

## Westover Baptist Church Virtual Sunday School Lesson

Lesson Text – Acts 1:6-14

<sup>6</sup> Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

<sup>7</sup> He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> 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.”

<sup>9</sup> After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

<sup>10</sup> They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. <sup>11</sup> “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.”

<sup>12</sup> Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk<sup>[a]</sup> from the city. <sup>13</sup> When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. <sup>14</sup> They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

### Reflection:

***“you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”***

This is the mission of the apostles and the church. It reminds me of when Jesus sends the disciples on their mission in Luke 10. Jesus told the disciples at that time that “the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.” Jesus sent them out into the field to proclaim that the Kingdom of God is near because there are so many that need to hear the good news of the gospel.

Here in Acts the context has changed from Luke 10, but the message is the same. The early church is now the ones to proclaim the message, “The kingdom of God is near!” Open your hearts and receive the good news. Prepare room for God’s spirit in your heart!

Jesus sent the disciples in Luke 10. Here in Acts 1 Jesus commissions the entire church for its mission. Both the disciples in Luke and the early Church in Acts are to rely solely on God

in everything they do. They are not to remain idle or lazy – they have work to do. But in the midst of their work they are to rely solely on God’s grace. We will see this played out throughout the rest of the book of Acts as the holy Spirit does miraculous things.

Jesus instructs the disciples to proclaim the good news of the gospel to the ends of the earth. The gospel message transcends boundaries, nationality and even religion. The good news of the gospel message is that God’s kingdom is here in our midst and each of us is invited to enter into a life-giving relationship with God. This good news is for everyone regardless of your ethnicity, socio-economic status or religion.

***“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky?”***

The early church has work to do. Here the angels remind them of this fact. As we were reminded in Luke 10, the harvest is plenty, but the workers are few. The church needs to get to work. They cannot remain stargazing or staring up at heaven for long. This message is relevant for us today. The church cannot stay staring up at heaven. We cannot remain singing in the sanctuaries forever. There is work to do.

***“They all joined together constantly in prayer”***

Prayer has always been foundational for both Jesus and the church. Jesus was constantly going to God early in the morning in prayer. Both individual and collective prayers are vital in a relationship with the Lord. But remember prayer is communicating with God, and true dialogue and communication is a two way street – talking and, perhaps more importantly, listening. Meditation and centering prayer are forms of listening to God.

But our passage claims that the disciples were “constantly in prayer”. What does it look like to remain constantly in prayer? Paul told the Church in Thessalonica to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thes. 5:16). Constant prayer! What an idea. How does it work? When we get up off the floor, or wherever it is that we are praying, we should remain in prayer whatever we are doing.

One way we can remain in prayer is to devote every task you do throughout the day to God. Another way to remain in constant prayer is by always listening to God. God always speaks to us through the experiences in our lives. So in everything that happens throughout the day, ask “how is God speaking through this experience? How is God leading me and guiding me?” There are many other ways to remain in constant prayer. How do you remain in constant prayer?

In closing, our passage reminds us that we too are witnesses for Jesus and the gospel message. How might we become more faithful witnesses to the gospel message in our daily life? Our passage showed us that the disciples were in constant prayer. How might you remain in constant prayer?