' mission, taking His message of forgiveness to the end of the Earth.
 - c. In the same way John's baptism was *evidenced* by soaked clothes, the Spirit's baptism would have its own evidence, which Jesus goes on to describe.
9. But only after dealing with an interruption by the disciples . . .

B. Vs. 6-7

1. This translation puts a time break between vs. 5 & 6.
 - a. But it's best to understand these verses as a continuous narrative.
 - b. With united voice, the disciples ask if *now* Jesus will claim His throne.
2. Having seen Jesus conquer death, in their minds, there's only one thing left to do -

Inaugurate the Kingdom of God on Earth.

3. So like kids riding in the back seat, they ask, “Are we there yet? Is this it?”
 4. Now, Jesus could have just said, “Nope.” But He knew if He did they had a follow up question all ready, “When then?”
 5. So He pre-empted the whole deal by saying God’s timetable for history is none of their concern.
 6. They’re not to *concern themselves* with the *when* of His return. Rather, they’re to *busy themselves* with the *what & how*.
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7. This is something *all of us* need to take to heart.
 - a. While the Bible contains plenty of prophetic material giving signs identifying the Last Days & the Return of Christ,
 - b. It’s not given so we’d set dates but so that we’d stay alert & ready.
 - c. **HOW** to be ready is what Jesus now turns to . . .

C. V. 8

1. It isn’t their business to know the *when* of His return, only to *prepare* for it whenever it might be.
 2. The *way* they’re to do that is by being baptized with the Holy Spirit, Who will empower them to attain the thing, *as disciples*, they’d been aspiring to for the last 3 years; *To be just like Him*.
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3. It’s important we keep Jesus’ words here in their proper setting in the story of the disciples.
 4. We read that on Resurrection Sunday, Jesus appeared to the disciples, breathed on them, then commanded, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”
 - a. The *proof* they were indwelt by the Spirit *at that moment* is that He then showed them how all that had happened to Him had been foretold in the Scriptures.
 - b. Luke says their *understanding was opened*; sure evidence they were NOW born again.
 5. Yet here we are 40 days later, & Jesus tells them **BEFORE** they launch out as “disciples who’ve become just like Him, “they need *one more work* of the Holy Spirit.”
 6. As I mentioned earlier, just as the Jews, who were already in covenant with God, went to be baptized by John in water to show a *complete, personal* desire to *partner* with God **IN** the covenant –
 7. The disciples, who were already in covenant with Jesus through faith, were to be baptized by the Holy Spirit in power, so they could *partner with Jesus in His work*.
 8. Then Jesus tells them the *scope* of their calling.
 - a. They will start right there in Jerusalem,
 - b. Move out to the surrounding state, then nation,
 - c. And finally to all the world.

D. Power – Your Turn!

1. I want to make sure I’m clear here.
2. Jesus told the disciples, guys who were *already* saved, *already* born again, that there was **ANOTHER** work the Holy Spirit would perform on them – called in

- v. 5, *the baptism of the Holy Spirit*.
3. In v. 8 He said when this event took place in a few days, they would receive **power**.
 - a. The word is *dunamis* ; it means something ***dynamic***; that word *comes* from the same root.
 - b. It speaks of a power that produces an ***obvious effect*** on its surroundings.
 - c. Our word “dynamite” came from this Greek word for power.
 4. Jesus didn’t say the baptism of the Holy Spirit would produce warm fuzzies, or spiritual euphoria.
 - a. It isn’t to create some kind of bizarre ecstatic state.
 - b. It isn’t to make people do or say strange things that get blamed on God.
 5. No – the baptism of the Holy Spirit does the ***one thing those first disciples*** were positively anxious about –
 - a. **HOW COULD THEY CARRY ON IN ALL THEY’D SEEN JESUS DO & HEARD HIM SAY?**
 - b. Remember, ***after just 3 years***, Jesus said to them, “Okay men – School’s out! Put a fork in it – you’re done!”
 - c. “Here’s your diploma. Congratulations! Now, carry on My mission.”
 - d. They’re like, “Huh? What? How!?!?”
 6. Here’s their answer. The ***same Spirit*** who had anointed & empowered Jesus would anoint & empower them.
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E. Not Weirdness

1. There are groups today who think the baptism of the Holy Spirit ushers them into some kind of elite spiritual club.
 - a. And in this club, the members do & say some really strange things.
 - b. I’m not going to give a list of the bizarre things people have done & blamed on the Holy Spirit.
 2. Instead, let’s simply ask, “Does it look & sound like Jesus?”
 3. Because isn’t that what He said the power would accomplish?
- You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me.**
4. Again—Keep in mind **WHO** Jesus said this to & what **they** would’ve understood Him to mean.
 5. The baptism of the Spirit was to empower the disciples ***to be just like Him***.
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6. As a pastor of a church in SoCal of nearly a thousand adults, I know we have people from all kinds of backgrounds.
 - a. Some have no church background at all.
 - b. Others came from a traditional, mainline denomination that denied the baptism of the HS.
 - c. Others attended a Pentecostal or Charismatic church where it was taught unless you speak in tongues you’re not even saved.
 - d. Regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit, some were taught you get ***all*** of the Holy Spirit you’re ever going to get when you’re born again.
 - e. While others went forward every Friday night to get baptized in the HG all over again.
 7. My concern is two fold:

- 1) On one hand are those who're leery of the baptism of the Spirit because of the *excesses* & weirdness they've seen in the Pentecostal camp.
- 2) And on the other hand are those whose view of the work of the Spirit is that *unless* there's something of the wild & noisy it's *lacking* the power of God.
8. If you're in either place this morning, I ask you to put aside your concerns & conditions & let God's Word & Spirit become your guide.
9. Look – it's clear: Jesus spoke this to already born-again disciples.
 - a. He told them in a few days they would be given power when the Holy Spirit baptized them.
So obviously, it must refer to something that happens *after* a person is saved.
 - b. But He doesn't say it would lead to weirdness.
The *result* would be the disciples would live lives that pointed others to Him.

F. Vs. 9-11

1. In high school, every so often a few of us would stand in the middle of the quad & stare up into the sky.
2. We weren't looking at anything, we were just trying to see how many people we could trick into looking up.
3. It was a riot watching people who would see us, stop in their tracks & look up at that point in the sky we were all looking toward.
4. That's the way I see this scene.
 - a. The disciples are standing there ooing & ahing as Jesus rises to become a tiny dot in the sky.
 - b. Long after He's gone, they're still there with their mouths hanging open.
 - c. They don't notice a couple of others who've joined them. It's clear they're angels.
 - d. After waiting a while to see if the disciples are going to head back to the City they say, "Hey, whatcha lookin' at? He's gone."
 - e. "But don't fret, He'll be back. In the meantime – *follow through on His last instructions.*"

III. CONCLUSION

A. 10 Days Later

1. 10 days later, the Holy Spirit came just as Jesus promised.
2. After the disciples were baptized in the Spirit, these young men who'd remained in hiding for fear of persecution by the officials who'd killed Jesus, went to the most public place in all Jerusalem and preached so boldly, 3000 came to faith!
3. The officials heard the testimonies of these backward, common laborers & said, "These guys sound just like Jesus!"
4. Those first 11 did what Jesus told them to do.
 - a. Through the power of the Spirit who produces the life of Christ in His people,
 - b. They made disciples, who made disciples, who made disciples, and so on until here we are today.
5. Now, here's the point – It doesn't end with us!

6. Just as Jesus told those *first disciples* – WHEN He'll return isn't for us to know.
7. Rather, in the *meanwhile* – we're to prepare for His return.
8. And we do that by *not just enjoying* the New Covenant & being born again.
9. Each of us is to realize we're called to *partner with Christ* in carrying on His mission of taking the gospel to the Lost.
10. This isn't a program, or a campaign – it's **LIFE!** A life lived through the Power of the Spirit who enables us to *be* just like our Rabbi—Jesus.