

Let the Gospel Tell the Gospel
EQUIPPING DISCIPLES FOR KINGDOM GROWTH

Covenant Presbyterian Church

ACTS 1:6-14

26 July A.D. 2013

Acts – “The Continuing Words & Deeds of Jesus by His Spirit through His Apostles” (Stott)

- *The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach (Acts 1:1)*
 - Theophilus – God lover or lover of God
 - If you are here this morning, this book is written for you!
 - The purpose of Luke’s writing was that we would know truth (Luke 1:3, 4)
 - Why? Because we doubt, misrepresent and are weak in sharing the truth

The Kingdom of God is pressed forward by the power of God

- **We are equipped for Kingdom growth by the power of God**

The power of God to witness

⁶ *So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”*

- *Lord, is it at this time*
 - The disciples are asking, “Are we there yet?”
- *You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?* – narrow Davidic expectation which is understandable, but misses the fullness of the all-nations thrust of Scripture
 - “The problem was the highest glory that they expected was far too low.” (Oglivie)
 - *Application:* The goodness of God is to be remembered in the past, but the gospel aim of the Kingdom is always forward looking.

⁷ *He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;*

- In one sense, Jesus responds, “No. Wait.” (v. 7)
 - God doesn’t work around our speculations. He works for His own purposes and glory – that all His people would come to know Him.
 - *Application:* Not even Jesus’ disciples know when. Don’t be fooled by predictions of the end times.
- *but you will receive power*
 - Power – “*dynamis*” dynamite, a small ordinary looking stick that contains huge power (1 Cor. 2:4-5)
- *when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*
 - “Just as the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus to equip Him for His public ministry, so now the Spirit was to come upon His people to equip them for theirs.” (Stott)
 - The baptism in the Holy Spirit is what the sacrament of baptism done with water points to.
- *and you shall be My witnesses*
 - Power for a purpose – to be Christ’s witnesses
 - Witness – same root as martyr. Has a testimony in a trial. Must tell the truth.
 - This isn’t bodybuilder strength for show. It’s farm strength because it’s necessary.
 - Why? Because it was going to be HARD to be a witness for a “dead guy” in Jerusalem and all Judea. It was going to be HARD to be a witness among the maligned people of Samaria and overcome centuries of deep seeded prejudice. It was going to be HARD to be a witness to the remotest part of the earth. (John 14:12)
 - Completely dependent on the work of the Spirit. Don’t move without Him!
 - *Illustration:* Spurgeon’s steps to the pulpit
 - *Application:* Witnessing at work, to your friends, to your family...
 - VBS, ESL, Worship Team, Stephen Ministry...

The power of God passed on

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.*

- *was lifted* – Divine passive. God did this.
 - Not a Superman or spaceman exit

- “Neither Luke nor the other early Christians thought Jesus had suddenly become a primitive spaceman, heading off into orbit or beyond, so that if you searched throughout the far reaches of what we call ‘space’ you would eventually find him. They believed that ‘heaven’ and ‘earth’ are the two interlocking spheres of God’s reality, and that the risen body of Jesus is the first (and so far only) object which is fully at home in both and hence in either, anticipating the time when everything will be renewed and joined together.” (Wright)
- *they were looking on* – we have eyewitnesses (gazing (v. 10), looking (v. 11))
 - Luke records the ascension in such a matter-of-fact way because it is fact.
- *a cloud received Him out of their sight.*
 - Clouds are the chariot of God (Daniel 7:13) Behold He comes. Riding on the clouds...

¹⁰ *And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.*

- *He left!??!*
 - “He had to leave them as the self-limited Jesus who had taken on our humanity. As the glorified Christ He commanded all power in heaven and earth which He had promised would be released in prayer in His name.” (Ogilivie)
 - Holy Spirit - The transfer of power so that the nations will know. One man to 12 men (John 16:7)
 - *two men in white clothing stood beside them.* (parallel to Mark 16:5)
- *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.”*
 - *Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky?*
 - The reality of the sovereignty of God is shown in how the angels are quite normal sounding about the ascension as if this was just a part of the plan, so let’s move along guys!
 - *will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.*
 - Heaven is a real place and Jesus is really coming back
 - The power of hope, even though that hope can be hard, is here in Christ’s second coming.
 - Jesus didn’t just die for our sins. He didn’t just rise from the dead conquering death, hell and sin. He didn’t just ascend and go away. He is returning!

The power of God in waiting

¹² *Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away.*

- *Then they returned to Jerusalem*
 - What a hard place to return to!!!
- *from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away.*
 - Jesus’ ascension happened in a real place about 2/3 or 3/4 of mile away from Jerusalem
- They were carrying out Jesus’ command to wait (Acts 1:4)
 - Theme of waiting throughout Scripture (Psalms 40:1, 130:5-6, Micah 7:7, Rom. 8:18-25)
 - *Application:* Waiting for a job, a spouse, a sickness to end, kids to grow up, kids to come home, the end of the school year, the beginning of a new phase
 - Why wait?
 - Fellowship, prayer connection of this odd lot.
 - What are they waiting for?
 - Waiting on the promised Spirit (Joel 2:28, John 14:26)

¹³ *When they had entered the city, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James.*

- Quite a disparate group!
 - 11 men who ran from Jesus when the soldiers came to get him.
 - Peter, the denier. Simon, the zealot who had greater hopes for the nation of Israel.
- *These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers*
 - *These all with one mind*
 - Love for Jesus united them. They had the same mind or passion. They weren’t just hanging out.
 - Prayer doesn’t get God ready for our agenda. It gets us ready for His.
 - Prayer always precedes revival.
 - *Application:* The power of God comes upon a community of people who are praying for His movement, so let us