

## Between the End and the Beginning

You may be reading the above title and wonder if it was mistyped. But in reading Acts 1 and thinking of verses twelve through twenty-six it occurred to me, the end of Jesus' time here on earth had come to an end. But we always speak of Acts two as the beginning of the church. What would you call those verses after Acts 1.11 and Acts 2.1? It was simply the time between the end and the beginning of the church.

What can we learn from those verses? Let me challenge you to think of them through the eyes of the disciples. Have you ever been lost? I don't mean the kind of loss you get when going to a new place and the directions makes no sense. I don't even mean being spiritually separated from God and not knowing how to get back to Him. There is another kind of loss, the kind which means you are at a cross roads and don't know what to do next. The kind of loss that comes after going to school for years and then not knowing what to do with that diploma, dealing with a marriage that has ended in divorce, or waiting on a love one dealing with a terminal illness and then one day they are gone. This kind of "loss" can be devastating. The question we ask ourselves is "What should we do?".

Now place yourself in the position of the disciples. For three years they left everything to follow Him. They had witnessed Jesus feeding thousands of people with a few loaves of bread and fish. They saw the dead rise from the grave and Jesus healing the blind. Also, they saw Jesus died on the cross and then reappear as He was resurrected. For a period of time Jesus was with them but in Acts 1.11, He left them again. This time He would only come back at the end of this age.

I have to think they were still perplexed and confused but they knew something more was coming. I want to suggest we can look to the example of the disciples in Acts 1 to help us in our times of being loss.

They listened to Jesus and went to the right place. "Then they returned **to Jerusalem** from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath

day's journey." (Acts 1:12). In verse 4 we read where Jesus commanded them to go to Jerusalem and not leave there. In obedience they did as they were told. Jerusalem was prophesied in the Old Testament as the place where the law of the Lord would go forth, see Isaiah 2:2-3. In Luke's account of the Great Commission we read, **"and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."** (Luke 24:47)

We need to be in the body of Christ. **"For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body."** (Ephesians 5:23). One cannot be saved outside the body of Christ. Therefore, it is essential we understand how to get into Christ and then stay in Him.

They were together with other disciples. Acts 1:13-15 gives us the names of those who would become the Apostles but it does not stop there. Next it says they were together making supplication and praying. Then it tells us the number was about one hundred twenty disciples. Being with the right people, people of faith is very important in times of trials. They did not go to the enemies of Jesus, leave Jerusalem, go home, or isolate themselves while in Jerusalem. Numerous times in Acts the disciples came together so as to make prayer on behalf of others, or to praise God.

As one reads Acts 1:13-15, they think of the word "fellowship". It means joint participation, working together, having in common, and communion. Do not underestimate the encouragement one gets from fellow Christians in times of loss. I don't know the number of times people have said "We have been praying for you" or "I have been praying for your family". It is always a comfort to know others are praying in such times.

The disciples were looking to the scriptures, Acts 1:16-20. Those scriptures foretold of Judas' betrayal, the amount, and his death. One of the hardest things for them to accept was the fact a fellow disciple betrayed their Master. But those Scriptures explained God's foreknowledge in this matter.

In times of feeling loss and confused we need to turn to God's word. It is the

Bible that tells us how to be saved, to trust in God, and how to make good decisions. Only the word of God tells us who God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit is. Let us be like the people of Berea as they searched the Scriptures daily, Acts 17.11.

Finally, they took care of the business at hand, selecting someone to replace Judas. We see the qualifications for such a person and how he was selected. This was in preparation for the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

The time between the end and a new beginning is a time for us to take care of our business. To be ready for something new.

The next time you are at a loss of what to do, just look Acts 1.12-26 for some guidance. – Dennis Tucker