

Witness Unhindered:
“God’s Kingdom, God’s Way”
 Acts 1: 1-11

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

“Waiting and fidelity are closely connected, and many of us struggle with both. Lured by the promise of freedom and infinite choice, we are fearful of foreclosing our options and limiting our opportunities. Why make commitments to something in the future, when better opportunities might surface in the meantime? Why live in a way that anticipates a future when the present includes so many other possibilities? What promise could possibly be so life-giving that we would shape our lives around it?” – Christine Pohl

*“When the scriptural people of God seek redemption, they want personal salvation, and they express their desire in what sounds like a cry of the heart. But to them redemption goes far beyond personal salvation. When biblical people want God to redeem, what they want is freedom and righteousness throughout the land. They want God to unseat Pharaoh or Caesar. They want God to drive the Midianites back across the border. They’re Exodus people, after all. They’re Passover people. They have a history of being squeezed by Egypt, Babylon, or Rome. In their eyes, God’s redemption means justice is coming, liberation is coming, the King of all the earth is coming!” – Cornelius Plantinga, *Engaging God’s World**

*“John [the Baptist] saw the mission of the Coming One as primarily one of separation: those who repented he would save and the unrepentant he would judge. John, in fact, expected this twofold messianic work to take place in a single eschatological event. He had predicted that the coming Messiah would both ‘gather his wheat into the granary’ and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire (Matt. 3:12). When John was in prison, he began to reflect on the fact that, while he did see Jesus gathering wheat, he did not see him burning chaff.” – Anthony Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future**

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

- What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered or rabbit trails to be followed for you?
- How does the disciples’ question about the Kingdom of God resonate with you?
 - Where do you see or experience brokenness that the fullness of the Kingdom would heal and you long for it to happen immediately? Where are you tired of the struggle and just want some relief?
 - What is frustrating about the gradual, slow growth of the Kingdom for you?
 - How does Christine Pohl’s assertion about waiting and fidelity inform that frustration and challenge you?
- Which is more of a temptation for you: the star-gazing, heaven focused piety or the landlocked, earthbound grab for control and power?
- How do we hold in balance and tension a right concern for our people (safety, agency, fortunes) and right concern for others/neighbors/unbelievers? How can the international nature of God’s kingdom grow in our church?