**Do You Now Believe?**

Why did Jesus ask this of his apostles at this particular time? It seems rather odd. They believed in him, about 3 years earlier. Peter, Andrew, John, Nathaniel, and Philip walked with Jesus three days from Judea to Cana. Jesus starts his ministry with this first sign, an obvious miracle, water into wine. “This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.” (John 2:11). So they did believe him! But now about 3 years later, the last night before Jesus dies on the cross, he asks the question. “Do you now believe”? (Jn. 16:31).

“Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? “Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:31-33).

In the next few hours they will show Jesus how little they believe. Judas will betray him. Peter will deny him 3 times. All of them will flee for safety when the soldiers come to capture him in the garden. Does that look like they believe he is the Son of God? Or does it look like tribulation took away their faith? They saw him walk on water, feed 5000 people with five loaves and two fish. But the moment of real tribulation, they flee. Does that look like faith to you? It didn’t look like faith to Jesus either.

It reminds me of what Jesus said during the parable of the sower, “And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away” (Luke 8:13).

Most of the apostles had a temporary lack of faith in Jesus.

We all have these times in our life. We recognize them later as a failure, a momentary lack of faith. Seeing Jesus alive on Sunday morning three days after the crucifixion, was a restoration of their earlier faith, and another chance to try again.

If you are still reading this article, you too will be tested again. Perhaps it is a sin you are struggling with. Perhaps it is courage to stand for what is true. He wanted them in the future to realize, understand, and believe. “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33). A second chance they received, “ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.” (Acts 4:13). Now it is our turn to face tribulation in a better way, full of faith. Dan Peters