

Following From the Empty Tomb: What Comes Next?

Looking For Jesus

After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Acts 1:3-11

At the time of Jesus' ascension back to the Father, the disciples were encouraged to stop "looking into the sky" for Jesus (Acts 1:10-11). If we want to see Jesus after His ascension and before His return, we better be:

1. looking within

2. looking forward

3. looking beyond

4. looking bigger

next weekend: a new series begins w/ Pastor David



CONNECTION QUESTIONS

for personal study & individual reflection,
and small group discussion & comment

“Looking For Jesus” - Acts 1:11; Luke 17:20-21; Hebrews 13:7-21
Philippians 3:7-16; 2 Corinthians 4:13-18

1. After the resurrection, Jesus appeared to hundreds of his followers for a period of 40 days (Acts 1:3; 1 Cor 15:3-8) and then was taken bodily from their sight back into heaven (Acts 1:9-11). In this experience two angelic messengers sought to reorient the vision of the disciples away from gazing into the sky and toward getting on with the life before them. Between Jesus’ ascension and His return if we want to see where Jesus is and what He is doing we, like the first disciples, better look lower than the clouds. If you were going to encourage someone to look for Jesus in the world today, what direction would you have them turn? How do we see Jesus in our lives and in the world around us?

2. In contrast to identifying the Kingdom of God with a place or a moment, Jesus taught us to find the Kingdom “within” (Luke 17:20-21). How are we supposed to recognize God’s loving and gracious rule from the inside of our lives? How different is that from looking here or there for His presence or power?

3. Sometimes we become focused on the past and get stuck gazing backwards when we really need to find Jesus in the present by looking ahead. Read Philippians 3:7-16. What is Paul’s orientation on the past and where he wants to encounter Jesus’ resurrected life? What is required to be “straining toward what is ahead” (Phil 3:13)?

4. What we look for in this life will determine what we find. If we look for Jesus in the clouds we will waste our opportunity to find, experience and share Him in the world. When you think about your life today, what are you really looking for? How has that changed over the past few years? Where is Jesus in your field of vision?

5. When we have trouble recognizing Jesus in our present situation or feeling His presence in our circumstances, how can trusted friends of faith help us to know His nearness? Why do we sometimes need to look to others if we are going to find God in our own lives? Why is it sometimes easier to see Jesus in someone else’s situation?
