



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

1, 2 Peter, Jude Sermon Series

Supports Session 13: Be Encouraged

Sermon Title: “Truths About Christ’s Return” (Acts 1:4-11)

Connection to Session 13

The return of Jesus was and still is a consistent topic of conversation. Peter communicated with persecuted believers that they should be encouraged by the certain return of Jesus. Luke, who wrote the book of Acts, provided definitive facts regarding the return of Jesus.

Introduction/Opening

We are all provided with choices each day. We can choose to go to work or school, or we can choose to stay home. We can also choose to base our lives on how we feel or what we know to be true. If we always base our lives on how we feel, we will experience many changes as our feelings frequently change. If, however, we base our lives on what we know to be true, we will have less turmoil as truth does not change. Today’s sermon is based on the truth that Jesus is returning. Culture may not feel this to be accurate, but this does not change the truth of the statement. As a church, we need to understand several truths so that we can live in obedience to God’s leading.

Outline

1. Truth: We do not know the times or periods (v. 7)

- a. We can look on a calendar and know what day of the week our birthday is or what day of the week Christmas will be this year. It would be wise to make sure to have a reminder for our anniversary. But we cannot look on a calendar and know when Jesus is returning. Anyone who indicates that they do know is not reading the Bible because God’s Word tells us that it is not for us to know.
- b. We, however, need not be discouraged by this truth. Instead, we should be encouraged by the fact that the Father is aware, and He is in authority. We can be encouraged by two truths in this biblical reality.
 - i. First, the Father is aware. The times and periods of the return of Christ will not catch the Father by surprise. He is fully aware.
 - ii. Second, He is in authority. Yes, it may feel like our world is spinning out of control and things are getting worse by the moment. But we need to be encouraged by the fact that God is in authority. This does not change the chaotic nature of our world, but it should change our response in knowing that the God of everything is fully aware and in complete control.
- c. Given these truths, we should present a question. What is our response? We can either submit to these truths and trust in the goodness of God no matter the circumstances. Or, we can base our lives around how we feel in the moment and thereby find ourselves in the midst of the chaos of this world. The choice is ours.

2. Truth: We are called to be His witnesses (v. 8)

- a. The next truth to learn and embrace is that God has called us to be His witnesses. It may be helpful if we look at a couple of things to better understand this truth.
 - i. The first truth is the plural nature of the words being used. Each “you” in verse eight is plural. This is important in the fact that if it was singular the application would apply to the one person being addressed. But, since it is plural, it is applied to all who were present. Furthermore, since it was plural then, it is still plural now. Therefore, the application to us is valid.
 - ii. A second truth we can discern is found in the “will be” (v. 8). This is written in the indicative, which means that it is a statement of fact. Let’s consider the context of this statement as we move towards application. According to verse two, the apostles were the original recipients of this message. This was a rather motley group in that several were fishermen, one was a tax collector, one was a zealot, and another had a tendency towards doubting. A truth to discern from this fact is that God wants to use all types of people to be His witnesses.
 - iii. Finally, we see a calling to be witnesses no matter where we may go. God called the apostles to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. He did not call them to one location, but rather throughout the world. If we are to personally embrace this truth, then we too are called to be His witnesses. Our calling is to our neighborhoods, our schools, or places of employment. We are called to share Jesus across our city, state, nation, and throughout the world. If we know Jesus as Lord and Savior, as the apostles did, then we too are called, and we too should strive after faithfulness.

3. Truth: Jesus is coming back (v. 11)

- a. When we know guests are coming over for dinner, we are active in our waiting. We wait for the time to arrive and are active in cooking and cleaning in anticipation of their arrival. Similarly, we need to be active in our waiting for the return of Jesus. When Jesus ascended into heaven, the men in white clothes asked, “Why do you stand looking up into heaven?” (v. 11). This question was asked on the heels of receiving the commission to be witnesses. They had a calling to fulfill, and it was time to be active in seeking to fulfill said calling.
- b. The reason it was important for them, and for us, to be active in waiting is because Jesus is coming back. The two men articulated this fact at that moment. As we learned in our group study this morning, Peter articulated the truth of Christ’s return. We also learned that Peter referenced Paul’s teachings about the return of Jesus. Jesus is coming back. It may be today, or it could be years from now. We do not know the times or the periods, but we know the truth of His return. Therefore, we as His followers need to be active in sharing the good news of the gospel message as we long for His return.

Conclusion

We can find at least two points of application for this sermon. For those of us who know Jesus personally as Lord and Savior, let’s be found faithful today in being the witness He has called us to be. For those here today who are learning more about Jesus, the application for you is to know that He is returning. While we may not know when, we do know that He will return. The

question for those who are learning about Jesus becomes, what do you need to do today so that you are ready for His return?

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