

‘Let us know when you arrive safely.’ Those are the sentiments often expressed by friends or relatives after they take me to the airport for my twice yearly snowbird trip to Florida in early November and then back to New York State in late April. Something similar happened to the disciples of Jesus nearly 2000 years ago. Before we examine the details, let us take a quick look at the various emotions they must have gone through as they spent over three years with Jesus.

Excitement and Adventure!

In Jesus' time, being a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee was a demanding, year-round job, often involving hard labor in unpredictable conditions. Fishing required long hours, often in the heat of summer and the cold of winter, sometimes even at night. Nets needed constant maintenance, including mending, washing, and drying. The Sea of Galilee, while a source of life, could also be treacherous with storms and unpredictable weather. When Jesus called these fisherman to be his disciples, it did take some faith to step out and follow Him, but they also must have sensed that they were getting involved with something big and important. Jesus went on to inspire them with these dynamic visionary words: 'You are the light of the world and the salt of the earth!'

They would no longer spend most of their life stuck on a boat with smelly fish, but they were able to travel with Jesus throughout Israel and witness amazing miracles and changed lives. In the process, their own lives would dramatically change too. We must not forget about Matthew either. When he met Jesus, he was a despised tax collector who ripped people off monetarily, much like a sleazy used car salesman, a crooked politician or greedy celebrity preachers of today. Jesus specialized in taking nobodies and making them feel accepted and important as future world changers. He exemplified leadership with humble service, honesty, integrity, faith, and compassion. The disciples were not just observing Jesus' life and ministry, they were also given on the job training in how to live by faith and perform miracles of healing and deliverance.

Sadness and Disappointment

When a person knows they are soon to die, they often open their heart fully to their closest friends and family. Jesus did so to his disciples at the last supper recorded in John chapters 13-17. The disciples were dismayed when Jesus told them he was about to leave them. They did not fully understand this, but they would shortly, as they saw him arrested, beaten and crucified on a cross. Their hopes of the soon coming kingdom where Jesus reigned were dashed. Their timing was off, for God's ways are beyond man's limited thinking. Jesus had told them:

‘The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.’ - John 12:23-24

God's plan included much more than them, for He had plans to draw untold millions into His future coming kingdom.

Glorious Joy and Hope

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead was more than amazing for Jesus' followers. It rooted their trust and belief in all that Jesus had taught them and prophesied. Over a period of 40 days, they saw the resurrected Savior and Lord. Although they knew that Jesus was once again going to leave them, this time was different, for now they understood His promise to send the Holy Spirit who would be their comforter, counsellor and power for living.

Anticipation and Expectancy

The disciples had waited in an upper room for 10 days, when the day of Pentecost came. Jesus words about sending the Holy Spirit came true that morning as the power and fire of Holy Spirit came upon them and gave them unusual boldness to be Jesus' witnesses and supernatural world changers. At the last supper, Jesus told them He was returning to the Father who had sent him. He was homesick for heaven as evidenced by his words of John 17:4-5 etc. When Jesus had made his trip back to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit, the disciples knew it was a sign that Jesus had made it safely home to be with the Father and that he loved them. He had not left them as orphans - John 14:18.

