

Rollercoasters

Imagine what the disciples have been through the past several days. Just a week ago, Jesus was performing miracles, healing on the Sabbath, debating with the Pharisees, and raising men and women from the dead - all with crowds of thousands following Him. Days later He was sent before the Roman government, accused of treason, and sentenced to death. Hours later, their leader, the supposed Messiah, was crucified and buried. After three days of hiding in fear and worrying about the future their own lives, Jesus reappears, gives them the Great Commandment, and then, right before He ascends back into heaven, orders them to “wait”. Imagine the emotional, physical, and spiritual roller coaster the disciples have been on, and then right when they think they’re back with Jesus, He informs them that He’s about to leave for good! Luckily, as we see later in the Book of Acts, a third part of the Trinity would later descend upon the disciples, making them more powerful through Christ than they could possibly imagine.

1. What are some examples of physical, emotional, and spiritual roller coasters that you’ve experienced in your life?
2. Have there ever been times where it felt like your relationship with God was strong and “apparent”, only to quickly fade and “disappear”, only to come right back again stronger than before? How does your approach to God change and/or remain the same during these times?
3. Do you ever struggle with who God is based on the seasons that you experience in your life? Does it bother you that sometimes God can feel like He’s sitting right beside you while other times it seems like He may not even exist?

Do not Act, but Wait

Moments before Jesus prepares to leave them, He commands them to not “leave”, but to “wait”! Again, imagine the emotions running through the disciples! Christ has risen from the dead! He conquered death! He truly is the Messiah and God’s chosen One! What’s their response? “Let’s go DO something!” Once again, Jesus’ plan is different from that of the disciples. Come to find out, the risen Messiah knew what He was talking about (go figure), as the Holy Spirit descends upon the disciples, empowering the once-fishermen into the first leaders of the early church, catapulting a movement that would change the world forever.

1. Have there ever been times you wanted to “do” or “go” or “act” yet Jesus was calling you to “wait”? What struggles do you face in these moments?
2. After these moments have passed and you look back and reflect, were there ever times when you thought you were ready for something where, in reality, you weren’t? Did waiting ever better equip you to overcome an obstacle? What’s your response to Jesus during these times?
3. Has waiting ever actually stopped a situation from becoming more negative than it was at the time? Had you followed your own desires instead of Jesus, what could have happened?
4. How does waiting change your perspective on a situation, whether it be at work, in your family, with your friendships, or your relationship with God?
5. If you struggle with waiting, what does this say about your trust and faith in Jesus?

God’s Vision and Our Role

After the excitement of Jesus coming back to the disciples, Jesus reminds them of their mission to “go to all nations, teaching them everything I have commanded you”. The disciples, on the other hand, can’t seem to grasp the capacity of God’s vision. They simply ask, “Lord, when are you going to free Israel now and restore our kingdom?” First of all, they limited God’s resources: “when are you going to...” - not when am “I or we”. Secondly, they limited God’s scope - “free Israel and restore our kingdom?” God had a vision to use His people for the advancement of His kingdom - His entire Kingdom, not just Israel. Like the disciples, we should expect and look forward to the privilege and honor of serving together in the body of Christ and working towards the advancement of God’s great vision - spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ to all the ends of the earth.

1. Do you feel like you take an active role in God's plan, or do you rely on others to fulfill the calling that He's given to His church, or even you specifically?
2. Do you long to be a part of the advancement of God's kingdom, or do you want to be a spectator or consumer? Which is easier?
3. Do you view taking an active part in the body of Christ as privilege and honor or a burden in an already hectic life full of demands? Why should we take an active role in the church?
4. How can you get connected into the body of Christ today? What unique role could you fulfill?
5. How does your vision for God's work in your life line up with His ability? Like the disciples, do you ever expect less out of God than what He's capable of? Why do you think we do this?
6. How can you begin to see the amazing capacity, power, and influence that God is capable of in your life? What are steps that you can take today to draw closer to the Perfect Trinity?

Prayer Focus

- That despite any roller coasters we may experience in our lives, we put all faith and trust in Jesus who is the same yesterday, today, and forever
- That we would begin to trust on God's timing in our lives and not our own devices
- That we would never limit the capability and capacity of God's influence in our lives, as we strive to be on active mission to advance His kingdom to all the ends of the earth.