

Acts 1: 2b-9

Acts 1: 11: ¹¹ “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.”

“Why are you standing there looking toward heaven?”

We’re still asking that question in churches around the world today. Why are we still standing still? Why are we still staring at the sky – as if we will see something different than what we had seen before? Why are we obsessed with timelines, signs, predictions, of Armageddon, and fear — so much fear of what is to come? Why are we waiting? What are we waiting for?

Why are we, like the disciples, still standing around looking toward the sky...looking for someone to save us ...when Jesus already told us what to do?

But here’s the thing. We are still looking to the sky – looking to Christ to make the wrongs right. “We’re still looking only to the sky for rescue, when Christ has already given us the Spirit and shown us how to live.”

Even after Jesus suffered, died, rose again and appeared to them over a period of forty days, speaking to them about God’s kingdom, the disciples were still confused.

He ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but “wait for what the Father had promised” But the disciples still misunderstood. They were still thinking about a politics and God’s kingdom overthrowing the powers of the day – namely Rome. They asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?”

Even after everything he taught them, the disciples were still asking: “When?” “How?” “What can we do to help this movement along?” “Now?” “Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now?” But Jesus redirected them – not with anger, but with purpose. He said, **Acts 1:7–8:** “It is not for you to know the times or periods...” and “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses...”

When we think about end times we usually don’t think farther than what Jesus says here – about how we aren’t to know the time and the place. We miss what Jesus is telling the disciples and us.

Look, he says, stop speculating. None of us know God’s timing. The more you obsess with the timing the less you will be witnesses to my way. The more you focus on the signs of the times, the more you will fear and the less you will focus on learning and growing your faith and spreading the good news of God’s love. In fact – the more you focus on fear and control the more you move away from trust, surrender, humility and empathy.

God’s kingdom does not come through prediction. It comes through Spirit-filled people living the way of Jesus.

We keep wanting charts, but God gives us the Spirit. We keep wanting certainty, but God gives us a calling. We keep wanting to know when Christ will return. Jesus tells us how to live until he does.

