

knows me, by name. I've been claimed, by name in the water's of baptism. He's sought to feed me in the bread and wine of communion with his body and blood. He's poured out the Holy Spirit so that I can 'Receive' when I wait. This isn't some wishful thinking, but a promise of Jesus our King.

So we live under a new reality; Jesus will 'Return'. Jesus' future now shapes my life. For every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father; like it or not. It doesn't depend on you, Jesus will 'Return'.

We can affect whether it will be a celebration of friends or a cold icy meeting with a stranger,

or worse an encounter with one who's love we have rejected. Jesus gives us the wonderful opportunity to live now with him as our friend. That's his passion. That's what he has invested his life in. But to force a relationship that doesn't create friends who trust each other with their lives.

Jesus goal is to use this time between his ascension and his return, to break down that boundary which keeps people from trusting him with their lives. Jesus has trusted us with his life, opening up his heart and soul, poured out his life for us because he wants to build an intimate, trusting relationship with each of us. Jesus' hope is that when he returns it will be a celebration of friends,

who sit down to a wonderful feast, enjoying each other's company.

Let us pray. Jesus thank you for restoring the Kingdom, for breaking down those barriers which keep us from you. Draw us closer, that out of trust in you, knowing your love for us, we live and move and have our being. Help us to wait, till we have received, and then to go confidently, trusting you. Jesus we look forward to your return, may we be a faithful witnesses this week so that others might grow close to you. Amen.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' Disciples, who grow disciples, who grow disciples, who grow disciples...

5 June 2011 ASCENSION Acts 1:6-14



Today we are going to look at the three 'R' in our reading from Acts. Not Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic, but; Restore, Receive, Return, which all do start with the letter 'R'.

Jesus' disciples ask him if this was the time that he was going to 'Restore the Kingdom of Israel'. What comes to your mind when you hear the phrase; Kingdom of Israel? I'm first reminded of the nation of Israel where Jesus lived, where the temple was built, where God's chosen people were lead, the place called the Promised Land.

All of which Jesus restores, with himself as King, but differently to how his disciple might have expected. Firstly Jesus kingdom doesn't have

geographical boundaries. Jesus hasn't come to fight over land boundaries. His kingdom is far more fluid. Jesus has come to fight over spiritual boundaries, boundaries which trap or liberate people. Jesus has broken through the boundaries which hold people trapped so that they can come into a right relationship with God, themselves and each other. Here is Jesus' kingdom. A kingdom that brings life and vitality into a world of death and weariness.

In Jesus we have been forgiven. So in Jesus we now live under God's grace; God's Riches At Christ's Expense. In Jesus we no longer live under the curse, we have been forgiven. That boundary has been broken, and so we live

under a wonderful new reality. The reality of being in Jesus' kingdom, under his rule. Not under the oppression of some tyrant, but Jesus rules by using his power and authority to enhance our lives with him. Jesus hasn't only served us with his life through his crucifixion, he continues to serve us, each and every moment interceding for you before his Father.

Jesus is right now restoring the 'Kingdom of Israel' the kingdom of God's promise, where we will be his people, where we will live with him as the object of his love, where he pours out his love and we live knowing that we are loved and the Father rejoices in us sharing life with him. This is his greatest passion,

what he lives for. Do I deserve it? Never. In Jesus, is it real? Certainly. You can build your life on it.

Jesus is right now in the process of restoring the 'Kingdom of Israel' as he brings more and more people into the boundaries of his love, his grace and his mercy. That together we live under a new reality, and live out being the new community he has created.

That's why the second 'R' is so important; Receive. Jesus reminded his disciples not to go off and do their own thing. We can't do this on our own. We can't do this off our own initiative. We can't do this by simply being focused, energetic and strategic. We can't do this by our own endeavour. Jesus said; don't go, WAIT! "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father

promised... the Holy Spirit." (Acts 1:4) Jesus said; "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) I like the word 'will'. You

Jesus will Return

will receive. That's a promise and Jesus always comes good on his word. He promises, he delivers, you can build your life on that. This is 'Good News'. Receive the Holy Spirit, and then go out in Jesus' power and authority. Now that far exceeds anything I could ever hope to do or achieve. I'm not simply doing my own thing, put I'm now living in harmony with the Father's will,

walking where he is blessing, rather than telling him what to do. Cause when I live that way often I'm only asking the Father to clean up my mess. An unnecessary mess.

The kingdom isn't my idea; it's the Fathers. The kingdom isn't ruled by me and my desires; it's ruled by Jesus. And he isn't just some figurehead but actively involved. The one who calls the shots. The

kingdom doesn't come about by my energy and effort, but by me being open to the Holy Spirit's leading, empowering, sharing Jesus' will with me, so that I can be doing what God is blessing.

Don't just rush of and do, wait. Always wait and follow Jesus' lead via the Holy Spirit. Wait and walk in harmony with the King. Often when I don't wait or I don't seek to listen, but do what my so

called sanctified logic wants I find myself out of sync with Jesus; doing it my way, for what I think is the right outcome.

More and more I'm realising I need to wait till I 'Receive'. And then go out in Jesus' power and authority.

Then I'll be his witness. That's my role, to be a witness of Jesus, and not an ad for myself. Look what I've done.

Look how I've succeeded. Look at me, don't look at me. No look at Jesus and all he has done, is still doing and will do.

When I wait and receive from Jesus, via the Holy Spirit I'll be a witness to those I live with; that's my Jerusalem. Then I'll be Jesus' witness to those I work and play with; that's my Judea and Samaria. Then I'll be Jesus' witness in whatever situation I find myself in; that's

my end of the earth. Because then my life will be an act of faith, trusting Jesus, listening to what he says, and then in his power and strength acting for his benefit.

This is one area I need to repent of daily, cause daily I want to tell Jesus how to run his

Wait till you Receive

kingdom. Sometimes I must admit I don't wait till I receive but I act because I think I know what is best. Please always ask me what I have 'Received' from Jesus.

The third 'R' in this reading is 'Return'. What were the disciples told; "This same Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back (that's return) in the same way you have seen him go

into heaven." (Acts 1:11) Notice Jesus didn't say; 'I'll come back if you're good', or 'I'll come back if you believe it'. Jesus is 'Returning' whether you like it or not. Jesus is 'Returning' ready of not. Letting us know that he will 'Return' gives everyone the opportunity to be ready.

That's what it means to live by faith, to believe, it means I'm living ready. Everyday ready for Jesus 'Return'. That is my unescapable future. It doesn't matter what you do or don't do, Jesus will 'Return'.

Personally I'm looking forward to that wonderful day, because the one who loves me today, the one I'm seeking to listen to and share life with is the one who is coming back. I know him, like a brother, like my best friend. And I know he