

Entrusted
March 6, 2016
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Acts 1:1-11

Opening Discussion: Let's take a poll by show of hands.

- When assembling or using a new device:
 - How many read and follow the instructions? How many just jump right in assuming you'll figure it out?
- What if you don't exactly have the correct tools?
 - How many improvise? How many take the time to get the right tools?
- Another, when you have some really big task to accomplish:
 - How many usually DON'T ask for help and just try to do it yourself? How many realize it's too much and ask for help?
- Why do some people slow down for instructions; tools; and help, while others just go for it?

When Jesus left the earth He gave His followers a role to play; instructions to follow; and power to carry them out. Because the apostles followed His instructions and operated in His power, the good news of the Gospel and the influence of the early church spread fast, far, and wide. And we're still talking about it today almost 2,000 years later. Followers of Christ today have been entrusted with that same responsibility and that same power through His Spirit.

- Since we're starting a new study in a new book, let me give you some quick facts about the book of Acts.
- We believe Luke who also wrote the third gospel wrote the book of Acts.
- It's believed that Luke was a Gentile physician (Col 4:14) who was a coworker and traveling companion to Paul.¹
- Luke states the purpose of his writings in Luke 1:1-4: *"...to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us...[as] eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us,³ ...to write an orderly account...⁴ that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught."*

- Look at verses one and two:

1 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, **2** until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

- Luke addresses both the third gospel and the book of Acts to someone named Theophilus. That name translates “lover of God.”
- He was evidently Greek because the name is Greek. He may have been the person who financed Luke’s writing project. Some have speculated the name was really symbolic for all believers. We really don’t know.
- Picking up where the gospel of Luke left off, Luke writes about how Jesus instructed His followers between His resurrection and His ascension. Then he documents the growth of the church as persecution pushes Jesus’ followers and His message further and further out to surrounding areas.
- The key verse of the book of Acts is Acts 1:8 (ESV) **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Let’s look at our text for this morning, then we’ll ask our three questions of Bible study: What does it say? What does it mean? And, how should it change us?

Acts 1:1–11 (ESV)

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

3 He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

4 And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; **5** for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

The Ascension

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” **7** He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own

authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” ⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

- Verse three says Jesus gave “convincing proofs” that He was alive.
- Only this book tells us Jesus appeared to His followers for forty days.
- **Why was it important for His followers to be convinced He had risen from the dead?**
- Verses four and five. **What did Jesus tell them to do? Why wait?**
- **What was the “promise of the father...you heard from me [Jesus?]”**
- Chapter 24 of Luke’s gospel records the first time Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection. Look at how he described this promise:

Luke 24:44–49 (ESV)

44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things.

49 And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

- What a beautiful description: “clothed with power from on high.”
- The Message paraphrase renders it: “*equipped with power from on high.*”²

- The New Living translation is really specific: *“stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven.”*³
- Jesus was assigning the most important mission ever given to mere mortals but they needed to wait for supernatural power to accomplish it.
- What about Moses, Abraham, David, Solomon, and the Old Testament prophets? All were mere mortals who God used uniquely in His plan.
But the apostles were the eyewitnesses of Jesus’ ministry, death, burial, and now resurrection. Their testimony would open the door to eternal life through Jesus for mankind. What could be a more important mission?
- For such a mission, Jesus said, “wait” for the power. Jesus didn’t want them to get ahead of Him and try to do His work in THEIR strength. The same is true for you and me. When it comes to doing God’s work we need to remember the words of Zechariah 4:6 (ESV)⁶ ...Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.
- As Adrian Rogers said: *“You can save a lot of time waiting on God.”*⁴
- Back to Acts chapter one, verse six. Now that Jesus was raised from the dead and promising them supernatural power, **what assumption does verse six indicate the disciples were making about what came next?**
- It’s no surprise they still didn’t understand the plan. One commentator states: *“Being loyal Jews, they longed for the defeat of their enemies and the final establishment of the glorious kingdom under the rule of King Messiah. They did not realize that there must first be a spiritual change in the hearts of the people (see Luke 1:67–79).”*⁵ John Stott writes: *“The kingdom of God is his rule set up in the lives of his people by the Holy Spirit. It is spread by witness, not by soldiers, through a gospel of peace, not a declaration of war, and by the work of the Spirit, not by force of arms, political intrigue or revolutionary violence.”*⁶
- Theirs wasn’t a military mission, but a spiritual battle led by God’s own Spirit. It’s also our mission today!
- Verse seven: **How did Jesus respond to their question about restoring the kingdom to Israel?**

- Then in Acts 1:8 Jesus states the whole theme of Luke's account.
- "You will receive power..." Every believer receives the indwelling of the Holy Spirit when you are saved. Think about it like a pilot light in a heater.
- When you're saved (regeneration) God lights a pilot light in the heater of your soul that will never go out. You might say, "I don't feel any warmth much less any heat."
- The pilot light is still burning, you just need your Heavenly Father to turn up the thermostat releasing that stored-up power of the Holy Spirit into your life. **What are some things we can do to have God turn up the thermostat of His Holy Spirit in our lives?**

Charles Stanley writes this about the Holy Spirit (link provided):
"He's always with us whether we feel Him or not. Many people want an emotional encounter of some kind, but we never see the Spirit producing ecstatic experiences in Jesus or the apostles. His work is to teach us the truth of Scripture, guide us into God's will, transform our character, gift us for service in the church, and empower us to obey, suffer hardship, and share the good news of salvation in Christ."

The key to being filled with the Spirit is not in experiences but in obedience ([John 14:21](#), [Eph. 5:18](#)). So if you're a Christian, you are always in the presence of the Holy Spirit. And the more you surrender your life to His control, the more you will sense His love and power."⁷

Warren Wiersbe stated:

Ordinary people were able to do extraordinary things because the Spirit of God was at work in their lives. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is not a luxury; it is an absolute necessity."⁸

- Once they received power Jesus gave them their job description: "...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
- The message of the gospel was to be spread geographically in ever-widening circles. We need to be witnesses both close to

home and to the very ends of the earth. We still have work to do in all those places.

- The word “witness.” ...is a key word in the Book of Acts...used twenty-nine times as either a verb or a noun.⁹ **Easy question: What is a witness?**
- Let’s get honest, transparent, and real. **How does it make you feel when you realize Jesus is calling every believer to be His witness? Does that assignment make you cool as a cucumber or nervous as a cat?**
- The great commission tells us to “*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 *teaching them to observe all that [Jesus] commanded.*”¹⁰ The very idea of it can make some of us break out into a cold sweat!
- When we’re told to be Jesus’ witnesses we probably imagine we are to be an evangelist like Billy Graham.
- Ephesians 4:8 (ESV) says... “*When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.*” In 4:11-12 (ESV) “*And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,*”
- This verse would indicate that some are called specifically to the job of evangelist, but it says “...*to equip the saints for the work of ministry.*”
- Some say: “I don’t have the gift of evangelism.” Lifeway’s Ed Stetzer contends there is no “gift of evangelism.” He says, “*It is unhelpful to refer to evangelism as a gift because it removes the responsibility of all believers. In other words, many think that if they don’t have the gift, it is not their job. Evangelism is not a "gift," it is a call to all believers.*”¹¹
- **What do you think? Is everyone called to be an evangelist? How can we be a witness if we’re not called to be an evangelist?**
- I think Warren Wiersbe has a good perspective on this: *We hear a great deal these days about “soul winning,” and the emphasis is a good one. However, while some of God’s people have a calling to evangelism (Eph. 4:11), all of God’s people are expected to be witnesses and tell the lost about the Saviour. Not every Christian can bring a sinner to the place of faith and decision (though most of us could do better), but every*

Christian can bear faithful witness to the Saviour. “A true witness delivereth souls” (Prov. 14:25).¹²

- [Note: The book “Becoming a Contagious Christian” is good resource on “communicating your faith in a style that fits you.”^{13]}
- Verse nine: Not only did the disciples need to see that Jesus was alive, they needed to witness another important event.
Why do you think God wanted them to witness Jesus’ ascending back to Heaven?
- The apostles needed to see with their own eyes that Jesus left and where He went. Jesus told them they could only receive the Holy Spirit’s power if He went away. They needed to know He was at the right hand of the Father. They needed to know He is coming back in the same way in His glorified body. We needed to know all that too.
- We can understand why they stood their gazing up at the clouds. Who wouldn’t? That’s why those angels had to startle them with the instructions: “He’s coming back...get busy!”

With a sense of irony I’ll ask: What’s the Takeaway?

- Not every believer is called to be an evangelist; but every believer IS called to be a witness who shares with the lost what Jesus has done in our lives. We can only carry out this assignment if we have the power of the Holy Spirit.
- If you’ve received Jesus’ free gift of salvation, your “pilot light” has been lit. The very Spirit of God is living in you and you just need the Father to turn up the heat. He’ll do that as we spend time in His word; time in His presence; and obedience to His commands.
- If your Christian life seems a little cold this week...pray for the Lord to turn up the heat!

¹ Luke in the New Testament Luke appears three times in the New Testament:

- (Phlm 24)—Paul lists Luke among his coworkers along with Mark, Aristarchus, and Demas.
- (Col 4:14)—Paul sends a greeting to the Colossians from Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas. As the author states that Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus who is called Justus are his only Jewish coworkers, Luke, Epaphras, and Demas are likely Gentiles (Carson, Moo, Morris, Introduction, 115).
- (2 Tim 4:11)—The author notes that Luke is the only coworker currently with him.

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² Peterson, E. H. (2005). *The Message: the Bible in contemporary language* (Lk 24:49). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

- ³ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Lk 24:49). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
- ⁴ Adrian Rogers Legacy Bible: 2009. Love Worth Finding Ministries
- ⁵ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 403). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
- ⁶ The Message of Acts (The Bible Speaks Today Series) by John Stott © 1990
- ⁷ <http://www.intouch.org/read/magazine/the-pulpit/full-power>
- ⁸ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 403). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
- ⁹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 403). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
- ¹⁰ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2001). (Mt 28:19–20). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.
- ¹¹ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2010/july/no-such-thing-as-gift-of-evangelism.html>
- ¹² Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 403). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
- ¹³ http://www.amazon.com/Becoming-Contagious-Christian-Bill-Hybels/dp/0310210089/ref=sr_1_1_tw_i_pap_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1457095484&sr=1-1&keywords=becoming+a+contagious+christian