

After The But... The Here, Near, And Far

Acts 1:7-8

The Command

- In the beginning, the Apostles only saw the Easter weekend as a prelude to Jesus overthrowing Rome and setting up His kingdom.
- Before Jesus ascended into Heaven, He told them the future of the movement that He had started.
- But... they were comfortable where they were, none of them had travelled more than sixty miles from where they were born.
- They believed it would be unfair to expand outside of Jerusalem and Judea before everyone had the chance to respond to the message of Jesus.

Change

- For the Apostles, Israel was a small island of righteousness in a sea of wickedness.
- The Apostles believed there was no need to reach beyond Judea because there was nobody worth reaching outside of Judea.
- If Christianity was going to become a world changing movement, the Apostles would have to change.
- The Apostles had grown up singing the same songs and hearing the same scriptures that had been recited for over a thousand years.
- For the Apostles, Christianity was Judaism with Jesus.
- By the time of Jesus, participation of the congregation in the Temple would be limited to *"Amen"* or *"Halleluiah."*

Here and Near

- Jesus knew that if Christianity was going to become a world changing movement the Apostles would have to change.
- It is in the “Here” that we are most comfortable.
- Jesus was not telling the Apostles to leave Jerusalem and Judea; He was telling them they would have to add to Jerusalem and Judea.
- Jesus also had a plan for the “Near” as the Apostles were told they would be witnesses in Samaria.
- Jesus is more about building bridges than building walls.

Conclusion

- Jesus also had a plan for the “Far” as He knew the world would shrink.
- For the Apostles, who had never been far from where they were born, the ends of the earth was unimaginable.
- Not only were the ends of the earth far away but they were populated by people with strange languages, strange customs and different faith backgrounds.
- The reality was that the unimaginable became possible, because within a generation the Christian Church had spread to the ends of the known world.
- The task of taking the Gospel to the ends of the Earth is a daunting one, But... God has provided all the necessary resources.