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## **May 26 – There Is Room For Celebration | A Message from Jim Everette**

Like many of you, I try to begin each morning reading God's word and praying as I offer my day to what God may desire to do in me and through me. This being the week of we remember the ascension of Jesus into heaven, I am focusing on Acts 1:1-14. The first thought that came to mind was how frustrated we can become when we have unanswered questions. As followers of Jesus, we called to live by faith. That means we are often called to live with unanswered questions and not be hindered in our walk with God. In Acts 1:6, Jesus is about to depart, and the disciples are eager to learn if this means that Jesus will finally "restore the kingdom of Israel?" My question, and maybe yours, is "When will we get beyond some of the frustrations caused by the coronavirus pandemic that have caused a lot of us to be a bit unsettled? Jesus' answer to his closest friends seems a little harsh to me as he essentially told them it was none of their business. His response reminds us: (1) God is God and we are not, and (2) even though God may not answer all our questions, God still loves us dearly and will give us what we need to live the life God has called us to live. Then, Jesus gives the disciples a great word of promise and encouragement in verse 8 when he says, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses....." We may at times ask why, when, or how, and it may seem like God will not answer. We have to be patient and understand that (1) God knows we have questions, (2) we can become frustrated when we don't have answers, or answers we may not want, (3) yet God loves us and has the best in mind for us.

During these days of pandemic, it is easy to feel discouraged, fatigued, and frustrated because it feels like it has lasted too long and some of the "experts" are prolonging it. We have to acknowledge that while we are not in control of much of what is happening, we can control our response. We can live in the negative and allow frustration to morph into anger, or we can follow the teachings of the Apostle Paul who writes, "Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God.... in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold firmly to the word of God." (Philippians 2:14-15)

Even in dark times, there is room for celebration. In my days of questioning I reflect on the question, "What has the Lord done for me?" and the list of good things is long. What has the Lord done for you? I bet you can make a long list of all the good God has done for you. Time and again, God has blessed us, provided for us, delivered us, and God will continue to do so.

God hears our prayers and we are never outside that divine love. In fact, God calls us to humble ourselves and be witnesses and evidence of that love to other people.

The more I reflect upon this the more positive my spirit becomes. God is with us. God hears our prayers. God's love never fails. God gives us the power of the Holy Spirit. With these reminders, I am ready to face a new week with hope and joy. How about you?