

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER - MAY 24

Describe a time when you were a witness to someone doing an incredibly kind and generous act and were also inspired to show that kind of generosity. *Note: If you are with a group, have each person take a turn sharing.*

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:6-14

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of[a] James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Reflection

After Jesus was resurrected, he spent 40 days with his followers, teaching them how they should live and be in community. This was such a gift to have this extra time with Jesus. When he was present with them, for what turned out to be the last time, they asked Jesus a question that had been pressing on their hearts: "Now will you restore the kingdom to Israel? When can we be free from leaders who make decisions and laws that harm us and keep us poor?"

Jesus tells them that while they won't understand God's timing, what matters now is they will receive the Holy Spirit, and they will be his witnesses of God's powerful love and compassion. Take a look at the illustration. Right after he told them, "you'll be my witnesses," Jesus ascended (was taken up) into the heavens to be with God.

Jesus' followers were left to carry on his work by following his example by loving God and their neighbors, even though he wasn't physically present. They were witnesses to Jesus' life on earth and continued to be witnesses when they carried on Jesus' work and God's love for the world.

This is how the church got its start - by being witnesses of Jesus through loving God and loving their neighbors. Now all these years later, we still remember Jesus and continue his work and the work of those first followers. On Ascension Day, we celebrate how we are called to live as Jesus taught us. Like the disciples, we, too, are his witnesses.



Acts 1:6-14 • illustratedministry.com

Discussion Questions

1. Who have you seen showing kindness, generosity, and joy?
2. When have you shown love to someone?
3. How are you a witness of Jesus to your neighbors during the pandemic?