

Sermon Notes Sunday 24th May 'Waiting, Worshipping and Praying'

Read Acts 1:1-14

In these days before Pentecost and following Jesus' ascension into heaven we find Jesus' followers being given their instructions as to what they should do next.

Firstly they are told to 'Return to Jerusalem'(Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4).

- After all that had happened in Jerusalem how easy would it have been for the disciples to act in obedience and return there, when their inclination might have been to return to Galilee to what was familiar and comfortable?
- Can you recall other occasions in scripture when 'return' has featured (Ruth 1:11, Numbers 14:4).

The wise men returned by a *different route* (Matthew 2:12). I wonder how we will 'return' to gathered Sunday worship once the churches are open again? How might our experience of these months affect how we might return or what our concerns might be?

Secondly the disciples were told to 'wait for the gift my Father promised'.

If you are like me the first question that comes to my mind when told to wait is 'How long must I wait?'

- What do you find most difficult about waiting? (not being in control?)
- Why did they have to wait? Why could Jesus not simply have 'breathed his Holy Spirit upon them' as he did in John 20:22 and then send them off to do his work? Does this suggest there is purpose in waiting?
- Why does it seem God is always making his people wait (deliverance from n Egypt, from exile, from imprisonment for Joseph; Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Hannah, Elizabeth and Zechariah etc all had to experience 'waiting').
- If you are in a place of waiting, what is God teaching you?

'Who you become while you are waiting is as important as what you are waiting for' John Ortberg

Thirdly, what did the disciples do while they waited (Acts 1:14)?

- a. They expressed unity, 'joined together' (all 120 of them - Acts 1:15)
- b. They prayed and worshipped 'constantly' (at the temple: Luke 24:52).

What can we learn from the disciples as they waited that can inform our experience of waiting? What can we do *as we wait* for Pentecost next Sunday?

James 1:4 '*Perseverance must finish its work, so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything*'.
'*A river cuts through rock, not because of its power but because of its persistence*'.

What might God be saying to you today through this reflection?