

## Dr. Joe Jursa's Sermon

[Ascension Sunday \(so that the Spirit can come\)](#) - Acts 1:6-11

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?"<sup>7</sup> He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."<sup>9</sup> When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.<sup>10</sup> While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them.<sup>11</sup> They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom of Israel? We ask God this question in so many ways. Can you tell me now, God?

We want to know. We want the inside information. We are like children on a car trip. We are not in the car 10 minutes before we start asking, "Are we there yet? How long do we have to go? When are we going to get there?"

We want the inside information because we instinctively know that knowing the information somehow puts us in control. Because mom or dad who is driving the car know how much further, how much longer until we get where we are going; they are in control. We want control. We want the answers.

Jesus has finished his life here with the disciples. His death has occurred. There has been the 40 days of his appearance to various disciples. Now standing on the verge of his ascension they want to know "Can you tell us now?" "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom of Israel?"

Give us the inside information. Let us know also so that we can feel as though we are in charge. And his response is so typical of Jesus, "it is not for you to know." You have to keep living by trusting that God is in control, even when God does not let you in on the plan. They had lived so long just trusting that Jesus knew, now they were being told they would have to trust God to be in control.

Trusting God is difficult. Not with big things like eternity or everlasting life or big things out there. But trusting God with today, with events and needs of my life now can be difficult.

If I don't know how God is going to meet my needs for paying bills or with health concerns or with my children it is just hard to trust. If only I could know how, if I only had the inside information, I could rest easier.

But it is not for you to know! Jesus tells his disciples. And he tells us the same thing. Some things are not for you to know, can you still trust?

For three years the disciples have traveled with Jesus. They witnessed the early miracles that brought large crowds to hear and see Jesus. They had witness the decline in popularity and the rising opposition of the religious establishment. They had endured that last week of his life and that horrible day of his crucifixion and on the third day the miraculous news of his being alive. For 40 days they had been visited by Jesus and had talked with many other disciples who had also experience the risen Christ. Now they were sure it was finally time. God was going to bring in the kingdom of Israel.

Now was surely the time. Nothing could possibly be better than this very moment. Can we know now?

But God's ways are not our ways, and God's time is not our time. When we don't know the answer, when we are not given the inside track, can I still trust God?

Can I believe that God is in control? When we know the inside information and we can watch it unfold it is easy to recognize that God has been in control. It is with the yet to be the future out there that gives us trouble. Trusting anyone, even God about tomorrow is difficult.

But in this moment in the disciples lives, Jesus wants them to remember and because they remember to trust God.

When the journey with Jesus began for each of them it was over 3 years before. He had called them and they had come not knowing the future but trusting that somehow time with Jesus was the right direction for their lives.

During those years of miracles and success, Jesus always seemed to know what to do. Miracles followed and needs were met, needs that they themselves could have never even fathomed let alone met. The blind man whom Jesus touched who could then see, no one had ever helped a blind person receive their sight before. The raging storm at sea when the boat was almost swamped, Jesus had been asleep but when they woke him because of their own terror, Jesus spoke and the seas calmed and the wind ceased.

When he had challenged the thinking of the best of the religious establishment, talking about the love of God for all persons, they had seen the changed lives of those who were marginalized before. When he spoke of his own death and of life everlasting, they had witnessed his death and his resurrection. Now he wanted them to continue trusting God. No, they would not be given the inside track, the secret knowledge, they would not know the very mind of God; but could they trust God?

Jesus had trusted God. He had lived daily before them trusting God at each turn. Could they be like Jesus? Could they trust God? Maybe they could remember the garden of Gethsemane, he had questioned God, but he still trusted. What were his words, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

When they didn't get the answer could they with Jesus just trust God?

And the same thing is asked of you and me each day. Can we trust God with today? If I don't know, can I trust God?

The disciples are told that Jesus is going to the Father. When he goes another, the Holy Spirit will come and lead them into all understanding. They are asked to wait in Jerusalem until that Spirit comes. When the Spirit comes they will receive power to become his witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samarian and into all the world. Can they trust God?

Can you today trust God? What is going on in your life? Are you waiting for answers, afraid of what the future may be bringing, uncertain of which road to take, are there questions to which you would feel better if God gave you the answer now? Can you trust God?

We want to ask God – Can you tell me yet? But the answer is can you trust? Well, children of God can you?