

Acts 1:(1-7) 8-14  
“And So We Go!”  
11<sup>th</sup> Sunday af. Pentecost

August 9, 2015  
Our Redeemer  
Rev. Brent Hartwig

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior

**[Introduction]**

Everyone into the huddle now! Here’s the plan!

Okay, you take Jerusalem and you take Judea and you take Samaria . . .  
I’ll cover the rest of the earth! Ready? Break!

Well, it doesn’t quite work that way, does it? Not hardly.

Nevertheless, it must have seemed overwhelming to the disciples to hear those orders from Christ. So overwhelming they just stood there gazing up into the sky.

I don’t know about you,  
but I picture all eleven looking intently up into the sky with mouths wide open—  
not because they were so amazed at the Savior’s ascension  
(they had witnessed some amazing feats already),  
but because he just gave them a tall order!

So transfixed were the disciples on that cloud in the sky  
that it took a couple of angels to snap them out of it.

And now, what’s the first thing they did after the King of glory  
returned to his throne in heaven?  
They went to Jerusalem, gathered the faithful women, and prayed.

What do you think they prayed for?  
Well...I’m sure they prayed for an increase of faith.  
I’m sure they prayed for courage and wisdom.  
I’m sure they prayed for patience.

Perhaps, as they began to process the daunting task set before them,  
they found comfort in Christ’s promise.  
They found themselves waiting in faith for the promised Spirit of truth,  
for they had a message of hope to share with the world!

Maybe they were waiting in faith, rejoicing in the truth, *BUT* what happened next?  
[*What Happened?*]

Here is *not* what happened with the disciples.

They did *not* privatize their faith

– remaining silent in the break room, lunch room or kitchen.

They did not include the word *polarized* in their mission statement

– we and they kind of language.

They did not stay in that Upper Room, praying among themselves.

They did not try to build a monopoly around Jesus.

***BUT*** here's what did happen.

They let their faith be known in such a bold way!

They preached inclusiveness and compassion for all people

– all have sinned

– all need repentance

They preached inclusiveness and compassion for all people

since it is for all people that Christ died.

They let their faith be known in such a bold way that all were martyred, except John.

They suffered for the faith.

Do you remember confessing that you would follow Christ unto death?

And yes, they joined together to pray in that Upper Room,

but they didn't stay there.

They left to pray among the people and carry the message of Christ's victory to all nations.

And no, it wasn't a monopoly on the truth; it was a mission in the truth.

[*Dangers in waiting*]

Keep in mind what Jesus is telling his followers.

Although he is being taken from their physical sight, they will not remain without comfort and guidance—comfort and guidance will come through the Holy Spirit.

We know then where the Lord left his disciples after ascending on high and where he left the church: in the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

And we know where he leaves us for these remaining days here on earth. He has left us with the order of salvation now fulfilled.

So then, do we stand gazing into the clouds like the disciples were caught doing at first? Or, do we follow what they did next?

The dangers are that we do the following:

- A. Waste opportunities by never leaving the “Upper Room.”
- B. Treat the church like a “Members Only Club House.”
- C. Sometimes forget that we are all on the same team and form sides.

The Jesus who burst forth from the tomb  
is not going to allow his followers to  
cower in their upper rooms and forget their mission  
of equipping disciples to make disciples for Jesus!

He will come to them again and again  
equipping them through Word and Sacrament,  
guiding them through the Spirit,  
and making them bold proclaimers of the resurrection.

God has ways to make us bold,  
even when we would prefer to remain silent and shy.

Many martyrs surprised themselves with their courage to confess the Christ  
when their lives were on the line.

### **[Conclusion]**

The disciples were united. It's truly amazing what can be accomplished when everyone is heading in the same direction with purpose.

I could make a fish reference to Finding Nemo here.  
Remember kids what happened when the fish all swam in the same direction?

We have the Good News that he died on the cross for every one of our sins and rose again that one day we will be with him in heaven.

What hope fills our hearts,

and what joy to share this hope with a broken and hurting world!  
And so we go! Amen!

Now you are the body of Christ, each one of you part of it! Amen!