

Acts 1

What are you like at waiting? I don't mean, waiting when you know what's going to happen such as when someone is going to arrive and you know you've got two hours. What I mean is - waiting, when you don't know for how long and you don't really know what for either. That's what it was like for the disciples. They were given specific instructions but no tight time scale and no real understanding of what was going to happen. The flip side to this waiting is an unsaid command therefore to not do something while you wait. So what do you do and what do you not do? That was the key thing for Peter and the other disciples.

Modern life seems dominated by the celebrity culture. If it's not endorsed by a famous person then it can't be worth having! The church seems to slip into that ethos from time to time, but if you think about the early church, the "stars" were not stars at all. Peter took a very long time to learn that Gentiles were to be included in the church and even when he had learnt this he still failed to live up to it. Paul was a man who couldn't see very well and who lacked skill in speaking. In today's celebrity culture they would probably be ignored. But God used them. The key is what Jesus promises the disciples in this chapter. But for us, are we content to be what God has called us to? Even if that is nothing "star" like whatsoever? Are we content to be in the second XI as it were?

Read Luke 1.1-4 & Acts 1.1-3

What is Luke trying to do and how does he go about it?

What were the "convincing proofs" and what convinces us that Jesus has risen?

Read Acts 1.4-11

What are the specific instructions they are given?

Why is this important?

How did the disciples understand this?

How does Jesus clarify their misunderstanding?

What is the Promise?

What is it connected to that they will do?

In your list of priorities - where does witnessing come? High/Low/Non-existent?

What did they see next and why is this important?

What is the significance of the two men in white?

Read Acts 1.12-19

What is Luke telling us about the disciples in this section?

Why does he tell us about the end of Judas?

What comfort would they have drawn from seeing this as being foretold?

Read Acts 1.20-26

Why is Peter so keen to fill up Judas' place?

Do you think he should have waited till after Pentecost?

What do you think of the method used to choose?

What do we know about Matthias?

How would you feel if you were Joseph Barsabbas - not chosen for the second time? (Not in the original 12 Apostles and now not the replacement.)

Please read Acts 15.22. Maybe Joseph had picked up another nickname by then or maybe it was his brother! - Just because God doesn't use you for one thing doesn't mean you are rejected as useless! How does that make you feel?

(*Justus* is his nickname for being *Just*. *Judas* is the same name as *Judah = Praise*)

Reflect on how much we need a fresh outpouring of God's Spirit today.