

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

Three Important Things to Know about God:

1) God wants us to live in _____ with _____.

God invites us to live in _____ with him.

We would rather live _____.

2) God is on a _____ to _____ the _____.

3) God is a _____ God.

Four Marks of the Christian Community:

We are to be a community of...

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

Digging Deeper

4. Read Acts 1:6-8. Jesus says we will be sent as his witnesses in ever-widening circles: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. These ever-widening circles may or may not be geographic in our day and time. Read the following descriptions of each of these places, then answer the question regarding it.

Jerusalem – the place where you live; where the people, the language, and the customs are all similar to yours. The Jewish disciples were in Jerusalem, the center of Judaism. They were at home and comfortable there. This is where their mission started – with people like them. Where is Jerusalem for you? For our church? What are some ways we can be God's sent people in this place?

Judea – a place where the language and the people are still the same, but the customs are different. Judea was the region in which they lived. Jerusalem was in Judea, much like Sarasota is in Florida. Where is Judea for you? For our church? What are some ways we can be God's sent people in Judea?

Samaria – a place where the language is still the same, but the people and the customs are different. The Samaritans were of a different race. They did not get along with the Jews. There were Samaritans throughout the land, however Samaria was their home. Jews did not go there unless they absolutely had to. Where is Samaria for you? For our church? What are some ways we can be God's sent people in Samaria?

Ends of the Earth – now the language, people, and customs are all different than yours. For the disciples, this would have been other countries such as Italy, Greece, Spain, etc. Where is this for you? For our church? What are some ways we can be God's sent people to the ends of the earth?

Taking It Home

- 5.** The Confession of 1967 is all about the ministry of reconciliation. The part Pastor Tim quoted in his sermon falls under the heading, “The Mission of the Church.” It says, “To be reconciled to God is to be sent into the world as his reconciling community. This community, the church universal, is entrusted with God’s message of reconciliation and shares God’s labor of healing the enmities which separate us from God and from each other.”

On down, under the heading “Reconciliation in Society”, the confession says this: “In each time and places there are particular problems and crises through which God calls the church to act. The church, guided by the Spirit, humbled by its own complicity and instructed by all attainable knowledge, seeks to discern the will of God and learn how to obey in these concrete situations. The following are particularly urgent at the present time.”

The confession then goes on to list those things the authors thought were urgent in 1967. What would they be for you today? In other words, what particular problems and crises are present in our world today through which God calls us to act as agents of reconciliation?

- 6.** Pastor Tim reminded us that the purpose of the church is the same as God's – reconciliation. What does reconciliation mean to you? How does our congregation pursue reconciliation right now? What new and different ways of pursuing reconciliation might we engage in as a church? What acts of reconciliation are you being called to pursue in your own personal life?