



▶ DAILY DEVOTIONAL.

Saturday/Sunday, 6/1-2/19

“Undeniable”

Acts 1:1-11

Theophilus, the first scroll I wrote concerned everything Jesus did and taught from the beginning, right up to the day when he was taken up into heaven. Before he was taken up, working in the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus instructed the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed them that he was alive with many convincing proofs. He appeared to them over a period of forty days, speaking to them about God’s kingdom. While they were eating together, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised. He said, “This is what you heard from me: John baptized with water, but in only a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” As a result, those who had gathered together asked Jesus, “Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now?” Jesus replied, “It isn’t for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has set by his own authority. Rather, 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 end of the earth.” After Jesus said these things, as they were watching, he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going away and as they were staring toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood next to them. They said, “Galileans, why are you standing here, looking toward heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you saw him go into heaven.”

In the passage from Acts above, we read that Jesus returned and offered many “convincing proofs” to the disciples (verse 3). Another word for this would be evidence. Jesus offered an ample amount of evidence that the resurrection is indeed real. Over the last several weeks we explored this evidence with many of our senses. Jesus showed up, and the disciples saw his new body (sight). Thomas felt the holes in Jesus’ hands (touch). Some disciples ate with Jesus (taste). Others knew it was Jesus when they heard him say, “Peace be with you” (sound). With all the evidence, we have to ask ourselves now what? The evidence requires us to process, make decisions and move forward. Join in on the devotions this week to flesh out more ideas from the Acts 1:1-11 scripture.

- Pastor Britton

Family Activity: The family activity this week involves putting our faith into practice. Because we have evidence of our faith, we should start using that knowledge to love God and others. We will focus on loving one another as a family.

Write down the name of each family member and cut the names into strips. Each member will draw a name (they cannot draw their own). Once all the names are drawn, the family should ask, "How can I serve you?" It could mean that parents help clean up their children's room. It could mean kids help vacuum. It could mean drawing pictures or saying kind words. The key is to make it fun and to keep it light. It shouldn't be a chore that lasts all day. When everyone is done, pray together and thank God for your family and for your ability to work together for God's glory!

Monday, 6/3/19

"Apostles or Disciples?"

Acts 1:2 (CEB)

"Before he was taken up, working in the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus instructed the apostles he had chosen."

- We often refer to the close followers of Jesus as disciples, but in this passage, they are referred to as apostles. The change in words is significant. The word disciple in Greek is *mathetes* which means learner or pupil. The word apostle in Greek is *apostolos* which means messenger or delegate. How does the use of "apostles" inform your understanding of this passage?
- Sometimes in the Christian life we get stuck in the place of only learning. However, it is always good to apply what we have learned. The followers of Christ had their time for learning. Now it's time for them to take what they have learned to be the primary witness of Christ. They must take ownership of their beliefs. How might you be able to take what you have learned and put it into practice?

Prayer: God, give me the courage and strength to surrender myself to you. I'm not sure if I can surrender myself completely, but I know I can take one more step. By your grace, let me take ownership of my faith. Let me learn for you. Let me live for you. Amen.

Tuesday, 6/4/19

"The Waiting Game"

Acts 1:4 (CEB)

"While they were eating together, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised."

- Waiting is no fun. Imagine picking between two lines at the grocery store. Now imagine the horror you experience when the clerk calls for a price check. You are left helpless while you watch the other line move seamlessly. You wonder if you should stay or switch lines. What makes it so hard to wait? In what areas of your life are you waiting?
- Jesus tells the apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the promises of God. While waiting, they face persecution and pushback for their beliefs. Jesus doesn't want the apostles to give up when light is just around the corner. Though Jesus is leaving, he knows the Holy Spirit will show up and give them power (verse 8). The good news is we can receive that same power. How might the knowledge of the Holy Spirit help you in your time of waiting?

Prayer: God, we look around us and see a world that is waiting to be restored. We are waiting to be restored. We put our trust and faith in you, especially during this time of waiting. May the power of the Holy Spirit be evident in our lives this day. Amen.

Wednesday, 6/5/19

“Still Holding On”

Acts 1:6 (CEB)

As a result, those who had gathered together asked Jesus, “Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now?”

- This is a question that comes up throughout scripture. It’s a long-held belief that the messiah would restore the kingdom of Israel, yet here are the apostles asking the same ole question. Are there certain things you hope for that just haven’t come about?
- Jesus is trying to convey that the mission of God is much larger than a single nation. Sometimes we hold onto old ideas and old traditions when God wants us to move forward. How might God be calling you to let go and move forward to something new?

Prayer: God of creation, you created us from dust, you created the world around us. From the beginning you have been making things new. You continue to make things new. Give us the understanding and wisdom to let go of the things we have been holding onto that are holding us back. Let us walk into something new. Let us walk into a life of love. Amen.

Thursday, 6/6/19

“God of All the Earth”

Acts 1:8 (CEB)

Rather, 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 end of the earth.”

- The first chapters in Acts serve as a bridge between the life of Jesus recorded in the gospel of Luke and the birth of the church. The emphasis in Acts is how the church (that’s you and me) represent God in the world. Think of this passage as a model for our world. Jerusalem is Platte Woods, MO. Judea is greater Kansas City. Samaria is the United States. The end of the earth is, well, the earth. God’s kingdom has been made available to all people regardless of their age, nation, race, gender, sexuality, political party, social status or religion. How might you be a part of welcoming others into God’s kingdom even if they are different than you?
- One thing we glean from scripture is that different cultures and nationalities had a hard time mixing. Jews and Samaritans did not think highly of one another. When Jesus asks the apostles to go to Samaria that opens the kingdom of God to a diverse group of people. Sometimes we are hard on those who are closest to us. Sometimes we fail to welcome those we don’t understand. What person in your life needs to know that you love them and God loves them? What group of people needs you to know them so you can understand them?

Prayer: God, we praise You for opening Your kingdom to all the earth. You included not only those from Jerusalem, but all people. May You guide us as we grow in faith and grow in love to have a compassion for people the way You do. Help us share Your goodness with those who are in our neighborhoods. Amen.

Friday, 6/7/19

“On-Deck”

Acts 1:10-12 (CEB)

While he was going away and as they were staring toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood next to them. They said, “Galileans, why are you standing here, looking toward heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you saw him go into heaven. Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem — a sabbath day’s journey away.”

- In the game of baseball, the hitter who is the next to bat warms up in the on-deck circle. The batter in the on-deck circle is on the field but not yet in the game. The batter watches the pitcher while taking swings and adjusting his or her timing. The apostles have spent several years watching Jesus. Jesus ascends into heaven and it's the apostles' turn to bat. Do you ever find yourself standing and looking, unsure of the next step in your life? It's ok, the apostles did too. It just took a little encouragement for the apostles to begin their journey to Jerusalem. Be encouraged today. What is one thing you can do to take a step toward God?
- I'm no angel. None of us are. However, I'm fascinated by the role of the angels in this scripture. They show up on the scene to encourage and get the apostles moving forward. Put yourself into the role of an encourager. Who might you encourage today? It could be a spouse, a son, a daughter, a friend or a coworker. That's one way to step out of the on-deck circle and into the batter's box!

Prayer: God, You have made it clear that we are to take a step out of the on-deck circle and into the batter's box. You want us to play in the game rather than sit idly as spectators. Help us to discern the times when we should speak and the times we should listen. Grant us wisdom as we seek to bring heaven to earth. Amen.

**This week's devotional was written by
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