

The Mission of My Church

Focus Passage: Acts 1:1–11

Larger Context: Conclusion of Jesus' time with His disciples following his 40 days with them after his resurrection.

Other Passages Referenced: John 16:7; Romans 8:11;

Comments to Leaders:

- As a group leader, you have a significant influence in encouraging your group members to unite with what Jesus has done for us with what Jesus wants to do through us. The 5:30 p.m. Serve gathering this Thursday evening at the Chapel may be a good event for your group to experience together
- Be sensitive to going deeper on application question 3 about the Kingdom of God being much larger than any national interests or influence.

Sermon Recap

The Book of Acts is the author's sequel to the Gospel of Luke. Where Luke's gospel "dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, the Book of Acts reveals that Jesus wasn't finished doing and teaching even after His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Pastor and author, John Stott, describes Acts as "the continuing words and deeds of Jesus by his Spirit through his apostles." Acts marked the pace for the Church to continue until the Messiah Jesus returns in ultimate victory. The Big Idea of the passage and message is, "**We can't separate what Jesus has done for his Church from what he wants to do through his Church.**"

Jesus' Church is Jesus' family on Jesus' mission. Being a part of Jesus' family requires participating in Jesus' mission. We can't be a part of Jesus' family and ignore His mission. Acts 1:8 reminds us that Jesus' mission is to see the gospel proclaimed to all peoples of every ethnicity and the Church is to be His witnesses of all that He has done. Being a witness does not call followers of Jesus to act as prosecutors, defenders, judges, or jury. Rather a witness is called to tell the truth of what she has seen or experienced.

It is normal for each of us to feel inadequate to the task of testifying to all nations. Jesus knew that and promised to give us the power to be His witness. Both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts show that when the Holy Spirit comes into God's people, they become empowered witnesses who testify about Jesus.

- John the Baptist – Luke 1:15
- Elizabeth – Luke 1:41
- Zechariah – Luke 1:67
- The Disciples at Pentecost – Acts 2:4
- Peter – Acts 4:8
- The Disciples in persecution – Acts 4:31
- Paul – Acts 9:17

We gather on Sunday, and we go on Monday. Like Rich took the time to stop his car to testify about an auto collision he had just witnessed. We need to stop and testify about Jesus when we see people whose lives have been wrecked after colliding with sin. Will you take time to stop and testify to such folks about how you have seen and experienced Jesus in your life? As the Church, we are God's family on God's mission. **We can't separate what Jesus has done for his Church from what he wants to do through his Church.**

. Interpretation Helps

- The Kingdom of God is not to be understood as a place but rather God's reign over all. kingdom of "God In the OT, the kingdom of God (Yahweh) refers to God's dominion (e.g., Psa 145:13; Isa 9:7; see 1 Chr 17:14 and note). Ultimately, the OT looks forward to fulfillment of God's kingdom in the Messiah's reign in grace and righteousness over the whole earth (e.g., Gen 49:10–11; Isa 11:1–9; Dan 2:44)"¹
- In Acts 1:4, Jesus refers to "the promise of the Father". "God promised to give a new spirit (or His Spirit) abundantly when He inaugurates the new covenant (Ezek 36:26; Joel 2:28–32). Jesus had told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would empower them to be effective in their mission (Luke 12:11–12; John 14:26)"²

Group Gathering

Group Check-in — Care, Celebration, Encouragement (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. Informal conversation to allow individuals to catch up with one another.
2. Ask if anyone would share how they've been hearing and obeying God's direction.

Allow the Word to Speak — Be Hearers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

READ Acts 1:1–11

1. What from the passage or sermon was most impactful to you?
2. Were you left with any questions or confusion about the passage or sermon?
3. To what does the author's "first book" mentioned in Acts 1:1 refer?
4. Acts 1:2 states that Jesus had given "commands through the Holy Spirit" to the apostles before He ascended into heaven. What were some of those commands Luke records in Acts 1?
5. During the 40 days between His resurrection and ascension, what does Luke say that Jesus spoke about?
6. What mission does Jesus give His followers? Note how Jesus expands the scope of God's Kingdom from the disciples' focus on Israel (1:6) to "the ends of the earth" (1:8).

Put the Word into Practice — Be Doers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. How have you experienced the Holy Spirit empowering you to be Jesus' witness?
2. Think through some of the "collisions" that people often suffer:
 - a. Marriage problems
 - b. Parenting challenges
 - c. Financial difficulties
 - d. Addictive behaviors
 - e. Sexual temptations

Can you think of a witness or testimony about what you have personally seen/experienced from Jesus and the gospel that might be appropriate? Will you ask the Holy Spirit in you if you are to stop and witness to the truth you have seen and experienced?

3. The men who would become the apostles of the church had a default understanding of equating God's Kingdom with their nation. Jesus gave them a corrective that God's Kingdom wasn't about their nation of Israel but about all nations of God's creation. Do you sometimes view God's Kingdom through the lens of your nation as the disciples did? How does the corrective Jesus gave them speak to you (Acts 1:8)?

¹ John D. Barry et al., [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Ac 1:3.

² John D. Barry et al., [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Ac 1:4.

The Big Question: What do you sense God's Spirit saying to you and what concrete action will you take in response? Share your answer with the group or another trusted Christian and ask them to pray for you.

What We Hope Members Glean from the Passage

1. No set answer.
2. No set answer.
3. The Gospel of Luke. The Book of Acts is a sequel to the Gospel of Luke.
4. Don't leave Jerusalem ... Wait for the promise from the Father—the Holy Spirit. Refer to the Interpretation Helps above for related passages showing the promise of the Father.
5. The Kingdom of God. That was Jesus' central message during His pre-resurrection ministry as well. If we can't separate what Jesus has done for his Church from what he wants to do through his Church, our message must focus on the Kingdom/reign of God in our lives and over all nations.
6. To be His Spirit-empowered "witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES: Click [here](#) for some good opportunities.