



Week 6 – The Commission

Check-in

How are you? Where have you seen Christ working in your life in the last week? And... today, we're discussing Jesus's final goodbye to his followers, where he simply floats off into heaven. If you were to float off into heaven in the final scene of your life's movie, what song would be playing in the background? "Stairway to Heaven" by Eric Clapton? "We are the Champions" by Queen? "Bright Side of Life" from the Monty Python movies?

Opening Prayer

God of Purpose, send us. Give us the courage to tell others about Jesus Christ.

Introduction

Jesus's time on Earth was nearing an end. He'd spent the 40 days following his death and resurrection appearing to his followers, spending time with them, talking about the Kingdom of Heaven. And

we've covered 5 of those instances to this point: Mary Magdalene, the followers on the Road to Emmaus, Thomas, his disciples eating breakfast, and Peter... all the best "post-credits scenes" after the epic movie that is Easter. (If you missed any of those, go back and check out the reflections from previous weeks and go through the corresponding reflection guides... it's powerful stuff.) But, Jesus is a master of dramatic exits, and when the time came for him to finally leave this world and go back up into heaven for the last time, he saves his best for last. And it is this final "Stinger" that we'll look at today. But first...

Yelp Review: Honest opinion, how would you rate this series? Has it been helpful to look at these stories in this way? What has been the most impactful piece? What would make it better?

Scripture

In the first 5 weeks, we covered all the "Stingers" in the gospels, the 4 books in the Bible that tell about Jesus's life. But, Jesus makes one more appearance. At the beginning of the next book, called "Acts," he meets with his followers one final time, then floats off into heaven with the theme from Rocky playing in the background. (Yes, "Gonna Fly Now" from Rocky was the correct answer.) But before he makes his Hollywood-worthy exit, he gives them a final set of instructions... a "commission" that would change their lives forever.

Read Acts, chapter 1, verses 6 to 9.

It was time. Jesus had spent 40 days proving to them that he was alive, reminding them of their call and their worth, and telling them more about the Kingdom of God. This scene, often referred to as “Luke’s Great Commission,” (as we believe the author of the book of Acts, was the same guy who wrote the gospel of Luke,) would be the “Stinger” that would change the world.

Question 1: Talk about this scene. What stands out or catches your attention about this passage? How would you have felt were you one of the disciples watching this happen, knowing this was the final time you’d see Jesus? What would this “Commission” have meant to you?

Reflection

The Commission, (specifically verse 8,) is the last thing Jesus ever says to his followers, which makes it extremely important, for them and for us. In this verse, we can see Jesus doing his best to finally get it into their heads that their mission was going to be so much bigger than just themselves, than just Israel. Remember last week when they didn’t know what to do, so they went fishing? Well, in this one moment, Jesus gives them exactly what to do next. They were still wrapped up in the notion that Jesus was the Messiah of Israel who would free them from the Romans. But Jesus doesn’t tell them to go gather an army. He doesn’t tell them to overthrow the Jewish leaders. His commission is very simple. They would have one job: “tell others about me.” (v.8) We get so wrapped up in finding God’s purpose for our lives, making it day to day, praying for guidance and direction. But the role Jesus gave us

was simple, “tell others about me.” For the last 5 weeks, we’ve look at the encounters the disciples had with Jesus, and just how greatly these “Stingers” impacted their lives. And now it was time go share that life-change with others... to help others find the same unmistakable love and grace and healing through Christ that they did. Jesus gives us the same Commission: “Tell others about me.”

Question 2: Part 1) What stands in the way of you telling others about Jesus? What prevents you from inviting someone to worship or to Connect Group? What would open that door?

Part 2) Take a moment to be silent and ask God to place the name of someone on your heart who you are supposed to tell about Jesus. Then pray for an opportunity to live The Commission this week.

Closing

This Commission is what this whole series, every appearance, every encounter, every Stinger, has been about. The appearance to Mary because she was worthy, the encounter with the Emmaus guys because the mission wasn't over, the reveal to Thomas because of his desire to know Christ, the reminder of the Disciples' call to be fishers of people, the redemption and reinstatement of Simon Peter... all of it... was Jesus's way of reminding them of the incredible life-changing power they experienced through him. And because their encounters with the Risen Christ changed their lives, they went out and told others about Jesus. And we know they lived out this Commission because we

are here today. They went and told somebody, and those somebodies told somebody, and those somebodies told somebody. And because people have been telling people about Jesus for 2000 years, we sit here today. Thus, we *have to* carry on the Commission, because there lost and lonely people out there who need to encounter the Risen Christ, who need to hear about the same love of Jesus that has changed *our* lives. This Commission wasn't only for those disciples living in the post-credits world of the Easter movie. This Commission is for us. The disciples told others about Jesus and changed the world. Let us do the same. Go tell others about Jesus and do a little world-changing ourselves.

Take some time to share prayer requests or celebrations.

Close in prayer.