Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide August 18, 2025

The Ascension

The Gospel in Motion

Acts 1:6-12

This week, we pick up the next six verses of Acts which include the ascension of Jesus. Unlike the resurrection, to which Luke devoted multiple verses, the ascension receives much less description and we wonder why that might be. The apostles begin by asking Jesus, *"Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?"* It's an honest, hopeful question which we still ask every time we pray the Lord's prayer – for His kingdom to come. They were ready for Jesus carry on His mission and set things right. But Jesus turns the question around, pointing them away from *when,* and instead toward *who*—who **they** are called to be in this in-between time.

- Where are you tempted to just wait for Jesus to fix everything rather than step into the calling He might have for you right now?
- If Jesus flipped your question back on you today, what might He say is now on *your* shoulders?

Jesus tells them: *"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses…to the ends of the earth."* Notice the word: witnesses – not judges, critics, or passive observers. For us, this means telling the "night-and-day difference Jesus has made in our lives"(Eugene Peterson, *The Message*). So, until the kingdom of God does come, our task is to live as witnesses.

- What part of your story shows the difference Jesus has made—and who in your life might need to hear it this fall?
- How can you move from being a "critic" of the world to a "witness" to Christ in the world?

Instead of focusing on more details of the ascension, Luke seems to want to push us directly to the meaning for our lives. The ascension isn't about spectacle; it's about mission. Jesus leaves them, and therefore us, with a charge. His going up creates space for the Spirit to come down.

- Why do you think Luke wanted us to pay more attention to what Jesus said than how He ascended?
- Where in your life might God be shifting your attention from "how" to "why"?

While the disciples stand there, still looking at the sky, two heavenly messengers appear and ask: *"Why do you stand looking up?"* The rest of Acts is the story of the apostles living into their calling, and beyond that, Acts is still being written through us. The ascension gives us a purpose that changes everything. When we experience the joy that comes with finding our purpose, we can fully live into the person God wants us to be.

- Do you have an idea about why you exist, why God has placed you here in this time in history?
- How can you, through prayer and discernment, receive the calling God wants to give you?