

Ascension

Acts 1:1-11

Ascension day

Last Thursday was Ascension day

Public Holiday in the Netherlands and much of the rest of Europe

My brothers and sister are on a campsite this weekend

As lots of others are

The UK - Late May Bank Holiday

Secularisation of the UK Culture

But let us remind ourselves of the story of the Ascension

Luke introduces Acts

Relationship with Luke

Luke contains

All that Jesus did and taught

From the beginning - until his ascension

Acts starts by going back in time a bit

Evidence of Jesus' Resurrection

Jesus presented himself alive

many convincing proofs

Appearing over 40 days

Speaking about the Kingdom of God

Luke maintains therefore that there were many witnesses of Jesus' resurrection

Would be evidence in court!

Nor ghostly appearances

But real life

Conversations

Meals

Teaching and Instruction

But there is a difference

He is not with them all the time

But he appears to them

He has a real corporal body

However, it can do different things than our bodies

Is Jesus already on the edge between Earth and Heaven?

Final Instructions

The Promise of the HS Sandwich

Slice 1

Do not leave Jerusalem

Wait for the promise of the Father:

You will be baptised by the HS in a few days

Filling

D: Is this the time that you will restore Israel's Kingdom?

J: It is not for you to know - The Father will determine this and has the authority

Slice 2

The HS will give you power

Not to restore the Kingdom to Israel

But to be witnesses to Jesus

Jerusalem

Judea and Samaria

To the ends the of the earth

Lessons for us

As Christians : desire to know future

The disciples: when will God restore Israel?

The first Christians: When we Jesus return?

Today: when we Jesus return and make an end to this mess?

Especially in times of trouble!

Or at the end of our lives - as we have seen so much hardship!

Jesus: The time is for God the Father to know

- implies that Jesus does not (even want) to know?

Till the Ends of the earth

Gk is similar like English

End in space (Geography)

End in time (until Jesus returns)

Jesus will return! v11

Our job is to

1. Receive the Holy Spirit for power

2. To be witnesses to Jesus Christ

Until the ends of place and time!

How to be a witness?

Example:

Article in the Independent Online

29 May

Not a recommended publication to learn about being a witness:

Author is Michael Burton

Self Confessed Atheist

Who fell in love with a Christian lady

How did she witness?

Lots of debates in the beginning

She thought he was naive

He thought she was delusional

Agreed to disagree and working together

As they love each other

By being herself

She is not an evangelist - not on the streets preaching

Tells him faith is her personal choice

He however recognises that her faith is intrinsic to who she is

By praying for him

At first he brushed it off

Then he realised that praying for her is "the most intimate and loving gesture she can undertake"

"I know she is reaching out to me from the deepest part of herself with love and vulnerability"

She speaks to him about the Bible

"The Bible is full of good stuff"

"They have led to some great late-night conversations"

"Although I don't buy [...] it all, my girlfriend has quoted passages from the good book that I love"

She trusts God

"She doesn't fear death, my girlfriend"

"She does not crumble when people pass away"

"She feels safe and secure in the knowledge they're with God now"

"I look at her and long for the comfort she finds in Christ"

Her identity is in Christ

"My girlfriend's faith [...] is intrinsic to who she is"

"The truth is I don't know who she'd be without her faith. It informs everything she does, it's in every aspect of her being. It is responsible - at least in part - of creating the woman I love"

He is getting there!

He ends the article with Eph 4:2 "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient bearing with one another in love."

Great lessons for us

Do not panic - you have the Holy Spirit with/in/upon you

Build relationship - friendships

In this case much more

Debate when necessary - but know when to stop

Pray for your friends and family

And let them know you do

And what it means to you and God!

Quote the Bible

In conversation

Be always ready to speak about the hope that is in you

Trust God

Not only with your life

But also with your actions

Have your identity in Christ

He has created you

Loves you

Cherishes you

Lives in you through the HS

And demonstrate to others that this is what drives you

Your **life in Christ** is your witness!

Return to the story: Jesus is taken up

The disciples look

but he is taken from their sight

They keep looking!

Angels appear

Why are you looking towards heaven?

He will return one day in the same way as you saw him leave

Go on: Go: Do as he told you

Jesus will return!

When? We don't know

How? We do know: in the same way

In the mean time

Receive the Holy Spirit

And be his witnesses!

Like the girlfriend

Until he returns!

No quick fixes

But long term living and action

Christ is in you!

As you are in Christ!

Amen.