

What does God want us to know, to feel, and to do?



“The Promise of the Holy Spirit”

January 3rd, 2010

Acts 1:1-8

Intro: Happy New Year! (New Year’s resolutions vs. goal setting... articles and blogs I’ve read this week about the differences between the two)

Home work assignment: Right down your personal goals for 2010, bring to homegroup this Thursday the 7th and discuss.

As Christian young adults in this generation it is God’s plan that we be empowered by the Holy Spirit to be witnesses for Jesus Christ in this world...

A few years ago, Jonathan and I were here in the office talking about what it would be like to start a church... i.e. what if God called you somewhere to start a church from nothing, how would you do it...? And I remember something he said that has stuck in my heart ever since we had that conversation... “I would start by shredding the Book of Acts.”

That’s a great place to start... and not to mention, the Biblical way.

Now, neither Jonathan nor I have started a church from the ground up. To be candidly honest, one of my prayers since the mid nineties has been that the Lord would place me in the middle of a great work of God’s Spirit so that I might learn as much as possible from men who have paved the way already so that by the grace of God then I would be trained and prepared to receive the baton of the generation in front and run in this generation in a way that is submitted to the Lordship of Jesus and empowered by the Person of the Holy Spirit.

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Great works of God's Spirit in a community or in a generation do not have to cease... the gospel and the working of God's Spirit in the hearts and lives of people doesn't stop, rather it continues... and that is true of the Book of Acts... it is an unfinished book in the sense that "the acts" of Jesus through the Person of the Holy Spirit have not stopped, nor will they ever stop...

Jesus said, **Matthew 16:18 (NKJV)** "...on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

Governments may crumble... nations will rise and fall, but the church will always exist and be victorious at the end of all things.

*****Subject of the Book of Luke*****

Acts 1:1 "In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach..."

- *"In my former book"*: Luke is the author of the Gospel of Luke and also the Book of Acts. These two books can be looked at as one book in two volumes:
 - Volume One (Luke): All that Jesus "began" to do and teach
 - Volume Two (Acts): All that Jesus "continues" to do and teach through His disciples
 - There are only three references to Luke in the New Testament: Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:11
- *"Theophilus"*: "Lover of God," thought to be Luke's former master who freed him from his duties as a medical doctor in order that he might join Paul in the work of the ministry. (Written to all "lovers of God"?)
- *"I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach..."* The gospel of Luke only records all that Jesus "began" to teach and do.

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- Jesus continues to minister to the needs of people, He continues to heal the sick, He continues to raise the dead, He continues to minister His love and gospel to the world, only now He does it through His disciples who have been anointed with His Spirit.
 - **(PP) John 14:12** “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” (Greater in multitude, not greater in magnitude)
- Our witness for Jesus Christ first begins with what we “do” and then goes on to what we “teach”... You’ve heard it said that our actions speak louder than our words... As followers of Jesus Christ, we represent Him in word and in deed...

(PP) James 1:22 “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”

- **(PP)** We represent Jesus (Christianity) to the world.
- The Holy Spirit works in our lives individually and in the church corporately to make our lives and ministry like Jesus’ life and ministry. The Holy Spirit is the One Who conforms us to the image of Jesus Christ.
 - **(PP) 2 Corinthians 3:18 (NLT)** “So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.”

Becoming more like Christ is a progressive experience... the more closely we follow Christ, the more we will be like Him...

*****Subject of the Book of Acts*****

Acts 1:2-3 “...until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.”

- *“Jesus gave many convincing proofs that he was alive...”* How did He do this? He appeared to them. It is important for you and I to know that Jesus showed Himself alive to people for a period of forty days after He was resurrected from the dead.
 - **(T)** Paul says, **1 Corinthians 15:5-9** “...and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”
 - **(PP)** **1 John 1:1** “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.”
- When He appeared to His followers, what did He talk about with them? His favorite subject... the kingdom of God. Jesus is alive today and the Kingdom of God is alive and real... if you have doubts or unbelief, let Him speak to your heart and assure you of who He is and the plans He has for your life... You know tonight whether or not you are a part of the Kingdom of God... Is Christ ruling in your heart? Have you by the grace of God chosen to put your faith in Him for salvation and receive Him into your heart... to be born again?

(PP) **Romans 14:17** “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking [external things], but of

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righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit [real spiritual relationship]...”

Acts 1:4 “On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: **“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.”**”

- The coming of the Holy Spirit is a gift from God the Father to all Christ Followers...
- We do not have to attain a certain degree of holiness to receive the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives...

Acts 1:4 (NKJV) “And **being assembled together** with them...”

- God has designed Christians to meet together on a regular basis. Have you ever heard this - *“I am a Christian but I don’t need to go to church.”*
These people are wrong - they do NEED to go to church because God commands it. They don’t understand the Bible in context.
- **(PP) Hebrews 10:24-25** “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”
- The book of Ephesians (4:11-16) ALSO tells us that when we meet at church we are meeting to celebrate and to continue to get spiritually healthy.
- God is with us and we are thus encouraged to worship Him and then to go into all the world.

Acts 1:4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this **command**: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

- **Command** - God is our master, our Heavenly father; we are his children and servants. We obey what God commands – these commands are NOT optional.
We will see that the disciples DID wait – they did obey.
- **Do not leave Jerusalem** - Why would they have to stay in a city that crucified Jesus and where all the disciples had bad memories – because they all failed Jesus...
- **Because Jesus knew** that God was going to change the history of the whole world from Jerusalem.
 - This city would now see that Jesus was the only son of God – and it would be the strategic sending off place to establish Christianity in the world...
 - And that EACH disciple would experience in this city – a new start, a new power and a new life. WOW!
 - West Melbourne and Brevard County need to hear that Jesus is the Son of God!
- **Wait – don't leave**
 - It is hard to wait...and yet God uses waiting in our lives to prove our obedience and improve our patience.
 - If the disciples had disobeyed, they would have missed the will of God and NEVER accomplished what we are experiencing EVEN today.
- **(PP) 2 keys:**
 1. Don't get ahead of God – learn to wait on His timing
 2. The disciples were NOT INACTIVE while they were waiting.
(They were assembled together in obedience and expectation)