

April 19, 2009

Sermon Title: "The Difference between 1st Century and 21st Century Christians"

Sermon text: Acts 1:1-11

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Sermon-Based Discussion

INTRODUCTION

As we read the book of Acts, we find that the early church was a dynamic growing church. Despite its small beginnings and intense persecution, that 1st century church grew rapidly in number spreading throughout the Roman Empire. What was the difference between those Christians and today's Christians?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If someone died and three days later came back to life, how would you feel?
2. How did the disciples know Jesus came back from the dead (Luke 24:13-35, Acts 1:3)?
3. What did Jesus want His followers to do (1:8)?
4. In Acts 1:11, angels confirmed what Jesus had told His disciples (John 14:3), that He would come back. How should Christ's promised return change the way we live?

GOING DEEPER

The disciples were concerned about the time of Christ return (1:6). But Christ is more interested in if we are prepared to be accountable to Him when He returns.

Matt 24:44

⁴⁴So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

If Jesus came back right now, how would you feel? Have you been a good steward of the time, talent, and treasure that God has given to you? What needs to be changed?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

John 20:24-29

²⁴Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

²⁶A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

²⁸Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

(NIV)

Acts 1:1-11

¹In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ²until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³After 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. ⁴On 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. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

⁶So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But 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."

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

¹⁰They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹"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."

(NIV)