

To the End of the Earth
The Mission for Which We Are Responsible

Introduction: Today we bring this series and our missions emphasis to a close

- One last time we return to the 1st chapter of Acts (post resurrection and prior to the ascension)
- Jesus tells disciples to stay in Jerusalem until they receive the promise of the Father

The focal point of this series—the big question:

“Lord, will you at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?” (1:6)

Words of Calvin—“There are as many errors in this question as there are words.”

Re-direction of Jesus— *“...It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 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 ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:6, 7)*

Three errors we are addressing in this series

1. **It is not going to happen NOW** Jesus said (not an event, but a process of getting the Gospel to the ends of the earth must precede (Matthew 24:14—“And this Gospel of the Kingdom...”))
2. **It is not just for Israel** (unto the ends of the earth)—A Mission Without Borders (every kingdom, tribe, tongue)

Today—They asked “when will YOU restore the Kingdom?”

- Jesus didn’t say when HE would
 - He said YOU will receive power
3. **The error was thinking that Jesus was going to do it all** but He corrects that error

NOTE: Their response is partially right

- Only God can build His Kingdom
- Jesus promised HE would build His Church
- Only God can change hearts
- Only God can judge and renew the world

But—we are not to be mere spectators in this process (we are to receive power and be His witnesses)

It is a mission for which we are responsible—taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth

What does it take for us to carry our responsibility to this mission?

I. We must take the appropriate POSTURE.

“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; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” Acts 1:4-5 NKJV

A. Before Jesus sent His disciples into the world to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth He instructed them to wait (to tarry) in Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father

1. That promise was the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit to empower them.

“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” Luke 24:49 NKJV

- a. In Luke 11 they asked how to pray—instructed “Our Father...”
- b. That section ends with these words

“Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Luke 12:32 NKJV

2. They would have no power to carry the Gospel unless the Holy Spirit empowered them to be witnesses
3. They must first wait—tarry—pray—this was the posture He called them too

B. We are charged with the same task—take the Gospel to the ends of the earth

1. Posture of prayer is crucial
2. Altar time (Chad McAtee a great word)-altar our best friend
3. 5 minutes of prayer
4. People or prayer a must

(ILL)

The 137-mile long Atchafalaya River is a distributary of the Mississippi River that meanders through south central Louisiana and empties into the Gulf of Mexico, serving as a significant source of income for the region because of the many industrial and commercial opportunities it offers. Yet as scenic, productive, and enriching as this river is, it owes all its strength—all of it—to the mighty Mississippi. That's because a distributary doesn't have its own direct water source; it is an overflow of something else. So when the Mississippi is high, the Atchafalaya is high; and when the Mississippi is low, the Atchafalaya is low. What the Atchafalaya accomplishes depends wholly on something other than itself.

The church is a lot like the Atchafalaya River. Anything of value she accomplishes is always tied to her source. So if she somehow loses connection with it—with her first love, the Living Word—she loses all power. She dries up and empties.

We must take the appropriate POSTURE

II. We must keep the proper PERSPECTIVE.

A. After the ascension of Jesus we read these words

1. He's coming back but in the mean time don't stand gazing
2. Be about the business of the Kingdom (proper perspective is not sky-watching!)
3. Don't spend your times looking upwards—look outwards, the harvest is coming (ILL) People love to speculate about the coming of Christ, when and how but so many that don't know Christ

B. The time between Christ's ascension and Christ's return is the time for mission

John Stott paraphrase: "The angels tell them: You have seen Him go. You will see him come. But, between that going and coming there must be another coming and going: The Spirit will come; and you must go into the world for Christ."

C. What is our perspective?

1. Cautious and trying not to lose? (Sky-gazer)
2. Passionate and trying to win? (Harvest-gatherer)—look on the fields, not to the skies

We must keep the proper PERSPECTIVE

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III. We must enjoin the potential POWER.

“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.”
Acts 1:8 NKJV

- A. Without the empowering work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we will never be effective at witnessing the truth of the Gospel
- B. Jesus did not want them trying until the Spirit had filled them (Peter from denier and preacher where 3,000 saved)
- C. The pattern of Spirit empowering is a biblical pattern
 - 1. Bezalel and Ohioliab anointed to build tabernacle
 - 2. Spirit of Moses on Joshua and 70 elders to prophesy
 - 3. Elisha asking for double portion of the Spirit on Elijah
 - 4. Jesus—the Spirit of the Lord has anointed me
 - 5. Pentecost was the same anointing on the disciples
- D. Though it has been frequently abused, the Spirit infilling is a must if we are going to be effective witnesses
 - 1. May take patient waiting
 - 2. Will require unity (one accord) forgiveness of others
 - 3. Subsequent to salvation (John 20 they believed and received the HS) but Acts 2 they were filled (people in Ephesus—“have you received the Holy Spirit SINCE you believed” —Acts 19:2)
 - 4. We must allow our concern over fleshly excess to rob us of the opportunity to experience spiritual success.

(ILL) I want to share with you a question by Martyn Lloyd-Jones, who is certainly not known as a Pentecostal preacher. When he held the great pulpit at Westminster Chapel in London as the great preacher of Reformed theology, near the end of his life--and some say at the very pinnacle of his ministry--he asked his congregation a question. He said, "I want to talk to you today about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. You may call it what you want, but I want to know, have you experienced the fullness of the Spirit? I know all of you listening to me come as I do from a Reformed background. But it's not good enough. I know that all of you would want to say to my question about the Holy Spirit, 'Well, we got it all at conversion; there's no need for any more experience.' Well," said Martyn Lloyd-Jones, "I have only one other question to ask you. If you got it all at conversion, where in God's name is it?"

We must enjoin the potential POWER

IV. We must demonstrate the necessary PASSION. (gave possessions, themselves)

A. The New Testament church is a story of sacrifice and generosity

“Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.” Acts 2:44-45 NKJV

“Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles’ feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.” Acts 4:32-35 NKJV

“When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” Acts 7:54-60 NKJV

“Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.” Acts 8:1-4 NKJV

B. And the Lord Added, the Word spread, and the number multiplied

C. Are we willing to have that same passion that leads to sacrifice and generosity?

(ILL) The unoccupied fields of the world await those who are willing to be lonely for the sake of Christ.

— Samuel Zwemer, U.S. missionary (1867–1952)

(ILL) Some people thought he was a nut. He was just a shoemaker, after all, and an average one at that. But in the evenings, after work, he studied Greek, Hebrew, and a variety of modern languages. He devoured Captain Cook's Voyages to expand his horizons, which, because of his poverty, kept him bound to a small, forgotten English village. Some people said his time would have been better spent getting a second job to support his growing family.

But the young man's passion wasn't a curious, self-satisfying hobby. Early in life he had become concerned about the millions of unbelievers outside of Europe, and he was trying to figure out what could be done to bring them the gospel.

With God's help, he slowly figured it out. He ended up going to India to serve as the first Protestant missionary in the modern era. His passion inspired a generation of men and women—the likes of Adoniram Judson, Hudson Taylor, and David Livingstone (among others)—to take up the cause of missions as well.

Because one impoverished shoemaker named William Carey followed his God-given passion, large parts of the world that had little or no access to the gospel have large populations of people today who confess Christ as Lord.

Conclusion: Disciples: When will YOU restore the Kingdom?

- Not me—you will receive power
- What is our posture?
- Our perspective?
- Are we enjoining the spiritual power available?
- What is our passion?