

Reflection Questions: Acts 1:1-11

For the message, “The Sending Church” given by Pastor Ryan “Slim” Thompson at Mercy Hill Church in Bryan/College Station, Texas, on February 26, 2023

These reflection questions are designed to help you apply the message from the Scriptures by helping you think through application to your personal life, your church life, and your city's life. You can use these by yourself for reflection, or with your family or small group for discussion. To review the message, go to MercyHillBCS.org/resources/messages.

INTRODUCTION

Pray. Take a moment to pray asking God to guide you in reflecting upon the Scripture text.

Read the Scripture text: Acts 1:1-11

1 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, **2** until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. **3** He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

4 And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “You heard from me; **5** for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” **7** He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” **9** And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. **10** And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, **11** and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Let's get started...

- What initially grabs your attention as you read through this passage? What do you find interesting or prompts questions in your mind?

QUESTIONS

1. Let's think about how this text applies to our lives as individuals.

- (1) Let's focus in on verse 8: Jesus promises empowerment from the Holy Spirit—God's personal presence with us—in order to be witnesses to Jesus. What is the connection between power and being witnesses? Why do we need it, and what happens when we don't tap into it?
- (2) The original disciples were eyewitnesses of Jesus, having seen his resurrection and ascension. What does it mean for us to be witness of Jesus, relying as we do on the testimony of the original eyewitnesses?

(3) There are two ways we witness to Jesus: (1) by speaking the words of Jesus, that is, in telling others about the good news Jesus proclaimed, and (2) by demonstrating the goodness of Jesus in our acts of kindness to others, often described as good works. Which of these do you feel most comfortable doing, and which of these would you like to see more growth in yourself?

2. Let's think about how this text applies to us as a community of Jesus' followers.

(1) What comes to your mind when you imagine a group of Jesus' followers embodying this passage in their neighborhoods and workplaces of our city?

(2) Pastor Slim Thompson spoke of four images of the church: (1) the canoe, or thinking that we are in this thing by ourselves; (2) the cruise ship, in which the church exists to provide goods and services; (3) the battleship, in which we think of the church as engaged in culture wars, or as the people (staff) that are supposed to engage the battle; and (4) an aircraft carrier, in which the church equips and sends us into the world to be witness of Jesus.

- Which of these images best describes how you have tended to think about the church?

3. Let's think about how this text applies to our city.

- How does this passage help us to see / understand the kind of church we want MHC to be in and for our city?
- How are the good works we do as believers in our city differ from "random acts of kindness" that our culture talks about?

CONCLUSION QUESTION

What is the one thing you want to take away from this study to remember or to make a change in your life?

PRAYER

What are some ways you can turn what you are learning into prayer? List them as bullet points....

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