Sermon Highlights

From Gazing to Going: The Call to Active Witness

Sermon Summary:

This sermon examines the ascension of Jesus Christ from the Mount of Olives and the disciples' response to His departure. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes that while the disciples stood immobilized, gazing into heaven after Jesus ascended, God sent angels to redirect them toward their mission. The message challenges believers not to become paralyzed by circumstances or consumed with end-times speculation, but instead to actively pursue the work God has called them to do. The sermon stresses that God equips those He calls, providing power through the Holy Spirit to accomplish His purposes. The central theme is moving from passive observation to active obedience—doing what God commands one step at a time rather than standing idle while waiting for Christ's return.

Key Points:

- The disciples were not prepared for Jesus' ascension despite His previous teachings, reminding us that we often hear but don't truly listen

- God sent two angels to rebuke and encourage the disciples who stood gazing into heaven instead of following Jesus' commands

- Jesus commanded them to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which would give them power to be witnesses

- Believers should not be consumed with knowing the exact timing of Christ's return, but focused on being faithful in daily obedience

- The responsibility of believers is to accurately present the Gospel; the Holy Spirit does the drawing, the blood does the saving, and God does the judging

- Jesus ascended bodily into heaven and will return bodily in the same manner—first for the church, then later to establish His millennial kingdom

- God promises power to accomplish whatever He calls us to do; our willingness matters more than our perceived ability

- We must redeem the time and stay busy in God's work rather than standing idle, gazing into heaven

Scripture Reference:

- Acts 1:1-11 (primary passage)

- References to John's Gospel regarding the promise of the Comforter

- Allusions to Old Testament prophecies about the kingdom of Israel

- References to the baptism of John versus the baptism of the Holy Spirit

Stories:

- The disciples' experience of Jesus' crucifixion and their fear, followed by His resurrection appearances over 40 days

- The raising of Lazarus from the tomb at Bethany, near where the ascension took place

- Illustration of a general who positions himself above the battlefield to see the whole picture and direct his troops effectively, compared to Jesus now interceding for us from heaven

- Personal testimony about the burden lifted when Pastor Bruce Gordon realized his responsibility is to accurately preach the Word, not to force conversions

- Anecdotal reference to making church announcements that people hear but don't really hear