

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, May 25th 2017

Try to imagine what was going through the minds of the disciples. Imagine their total despair and shattered dreams during the long wait between Good Friday and Easter. But as their sorrow turned to joy on that glorious morning and continued to grow throughout the ensuing 40 days, do you think they were ready for the Ascension, do you think they were prepared for Jesus leaving them again? Perhaps now that they finally could grasp that Jesus really was the Son of the Living God, they could finally put their total trust in Him – in all things. So maybe they finally got it and could trust that Jesus was in complete control, that they would receive the Holy Spirit and that Holy Spirit would empower them to do the “impossible” – to take the message of Jesus to the ends of the earth.

As Luke unfolds this scene in the first chapter of Acts, it is very interesting to note that he included verses 10 & 11 – the need for a couple of angles to bring the disciples back to reality.

While I can easily relate to being awestruck by the God of the universe, as Psalm 47 reminds us over and over again, I can even more easily relate to being awestruck when asked to do something that appears to be well beyond my capabilities. Within God’s frame of reference it is only natural for us to focus upon what little we have to bring to His table. We quite often need to be snapped back to reality, the reality that we really could accomplish something for God, let alone being a part of the task of taking His message to the actual ends of the earth.

As with everything else in His universe, God foresaw this shortcoming in His disciples as well as that same shortcoming in each of us. In the letter to the church at Ephesus, God spoke through Paul to not only his contemporary brothers and sisters in Christ, but also to all of us and our brothers & sisters in Christ today. He reminds us of the amazing reality that the God of the universe actually intended all along to use his body – the church (us) even with all our insecurities and faults. He provides us with the living Holy Spirit to enlighten us with wisdom, revelation and perhaps most important of all – hope. We can actually claim the riches of His glory as we begin to recognize the surpassing greatness of His power available to us who believe.

Yes, Jesus was speaking directly to me and to you. “Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations”. This was not a suggestion! It doesn’t work for me to remind myself that I am not talented enough, wise enough, or famous enough to accomplish such a monumental assignment. I simply need to remember that it has nothing to do with my shortcomings, but everything to do with His power and the fact that He is with me “always, until the end of the age”. Praise God.

Lord, how could there possibly be anything more important in my life than to point people to you. In these troubled times – perhaps even end times, I cannot imagine anything more urgent than effectively sharing your Good News. Help me to never forget that all I need is You and Your power at work in me. Help me to never lose focus upon my responsibility to take your message to the ends of the earth – beginning with the people I meet each day in my little part of Your world. Trusting in You - in the name of my Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.

Larry Hopp-Creighton University's Energy Technology Department