

Ascension Sunday...is well described to us in the Acts reading.

Jesus' words on the cross, 'It is finished' didn't mean that his work was complete.

There was more. One thing. The promise of the Father has been made possible through the sacrifice of Jesus, but not yet released.

The redemption of mankind has been accomplished, but man does not know what he has done.

Our Acts passage is one that almost plays out like a film.

During those 40 days, Jesus met with them and taught them. It was a time of preparation for a great transition that would come at Pentecost.

Just a few verses before our reading, Jesus is clear with the disciples. They are not to leave Jerusalem until the gift of the Holy Spirit comes.

Of course, their first thoughts are release from the oppression of Rome.

But Jesus explains that Time is in God's hands. He has the timetable for all events, worldwide, national and personal. He has a bigger mission for them.

Jesus promises power when the Holy Spirit comes to them and then they are to witness, near and far, of the life saving love of God.

Suddenly, a cloud lifts Jesus up and covers him from their eyes; he is a visible presence and then disappears from view in a cloud. He ascended into heaven.

The disciples knew that Jesus was God and his home was in heaven. But it has just happened and it must have been a bit of a shock.

They continue to gaze heavenward, transfixed by the space left behind.

Their feelings must have been very mixed; sadness at the loss of their close friend and teacher. Even though they knew the Holy Spirit was to come they had no idea how that would actually play out. This was a mystery. But they understood so much more now about the kingdom of God and that Jesus was returning to his rightful position....he receives power and authority. Sovereignty or glorification, if you like.

He reigns over all creation. Creation is his. He has a role in everything and he is present throughout all creation through the Holy Spirit.

It may feel that Jesus is removed, apart from human society and our daily experiences.

This is not so.

He has departed from his followers so that he can exercise authority and influence over all things, places and powers.

Disappearing from their sight must have felt like he was taken away from them.

But his ministry was about to be transformed into a limitless one that would cover the whole earth.

The staring, slack jawed disciples are startled by the sudden appearance of two men in white robes.

Jesus' love and care showed in sending his angels, reassuring the disciples that Jesus would return the same way he had gone.

Bringing them out of their stupor and shock, they return to Jerusalem to gather in the room they have used before.

To wait. To pray as one soul. United and bound together by their love and commitment to Jesus and His plan to save and rescue all people and the earth. To wait.

We all have experience of waiting.

And it is a test of our patience.

We could so easily feel that it is a waste of time.

But God wastes nothing.

He is in control and he will use this time of waiting.

For testing and trying us; helping our faith to become more complete. Drawing us closer to Him and His heart.

In our lives, waiting can be personal.

Private.

Even our friends and family may not know how we are longing and waiting for something. God knows. He sees. He understands.

And He will gently and mercifully help us. If we are willing, to draw closer to Him.

And help us continue to transform into who we are meant to be.

The waiting can sometimes be the best thing to ever happen to us.

Even though it doesn't feel like that at the time.

If we are not careful we may spend our time waiting by rushing ahead, impatient for the thing to happen and lose out on potentially the most intimate season with our Lord.

Dolapo talked about this 2 wks ago.

Who are we becoming while we wait?

The disciples had a 10day wait. To prepare. To pray and open their hearts ready to receive the gift of the powerful Holy Spirit.

To be a responsive community. One that waits on God to initiate.

Their waiting is active.

They are not just sitting around twiddling their thumbs.

They continually pray, attentive and expectant for God and the big things to come.

Corporately, we have this time..

And it's been a long old time ... 6 yrs and now we are close.

Close to our church's transformation.

Are we active in this waiting period?

Hopefully you are praying the prayer stuck to your fridge; and praying alongside Rev Jon each day on the church prayer whatsapp.

Calling out to our creator God, maker of heaven and earth reminds us we are not alone.

He is with us in this and His hands are firmly holding us, his church, his people.

There is work for us to do.

On ourselves and together.

Let us be of one mind and pray like the disciples, for the fullness of God's glory to be evident in this community through the completion of the plan to serve those in need.

We have an opportunity to witness the faithfulness of our God; the peace that he pours out that none can understand; and the unwavering hope in the promises we believe He has made to us.

Lets close our mouths-- we don't want to be gaping at the space left behind! (or catching flies!)

Lets stay positive in the midst of various setbacks that may occur.

Lets trust in the one who holds the whole of creation together.

Lets encourage and support one another. And as Jane said so beautifully last week, remember, He fixes the broken and fits it together in vibrant harmonies.

Lets praise him and give thanks for his faithfulness and expect the unexpected.

Please pray with me

Father of all,

As we wait for our building to be transformed,

As we wait for the funds that we need to come,

As we wait for our own personal transformation to be who we need to be, for you,

May we know we are held in your arms of love.

May we be refilled each day to pray and hope, expectantly.

May we continue to praise You in every situation.

May we be Christ to each other and all we meet.

Your love endures forever.

Amen