

## **Week 45---An Empowered Kingdom**

**Acts 1:1-12**

**November 9-10**

### **Summary & Goal:**

We are transitioning into the Church Era. Luke writes volume 2 of the story which he started with the Gospel of Luke. Acts gives us the final words of Jesus that the disciples take to heart. They are empowered by the Holy Spirit to continue the mission by delivering the message of Jesus beginning in Jerusalem and then throughout the world.

### **Main Passages:**

Acts 1: 1-12

### **Session Outline:**

1. THE STORY CONTINUES-- (ACTS 1:1-3)
2. WILLING TO WAIT-- (ACTS 1: 4-5)
3. EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT—(ACTS 1:6-12)

### **Session in a Sentence:**

The book of Acts is a book of action; as Christ followers we have to be ready to go, but willing to wait for the empowering and direction of the Holy Spirit.

### **Kingdom Connection:**

Jesus had spent 3 ½ years with His disciples teaching, training and preparing them. Now it was time for them to put feet to their faith as they took action. They would not be expected to do this alone; the Holy Spirit would empower, teach, train and prepare them in a similar way as Jesus did when He was with them. The Holy Spirit does the same for us today.

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### Acts 1:1-12

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Famous last words have always been interesting. You can google it and find some that are funny, a few that are weird, some sad, and others profound. I would venture to say that for most of us, if we absolutely knew that the words, we were to speak would be the last words someone ever heard from our voice; we would be specific, clear, encouraging and profound.

The Gospel Era covered basically 3 ½ years of the ministry of Jesus with some of the last words of Jesus recorded known as the Great Commission. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John focus on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

The last words of Jesus that John recorded was a dialogue with Peter on a beach.

The last words of Jesus that Mark recorded was what we would know as the Great Commission, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel.”

The last words of Jesus that Matthew recorded was also the Great Commission; in fact, the one found in Matthew’s Gospel is what we use as the mission statement of our church (Matthew 28:19-20).

The last words of Jesus that Luke recorded are not found in the Gospel of Luke. The Gospel of Luke was volume 1 of the story, part of the Gospel Era. The book of Acts, also written by Luke, is volume 2 of the story, part of the Church Era. It is in chapter 1 of Acts that we find the last recorded words of Jesus as recorded by Luke.

Yet those words are not the only significant last words in the book of Acts. In fact, the very last word in the book of Acts is an overarching theme not only for the book of Acts, but for the entire Church Era, which continues even today in 2019.

The last word written in the book of Acts is the Greek word—Akolutos. (ako-loo’-toce).

It literally means “Unhindered—Freely”.

Jesus came to set us free, so that we may live life unhindered by sin. In writing volume 2 of the story, Luke ends with these verses in chapter 28.

**Acts 28: 30** Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, <sup>31</sup>preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him. (*Chronological Bible pg. 1526, Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>*)

(NASB—uses “unhindered”/ NIV---uses “without hinderance”)

The life of a Christ Follower is to be lived unhindered, no one stopping you, having been set free in Jesus and commissioned to be His witnesses. Those are the last words written by Luke, now let us look at the last words spoken by Jesus.

In Acts 1: 1 Luke sets up volume 2 of the story as the emphasis shifts from the life of Jesus to the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 1: 1** The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, <sup>2</sup> until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, <sup>3</sup> to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. (*Chronological Bible pg. 1427, Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>*)

In today's vernacular this would be known as a sequel. It picks up where the Gospel of Luke leaves off. Luke makes it clear that the first book he wrote was focused on Jesus and this book would move forward with the Holy Spirit, which Jesus had promised.

It is important also to note that Jesus presented Himself alive after His suffering (crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection) by many "*infallible proofs*" for forty days. Jesus did something that no one else had ever done before or since. Jesus rose from the dead and proved it by appearing, interacting, speaking, eating, and teaching for forty days with His apostles and others; never to die again.

Too often we think the story of Jesus ends at the resurrection, which we celebrate at Easter. We sometimes forget what Luke reminds us of here, that the story of Jesus continued and even continues today. Luke phrased it like this, "pertaining to the kingdom of God."

Throughout the Gospel Era, Jesus taught about the kingdom of God through parables, stories, dialogues and sermons. The disciples had been exposed to this teaching for over 3 years and now Jesus was passing the baton of the ministry and teaching to them. However, Jesus knew they could not do it in their own power, relying on their own intellect, skill set, or even experience.

Jesus had told them previously that they would not be alone, that He would send them a comforter, a counselor, a guide (cf. John 14:26). Luke is setting the stage for the final words of Jesus, words of a teacher.

**Acts 1: 4** And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "**which,**" *He said, "you have heard from Me; <sup>5</sup> **for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."** (*Chronological Bible pg. 1427, Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>*)*

He gathers them together, making sure He has their attention. From their perspective, He had been with them 40 days since the resurrection. It must've seemed like "old times". He was eating with them, talking to them, teaching them; day after day, week after week.

In Matthew, Mark and even Luke Jesus tells them to "Go and be disciples. Go and be witnesses. Go and baptize. Go and teach." These disciples have been with the risen Lord for 40 days and they were ready to Go! But Jesus now says, "wait."

Jesus told them not to depart from Jerusalem, which happened to be the capital of Israel, the hub of Jewish civilization. Jerusalem had been the city of their ancestors and Kings. Jerusalem was the city of the Temple. Jerusalem was the city where Jesus had been illegally tried 6 times in one morning and then nailed to a cross to die alongside two thieves. Jerusalem was the city where

they had buried Jesus in a tomb. But Jerusalem was also the city where Jesus did what no one else did, having been victorious over death, rising on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day.

Over the course of the 40 days we know that Jesus traveled back up to the Galilee area having breakfast with the disciples on the beach and having that infamous dialogue with Peter about feeding His sheep. (John 21). But now, it seems Jesus and His disciples have traveled back to Jerusalem, the capital, the hub of Jewish civilization. And Jesus says, “do not depart”, “wait”.

The resurrected Jesus, having conquered death now says, “stay here and wait.” The disciples must have been ready to move, ready to go, ready to continue what they had been doing with Jesus for 3 ½ years; instead they have to wait.

I’ve never been a fan of waiting. Waiting is not something that comes naturally for most people, though all of us have to wait. When you go to the grocery store there are lines in which you have to wait, even as your eyes are darting back and forth looking for a line that is shorter or moving more quickly. If you dare to change lines, you will find that once you go to the shorter line, it instantly becomes the slowest line and you have to wait even longer.

You go to the doctor’s office for an appointment at 9:00 a.m. and you have the privilege to sit in a room that has been aptly named “the waiting room.” The clock approaches 9:00 a.m. and then moves on, ticking to 9:05...9:10...9:15...and then they call your name. You get to leave the “waiting room” and go to the room to see the doctor, where you get to wait a bit longer.

None of us enjoy waiting. But the disciples were told by Jesus to “not depart and wait.” They were to wait on the Promise of the Father which Jesus had already told them about on more than one occasion. (Luke 3:16, Luke 11:13, Luke 12:11-15, Luke 21: 15)

Sometimes as a Christ Follower you need to be ready to go, but willing to wait. We are to wait for instruction. We are to wait on timing. We are to wait for direction. We are to wait on the Lord.

Isaiah said it like this in Isaiah 40: 31

**Isaiah 40: 31** But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew *their* strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

Jesus wanted them to be ready to go, but willing to wait for what was about to happen to them, so they would be prepared for the Church Era.

What happens in that waiting process? Do we just become stagnant sitting on a chair looking up wondering when something is going to happen? Jesus said they were to wait, and it wouldn’t be that long; in fact, Jesus says “not many days from now”.

This was a reminder to them as well as to us that it is about God’s timing not our timing. It is during those “waiting” times that God is preparing us.

- Preparing us for Relationships.
- Preparing us for Jobs.
- Preparing us for Conversations.

- Preparing us for Life.

We should take comfort in that although the disciples did not know what was going to happen in a few days, Jesus did. And it is because Jesus knew exactly what was going to happen that He could say with great confidence: I want you to “go” but you need to “wait”.

Jesus knew they could not do it on their own but the Holy Spirit, which had been promised was going to empower them to do the extraordinary. Jesus had talked about the Holy Spirit in several occasions, referring to Him as the Advocate, as the Counselor, as the Helper, as One who will give Peace. And in a few days if they were willing to wait, they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit, immersed, drenched with the Holy Spirit, clothed with power.

Look at what Jesus says in Acts 1:5.

**Acts 1: 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”** (*Chronological Bible pg. 1427, Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>*)

A literal translation of the Lord’s promise in Acts 1:5 reads, “You will be baptized into the Holy Spirit.” People of ancient cultures understood the significance of the symbolic rite of baptism. The ritual of baptism in ancient cultures symbolized identification. An organization or society initiated a new member by immersing him or her in a liquid of some kind, usually water. (Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary Acts, pg. 19; Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois, 2016)).

John (the *Baptizer, not John the Disciple*) baptized with water as a sign of repentance. It was an outward testimony of confession of their sins and repentance to God. Water baptism continues to be a way that we identify with Christ; being baptized as He was baptized by John by immersion. Jesus is not dismissing water baptism, He is expanding the relationship we have with Him beyond water baptism, by baptism with/into the Holy Spirit. This baptism would purify and refine each believer. When Jesus baptized with the Holy Spirit, the entire person would be transformed by the Spirit’s power. (*Life Application New Testament Commentary, Acts; pg. 473: Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois, 2001*)

Jesus knew it would be something worth waiting for. All the disciples had to do was stay there and wait. It wouldn’t be long, just a few days from now. Their lives were about to change again. Consider what they had experienced in the last 47 days. Approximately 47 days ago there was a triumphant entry with Jesus coming into Jerusalem riding a donkey which had been prophesied hundreds of years ago. People waving palm branches and shouting out praises of “Hosanna! Blessed be the Name of the Lord!”

Then only a few days later they were with Jesus in a large furnished room upstairs sitting around a table. It was in that room that Jesus washed their feet and instilled what we have come to know as the “Lord’s Supper” or the “Last Supper.” Later that same night Jesus would go to the Garden to pray after they had sung hymns together. It was in that garden that Jesus was betrayed by Judas, one of the disciples leading to the arrest of Jesus. Once Jesus was arrested, He was had to endure six illegal trials that led to Him being crucified on a cross and then buried in a tomb.

The disciples were crushed. They had seen all that Jesus had done. They had heard all that Jesus had taught. They had literally walked the steps of Jesus only to see Him crucified and buried.

For three days their hearts were crushed. But then the news they had hoped for but perhaps didn't honestly expect; He had Risen!!!!

Can you imagine the thrill of their hearts at that moment? And then Jesus talked with them, ate with them, proved He was the Risen Lord in front of them and others. The last 47 days were a roller coaster of emotions. And now Jesus was giving them what would be His final words, unbeknownst to them.

They were in Jerusalem. Jesus is telling them to stay there and wait. They were to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. John the Baptizer had baptized with water, which they remember, and it started a revolution. It was a message of repentance. And now they were to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, which Jesus had talked to them about which would provide guidance, wisdom, power, etc. Jesus had risen from the dead, the Holy Spirit was about to come; in their minds it was time for a revolution. We can see this in how they respond to Jesus in the next verse.

**Acts 1: 6** Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (*Chronological Bible pg. 1427, Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>*)

They were in Jerusalem and ready to go; ready for a revolution. In their minds it was time for Jesus to restore the kingdom to Israel. Jerusalem was the city of Kings. The risen Jesus would now be the King of all Kings; in their minds the time was now, it had been 3 ½ years of preparation.

And yet, they were wrong.

Jesus had been very clear to stay there and wait. The Holy Spirit would be upon them in a few days. It was not time, and He clarified it further by His response, which would in fact, be His last recorded words on this earth.

**Acts 1: 7** And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (*Chronological Bible pg. 1427, Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>*)

Notice Jesus did not get distracted with their question, nor did He shame them in being off track. Rather Jesus redirected the focus to what was going to happen to them as they took the baton.

In the last words of Jesus, He was saying you are going to be unhindered. You are going to be free to continue the story that has begun. There is power, purpose and a plan in place.

Acts 1:8 becomes a blueprint on how to live our lives and be on mission for God. It all begins with power. There is confidence in the words of Jesus. He doesn't say "if" the Holy Spirit comes upon you; rather "when". These are people who believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. The next step is to receive the power of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus had promised would be with them after He left.

This baptism of the Holy Spirit is going to be life changing in that you will receive power.

Notice first it is a promise--"You Shall/Will".

You will receive POWER; the Greek word: Dunamis, which means Dynamite/Explosive Power.

This is where it changes, Jesus is passing the baton to the disciples. Jesus is very clearly telling them in this promise they will receive power. *You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.*

You will NOT be able to do this on your own strength; nor with your own abilities; nor relying on your own strategy. But you will have extraordinary supernatural POWER because of the Holy Spirit.

The POWER of the Holy Spirit has a very specific PURPOSE. We are to be WITNESSES of Jesus Christ! Jesus did not ask them to be preachers, though some were. Jesus didn't ask them to be theologians, though some were. Jesus didn't ask them to be political leaders, though some served in that capacity to some extent. Jesus didn't ask them to be philosophers. The vocation didn't matter.

They were to be witnesses; the Greek word is "Martoos". This is where we get our word "Martyr". In its most basic form, the word means: *tell your story as it has happened to you.*

Dr. Lloyd Ogilvie says, "Jesus is very specific about the dimensions of our witness. The Resources of the Holy Spirit will be given in the realm of Responsibility." (*The Acts of the Holy Spirit, Dr. Lloyd Ogilvie; Harold Shaw Publishers, Wheaton, IL; 1976 pg. 23*)

This is a key part of the book of Acts and the entire Church Era. The word "witness" is used 29 times throughout the book of Acts and is lived out throughout the rest of the New Testament.

Jesus was about to leave, but the mission and the ministry was to continue. The only way it could happen was to allow the Power of the Holy Spirit to work in their lives for them to stand up for what they believe in and tell the story. They had the resource, but now they had the responsibility!

Jesus even gave them a marketing strategy, which is the one we use at Second Baptist. Start where you are; Jerusalem/ Houston, then expand beyond to Judea/Texas; Samaria/United States. And then go even further to the uttermost part of the earth/the world.

We happen to live in one of the most international cities in the United States. The world has come to Houston. We can be witnesses to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the Uttermost part of the World and not leave Houston.

In the first century the disciples had lived in a bubble with Jesus. The bubble was about to burst. They had traveled from the Galilee area to Jerusalem and back and forth for 3 ½ years with Jesus Himself. Always with Jesus by their side. Now it was going to be different, the message and the ministry was going to explode because of the Power of the Holy Spirit.

The book of ACTS is proof that the disciples listened to the closing words of Jesus and put them into ACTION.

**ACTS 1: 9** And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup> And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.

<sup>11</sup> They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.” <sup>12</sup> Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. (*Chronological Bible pg. 1427, Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>*)

Their obedience began in verse 12, by them returning to Jerusalem and waiting for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit which happens in Acts 2.

In the next several weeks we will see what happens when the Power of the Holy Spirit invades the lives of the followers of Jesus Christ. Though we won’t be looking specifically at the book of Acts, we will be studying various epistles and letters to churches written by Paul and others; many of their stories are recorded in the book of Acts.

But today the question is first and foremost are you a Christ follower? Have you had that moment when you have confessed Jesus to be the Son of God who died for your sins and rose from the grave?

If you have, then as a Christ follower we have to be ready to go, yet willing to wait. Sometimes Jesus wants us to wait just a bit longer, learn just a bit more by building community, serving others, and allowing the Holy Spirit to be our power.

It begins by being ready to go, yet willing to wait.