

6-2-19 **EVERYONE IS SOMEONE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST,
ESPECIALLY OUR GRADUATES ACTS 1:1-8 & MATTHEW 28:16-20**

Today, we recognize ASCENSION SUNDAY, which recognizes the ASCENSION of JESUS --- that day and moment that Jesus last met in earthly form with his disciples and that day when Jesus gave his final directions to the disciples – essentially GRADUATING the disciples that they are now ready to GO, DO AND BE THE PEOPLE GOD HAS CALLED & PREPARED THEM ---- TO BE FISHERS OF PEOPLE --- TO BE SALT AND LIGHT --- TO BE A LIGHT ON THE HILL --- TO BE AS CHRIST WAS TO THEM!

WE ARE TO BE THE BODY OF CHRIST TO THE WORLD, THE HANDS & FEET OF JESUS ... DOING ALL THAT JESUS DID (John 14:12) SO THAT THE WORLD MAY RENEW THEIR BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD, THEMSELVES and OTHERS ---- AND THEN, TOGETHER, SPREAD THE KINGDOM OF GOD NEAR & FAR --- HELPING TO HEAL THE PEOPLE AND CONDITIONS OF THE WORLD AND HELPING TO PREPARE THE WORLD FOR JESUS CHRIST'S 2nd COMING!!!

After a time of preparation and maturing, we send graduates into the world to make their mark --- LIKEWISE Jesus "GRADUATED" the disciples to go make their mark, as was INTENDED FROM THE BEGINNING.

GOD INTENDS FOR US, AS HIS MODERN DAY DISCIPLES, TO BE HIS **AMBASSADORS** TO THE WORLD ... TO BE LIKE A **LETTER** THAT TELLS EVERYONE ABOUT GOD'S LOVE, CARE, PROVISION, and MISSION TO REDEEM THE WORLD -- TO MAKE IT "NEW" AGAIN – TO BE THE SWEET **AROMA** OF CHRIST TO THE WORLD – HELPING OTHERS TO UNDERSTAND, and **RECONCILE** THEIR LIVES ACCORDING TO GOD'S GOOD & PERFECT WILL.

WOW!!!!!!

GRADUATION recognizes the achievement of having learned a certain body of life skills that recognizes the accomplishment of the basics for GOING INTO THE WORLD. To graduate ... means that we're ready to be sent into the world.

- + AS CHRIST FOLLOWERS, WHAT ARE THE PERQUISITES FOR US TO GRADUATE?
- + AS CHRIST FOLLOWERS, WHAT IS OUR MISSION or OBJECTIVE?
- + HOW ARE TO GO ABOUT OUR MISSION?
- + ARE YOU READY FOR JESUS TO GRADUATE YOU?

ACTS 1:1-8: Jesus Taken Up to Heaven:

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that **Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles** he had chosen. ³ After his suffering, he presented himself to them and **gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.** ⁴ On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days **YOU WILL BE BAPTIZED with the Holy Spirit.**"

⁶ Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

⁷ He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ **But YOU WILL receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and YOU WILL BE my WITNESSES in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**"

KEY POINTS from ACTS 1:1-8

PERQUISITE = TO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES ALL CHRISTIANS SUPERNATURAL, DIVINE POWER & PRESENCE

DO YOU HAVE A "TIGER IN YOUR TANK?"

ARE YOU LETTING IT LOOSE OR CONTAINING IT?

CAN YOU BE A CREDIBLE WITNESS TO JESUS?

START CLOSE TO HOME & THEN SPREAD OUT

Matthew 28:18-20 THE GREAT COMMISSION

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore GO and MAKE disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

KEY POINTS from Matthew 28:18-20:

We are to “GO” with DIVINE AUTHORITY & POWER

We are to “MAKE” with DIVINE AUTHORITY & POWER

Not “our disciples” but JESUS’ DISCIPLES!

More than mere TEACHING --- BUT TEACHING THAT RESULTS IN LIVING RESPONSIVELY TO GOD’S OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

HOW ARE WE TO DO THIS?

- + We are called to be the AROMA of CHRIST
- + We are called to be like a LETTER – revealing our hearts to ALL
- + Made COMPETENT & ABLE by GOD

2 Corinthians 2:14-3:6

¹⁴ But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ’s triumphal procession and **uses us to spread the AROMA of the knowledge of him everywhere.** ¹⁵ **For we are to God the pleasing AROMA of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.** ¹⁶ To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. ¹⁷ Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, **in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those sent from God.**

3:1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? ² **You yourselves are our LETTER, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone.** ³ **You show that YOU ARE A LETTER FROM CHRIST,** the result of our ministry, written not with ink **but with the Spirit of the living God,** not on **tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.** ⁴ Such confidence we have through Christ before God. ⁵ Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, **but our competence comes from God.** ⁶ **He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant ...**

WHAT’S OUR MISSION AGAIN?

- + To be MOTIVATED BY LOVE (not ‘ought’)
- + To THINK as Jesus thinks & SEEING as Jesus sees
- + To help people to ALIGN or RECONCILE their lives to the context of God & the Bible – God’s Operating instructions

2 Corinthians 5:14-21: The Ministry of Reconciliation

¹⁴ For Christ’s love compels us, ... ¹⁶ **So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view.** Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ, the NEW CREATION has come: The old has gone, the new is here!** ¹⁸ All this is from God, who RECONCILED us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. **And he has committed to us the MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION.** ²⁰ **We are therefore Christ’s AMBASSADORS,** as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so **that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**

SO WHAT?

We celebrate ASCENSION Sunday as that day that Jesus told his disciples they were ready to GRADUATE --- to do the work that they have been prepared to do.

When our hearts are FILLED WITH THE LOVE OF GOD WE ARE ABLE TO BE like the AROMA of CHRIST; a LETTER; A RECONCILER ... made competent BY GOD ALMIGHTY!!!!!!

HAS JESUS GRADUATED YOU TO BIGGER & BETTER THINGS? OR HAVE YOU BEEN “HELD BACK”? OR DO YOU EVEN WANT TO GRADUATE?

HAS JESUS GRADUATED YOU, BUT ARE YOU REFUSING TO “LAUNCH”?

HOW MIGHT YOU BE AN “AROMA”; A “LETTER”; a “RECONCILER” or AN “AMBASSADOR” – for CHRIST’S MISSION TO RESTORE THE KINGDOM OF GOD HERE ON EARTH AS JESUS SEEKS TO REDEEM & HEAL OUR WORLD.