



LECTIONARY BIBLE STUDY
OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH

EASTER 7: ACTS 1:6-14

READINGS AND PSALM: ACTS 1:6-14,
PSALM 47, 1 PETER 4:12-14, 5:6-11,
JOHN 17:1-11

Join Pastor Mark for a Live Zoom Study each Wednesday, 10am:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86887930554?pwd=M0gr aUNzNFR5azYwUnNkdFZ5RmQ5UT09>

Meeting ID: 868 8793 0554 Password: 654321 Or dial in for audio only: 1-301-715-8592

Acts 1:6-14

“So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

We believe the book of Acts is written by the same author as the gospel of Luke, and Acts’ beginning assumes you have read the first book. We can lose sight of this connection, since our canon has Acts preceded by John, not Luke. Acts 1:5 picks up right in the middle of where Luke 24 left off, including all the confusion, excitement, and expectation. Christ has died and risen, and still the apostles seek to have Jesus fit their idea of Messiah: one who will overthrow the Roman Empire and restore Israel’s kingdom. (In Luke 24:21 the 2 on the road to Emmaus had the same image of Messiah).

1. How have you tried to fit Jesus into a box? How does Jesus defy our boxes?

The apostles were looking for clear answers amid confusing times. We can relate! We too long for a clear path, but Jesus says there are some things that only the Father knows. How humbling for us to hear Jesus trust the Father without condition.

2. *What can we learn from Jesus about faith?*

But we are not to lose heart – there are things we DO know. We know of our experiences of God, and we are to witness to these things. Jesus doesn't demand that we witness, doesn't ask us to witness, he simply states that we will be his witnesses. The book of Acts is filled with stories of witnesses. Witness in Greek is martyres – hence the English word martyr. We may tend to think of martyrs as ones who have done great things, and often this is true. But a martyr is a witness, and verse 8 tells us that we are empowered to witness by the Holy Spirit.

3. *How do you resonate with the word martyr? With witness?*

4. *How have you witnessed the Holy Spirit's empowerment?*

Empowered by the Spirit, we are sent out to be witnesses in 3 regions:

Jerusalem – the obvious place, where we would expect to find God

Judea/Samaria – this feels like a stretch – the people nearby that are similar but different in radical ways.

Ends of the Earth – this is beyond what is even known! They don't even have the same ideas about God

The book of Acts shows us the way that the early apostles are witnesses and how the good news of Jesus Christ spreads to

Jerusalem – see chapters 1-7

Judea/Samaria – see chapters 8-11

Ends of the Earth – see chapters 13-28

5. *What challenges does each place hold? What gifts does each place offer?*

6. *When have you been called to Jerusalem, Judea, the ends of the earth? What did those places look like for you?*

Even after all that the apostles have witnessed; they stand slack jawed and staring towards heaven after Jesus' ascension. They head back to Jerusalem and meet up with the other disciples – both men and women – and devote themselves to prayer.

7. *What is the correspondence to prayer and witnessing?*