

Are You a Martyr?
June 10, 2007
Acts 1:1-14
Dr. Jeff H. McCrory Jr.

Synopsis:

You are probably tired of hearing the word *refocusing*. In fact, when I just said the word, I will bet many of you turned off your mind, thinking, “He’ll get over it, and then we can get back to doing what we’ve always done.”

Refocusing to me is not about *doing* different things, but about *being* different. I now get to *be* different with you and with my family and friends. I now get it—duh!

Those who heard Jesus’ words might have been thinking, “Jesus is going to ask us to *do* some new things.” But Jesus doesn’t tell them “**Go** and **witness**.” He says, “You *are* my witnesses.”

I get to be different with you, and we get to be different with our community. We get to be *martyrs*, the Greek word for witness, in Laguna Hills, Laguna Woods, and to the ends of the earth.

I.

From Whom?

Acts 1:3 ‘After his suffering he presented himself alive’

READ Luke 24:44-52 and Acts 1:3-44 (note similarities)

We get to encounter Jesus Christ *alive*: How?

- e.g. Lying in my bed experiencing my Father
 - not a dream
 - not awake
 - eyes open
 - very present
 - looking at me, trying to communicate love

We experience Jesus alive through the Holy Spirit: See vv. 2, 5, 8

- I have had these moments with Jesus
- I want you to have these moments with Jesus
- not a dream, not awake, eyes open, very present, loving you

*Changing who we are comes from *encountering* Jesus, not from *doing* anything. Paul says, “If you are *in Christ Jesus*, there is a new creation.” (2Cor 5:17)

II.

About What?

Acts 1:6 “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?”

Jesus alive is about the Kingdom: See vv 3, 6

-Kingdom = right relationships here on earth

-How do we establish right relationships here on earth?

*We become who we are supposed to be with people

E.g. Letter, phone call to Nancy, Dad’s widow

Where can you *be* who you’re supposed to be with people?

Where can we *be* who we’re supposed to be with our community?

III.

Who not What

Acts 1:8 “You all will be my witnesses”

READ Acts 1:8, note not *do* witness but *be* witness

-Greek sentence reads “When *Holy Spirit* . . . you will *be*”

Doing versus Being: Hard for Presbyterians

-We are “can-*do* people” not “can-*be* people”

-Good news is about our transformation

-*Breakthrough* for me, has me flummoxed

I don’t know what to *do* differently.

I know I have to *be* different.

Last week:

-Staff, just be there

-Military committal, just be there

-Don Capelle, was there for me (Grandmother’s chair)

*Refocus: Last weekend retreat

-More about who we *are* than what we will *do*

-Plan is good, but it's about how *we're* different

IV.

Where?

Acts 1:8 “In Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”

Where are these places?

-Draw a picture map

-Start at home and move out

Jerusalem = Home

-Barbara

-Hal

-Cate

e.g. Andrea helped me with this; I have to be different

*Where are you different at home?

*How can I cause these people to experience me differently?

Judea and Samaria = neighbors both friendly and not

-Judea = people like me

-Samaria = people difficult for me

For Geneva: 4 Major Initiatives

- Via Iglesia/ Family Center

- Early Alzheimers Day Care, and Laguna Woods

*How can we cause these people to experience us differently?

We at Geneva are at the end of Refocus and at the beginning of being different with each other and with our community. The Holy Spirit has made us a new creation. This is the adventure into which I invite you, and into which Jesus invites us today.