

Go and Tell Part 4: Easter's Enduring Change

Acts 1:1-11

April 8th 2018

Sermon Reflection

What did you find helpful or meaningful from the sermon this weekend? What stood out to you? [Note this is a question we are not putting in the bulletin, but we feel could be a good practice for groups do start with on a weekly basis. It gets people talking and helps bring people who missed up to speed.]

1) Read Acts 1:8. A witness is someone who recounts something they have encountered. What are some of the areas in your life where you can be a witness to the gospel and what are some of the challenges in those areas?

It is always good to pray for opportunities to share the gospel, but it is also wise to be aware of the opportunities God has already placed in our day to day lives. This question wants you to identify areas of your life where you interact with individuals who may be non-believers and think through the various challenges and issues each venue presents the sharing of the gospel. For many teachers or state employees it can be difficult to share the gospel without violating school policy. Maybe you work in a place or participate in a sports group where Christianity and its perceived values are often the whipping boy of public comment. None of these issues in themselves is enough to warrant no evangelism, but in sharing with you group you may be encouraged by the faithfulness of others, and you may even help other people think through their own obstacles in a biblically faithful way.

2) In this passage we see God orchestrating events, both in the believers and in the crowds, to bring about the spread of the gospel. How does God's active involvement give you hope in sharing your faith?

Pentecost is a culmination of God's plan to work faithfully through his church, and also the proof of God's meticulous sovereignty over the events. It was not a coincidence that the Holy Spirit was poured out in Jerusalem at a time when visitors from other countries were remarkably high. Peter's message confirms this! In times of evangelism and various other types of gospel work, we can often feel intimidated and alone. But how do stories like this, and the promise of the Holy Spirit bring us comfort in such situations? With the Holy Spirit we know that God himself is with us, and it is through the Spirit that Jesus upholds the promise of Matt. 28:20. We know that God works all things for his plan, even the death of his son. How much more will he work our feeble yet faithful efforts for his glory even if it is perceived as minimally important.

3) In this text and sermon we see how the events of the gospel not only save us, but commission us for a new purpose in life (see Galatians 2:20). How does the gospel provide us a greater identity and purpose than our culture?

What are some of the ways people in our Missoula community identify themselves? Can your group name two or three of these (outdoors enthusiasts, Griz fans, environmentally conscious...etc.)? How does the salvation of Jesus and his subsequent call for us to be witnesses further define our identity? Or better yet, how should it? How does this change in perspective shape the way you view your work, your family, your hobbies, your aspirations? We may drift from place to place, job to job, trial to trial, but amidst all this we are still saved and

called by the gospel of Jesus to glorify God and make him known to others. What a relief that we cannot be separated from such a truth! Where others may be prone to having their identity shaken or threatened we know such threat since Jesus has conquered even death itself (see Romans 8:37-39).