

All Disciples Go (Part 1)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 27 September 2026

Preacher: Brett Sanders

[0:00] Children, we are ready for Children's Church at this time, so you may make your way to the back with Miss Savannah there. And so you may make your way there. And I love seeing all of these children. And I don't know about you, but I love seeing the preschool choirs up here.

Just to give you an idea of all of those that are helping on Wednesday nights over the last few weeks, we've been averaging around 80 kids from fifth grade and below.

And so that is a lot of people making a place safe for these kids to learn about Jesus, to grow in their gifts. And so if you have just a moment, I want to encourage you to encourage them.

If you see some of those workers that help out with our kids, just be an encouragement to them. Tell them thank you for all that they do and what a blessing they are to our church.

This morning, we're going to be continuing in our study of this discipleship pathway, the fact that all disciples know, the fact that all disciples grow, that they show.

[1:05] And today and next week, we're going to be talking about that final part of that discipleship pathway. And that is the fact that all disciples go. All disciples go and are a part of this mission that God has called us to be on, to be a part of.

And we're going to be looking at the first part of Acts today. So if you have a Bible, go ahead and make your way there because we're going to be in Acts chapter one. And one of the things that you notice if you read through the book of Acts and I've done, you know, we spent about half a year, a few years ago, going through the book of Acts.

But if you look at the book of Acts as a whole, one of the things that you're going to notice is this a movement taking place. You know, I've spent a lot of time thinking about Acts and a lot of time trying to see what God is doing there.

And one of the things that I keep coming back to is the fact that when you read through the book of Acts, you see God moving. You see God working and you see him working through individual lives. And so as we see this, a lot of times we don't necessarily relate this to how we see the church today. We don't necessarily see that as something that took place at one point in time.

[2:16] And we don't see that God is still using and working today. In fact, a lot of times what we see as the church today is just a place to come to. David Platt, in making a distinction of what the church is and what the church is, and said that the church is neither a place to see nor is it a place to sit.

Yet this is often how we see church. The church is described as a landmark. You know, it's, you know, First Baptist, the big church there on the corner of Prather Bridge Road and Toulalaw Street. And we see it as a landmark. We describe it as a place. And I'm as guilty as anybody of this. I'll oftentimes tell Catherine and the kids, well, I've got to run up to church for something real quick. And there's two things wrong with that. One, I'm not running anywhere right now. And then two, this isn't a place to come to. This is, this isn't, the church isn't just a building.

It's not a landmark. The church is the people. It's a movement of God that is working in people's lives. The church is not a destination to arrive at and then leave from, nor is it sometimes we're referred to as a place to sit.

[3:25] We go to church. We have a seat. We get comfortable. We're entertained. And then we just leave and come back and do it all again next week. The church is neither of those things.

It is a movement to join and be a part of. And so what you see in the book of Acts is God is at work and there's a movement that's taking place and he's using people in that process.

Tony Morita notes, he says, no believer is a mere fan, but a player. The apostles certainly led the church, but the gospel advanced largely through the words and deeds of unordained and uneducated people, informal missionaries.

The church today, in fact, desperately needs to recover this practice, he says. He says, the only difference in a believer sitting in his or her American home and a foreign missionary on the mission field is location, not identity.

Every Christian is a missionary. And so each of us should ask, where do I serve? To whom do I minister? And so I hope and pray that we all desire to see a movement.

[4:41] I hope and pray that we all desire revival to take place in the church, in our community, in the nation, around the world. I hope and pray this is all our desires.

And if this is not our desire, if it's not our desire to see God and move and us be a part of that and seeing revival take place around the world, then I've got to question what it is that is most important to us.

Because what we should be about is God's glory and seeing lost people come to faith in him. If you are a child of God, then he has a plan and a desire to use you to reach the lost across the street and across the world.

And so as we begin to look at our passage today, I want us to begin with a moment of prayer. I want us to begin with prayer. And this isn't just a prayer that I want to pray over you, but I want this to be a prayer that you join me with.

Earlier this week, I was reading in the book of Revelation and reading about these seven churches that Christ is speaking about. And he's speaking to here. And in each of these instances, I was struck by something in the way that he ends his description of these churches.

[5:55] In each of these accounts, he says this. He says, he who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches. He who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches.

And so I want that to be our prayer today. I want that to be our prayer that if we have an ear, if we're listening to God's word being read, if what we're seeing and what we're hearing is in alignment with scripture, then if we have an ear, let us hear what God has for each of us.

So I want to encourage you to pray with me at this time. Father, thank you so much. Thank you for your word. Thank you for what it teaches us about you. And Lord, I pray that this morning as we open your word and we read scripture, read your holy words, Lord, that they would not just be words that we hear, but we would actually listen to them, that we would apply them to our lives and be willing to do what it is that you've called us to do.

And we ask all of these things in Jesus' precious name. Amen. Amen. With that in mind, hopefully you've had a chance to open to Acts chapter one. And we're going to start by reading the first 11 verses of Acts chapter one.

So Acts chapter one, verses one through 11. This is what the word of the Lord says. It says this. In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day when he was taken up after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

[7:30] He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during 40 days and speaking about the kingdom of God. And while he was staying with them, he ordered 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 baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

So when they had come together, they asked him, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel? And he said to them, it is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all of Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. And when he had said these things, as they were looking on him, he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight.

And while they were there gazing into heaven, then as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes and said, men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven?

This Jesus who was taken away from you into heaven will come in the same way you saw him go into heaven. You see, understanding this first part of Acts is key to understanding the rest of the book.

[8:59] Understanding this first part of Acts, and especially Acts 1.8 is key to understanding the rest of the book of Acts and also key to understanding how God works and moves in our lives today.

Acts 1.8 says that there to be witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. And then what you see in Acts is this play out.

Chapters 1 through 7 of Acts deal with how the Holy Spirit is moving and working there in Jerusalem. Verses, or chapters 9 through 11 talk about how the Spirit is working, the gospel is being proclaimed in Judea and Samaria.

And then from 12 to 28, you see that the Spirit is working and moving to the end of the earth. Acts is an exciting book that calls us to live an exciting life.

And to help us understand that this morning, to help us see how this takes place, there's a few observations that I want us to make from Acts 1.8 right here. And to begin with, I want us to see that disciples go with power.

[10 : 07] Disciples go with power. It says, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. What we see is dependence on the Holy Spirit throughout the book of Acts, but especially right here in the beginning.

The Holy Spirit is so vital to us going and so vital to the mission of God being fulfilled and proclaimed that Jesus, right before he gives this great commission, when they're all gathered there, he says, hey, wait right here.

Wait until the gift of the Father. Wait until you receive the Holy Spirit. Because he knows that if they go without the power of the Holy Spirit, then what they're doing is in vain. He says, wait for the power of the Holy Spirit.

You see that right there in Acts 1.4. While they were staying with him, he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father.

Jesus tells them to wait for the promise of the Father. The promise, of course, being the Holy Spirit, the great helper. Remember, that the one being talked about is the one that Jesus describes earlier in the Gospels when he says, nevertheless, I tell you, it is to your advantage that I go away.

[11 : 20] For if I do not go away, the helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him. And then we get to see this power being unleashed.

In Acts 2, verses 1 through 12, it records the coming of the Holy Spirit in the day of Pentecost. The day of Pentecost marked one of three major feasts of Israel's annual calendar.

And Pentecost refers to the 50th day after Passover. And so 10 days after Jesus ascends into heaven, we see the gift of the Holy Spirit coming.

And I think it would be hard to overstate the significance of what is happening here. Our need to be dependent on the Holy Spirit to work and to move.

After all, these were ordinary men and women who were proclaiming this message. So ordinary that in just a few chapters away, in chapter four, Peter and John were before the council of rulers and the elders and the high priests, and they were described this way.

[12 : 22] It says, now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished, and they recognized they had been with Jesus.

Now, let me be clear. I'm not calling any of you uneducated and common, but if you were, then you would be in great company. You would be in the same company of Peter and John and really pretty much all of the first disciples.

The Holy Spirit is what equips us. Now, this doesn't mean that we don't grow in those equipings. It doesn't mean that we don't grow in our relationship with the Lord, but it means that if we are believers, if we have placed our faith and our trust in Jesus, then we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit, and this is the power that allows us to go and proclaim the gospel message.

This is what equips us. This is what gives us our calling. This is what allows us to be qualified to take this gospel message. Now, here's the thing.

There's plenty of things in this life that I'm not qualified for. There's plenty of things in this life that you're not qualified for. In fact, as I was thinking about this, I believe I shared a story, this story, at least parts of this with you a number of years ago, but I can remember about three or four years ago, getting a call from my neighbor, Hannah, who called me and just answered, said hello, and then just went right, didn't say, hey, how are you doing?

[13 : 50] Hope things are going well. Hope you've had a great day. No, just went right into it, said, hey, do you know how to catch a possum? Now, let me, let me be very clear. The answer to that question, do I know how to catch a possum is no, I do not know how to catch a possum.

But in that moment, I said, yeah, I'll give it a shot. And so she had a possum trapped in her garage. And so what I did was I grabbed the first few things that I saw as I was leaving, which was a empty clothes basket, clothes basket, a cardboard box, and a wiffle ball bat.

Now, my plan was to go and throw the laundry basket on top of the possum, slide the cardboard under there, flip it over, take it to the woods, and let it go. Don't really know what I was going to do with a wiffle ball bat.

Guess if things got out of hand, I was just going to start swinging. But that was the plan going in. And hey, we made it work. We figured it out. But that's not something that I'm qualified to do. That's not something that I'm comfortable doing.

There's things in this life that you and I are not qualified to do. There's plenty of those things. But as believers, one thing that we cannot say is that we are not qualified to be a witness for Christ.

[15:03] This does not say that we're all qualified to the ministry of evangelists, or a pastor, or a deacon, or those things. But we are all qualified to be a witness.

The reality is we must remember that the only one, the Holy Spirit, can take, he's the only one that can take the gospel to the hearts and minds of men and women and change them into disciples of the Lord.

This is both encouraging and challenging all at the same time. It's encouraging because we recognize that it's not ultimately up to us, but it's also challenging because it means that we are without excuse when it comes to the fact, are we called to the mission?

We can't say, I'm not qualified. We can't say, I'm not ready. We can't say, I'm not worthy. When you look at what God did with ordinary people, it should empower us.

If you were to pick the most qualified people of Jesus' day, if you were to go out and say, hey, I want to pick 12 people that are going to be the dream team, that are going to be the most qualified people to share this good news, you wouldn't have picked any of the apostles.

[16:14] You wouldn't have picked, I want, I think you can say now, oh, I would have picked it. No, you wouldn't. You would have picked some of the most influential people of the day and said, that's going to be the one. That's going to be one.

But what Jesus did is he picked men who would be willing to follow him, who would give their all, who would be dependent on the Holy Spirit. Were they perfect?

No, but God used them because of their dependence. May we be encouraged that all disciples go with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Hopefully we can understand that disciples go with power, but we are going to, but where are we going? What are we taking with us as we go? And so the next thing that we see is not only do disciples go with power, but we also see that disciples go with a message.

Disciples go with a message. It says, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses. You will be my witnesses.

[17:15] And so disciples go with power, but they also, as they go, they go with a message. The message says, the passage says, you will be my witnesses. What's the purpose of a witness?

It is to give an accurate account of what they have seen, what they have experienced. I often say that if you have a relationship with Jesus, then you have a testimony.

If you have a relationship with Jesus, if you've given your life to him, if you're following him with your life, then you have a testimony. And if you have a testimony, you can be a witness to that testimony. But I also want to take a moment this morning to talk about the message and also share this message with you. Because I realize that in a room this size, there's a really good chance that not everyone has a testimony.

If someone were to ask you, are you a Christian? I suspect that many of us in here would answer, yes. Yes, I'm a Christian. But I want to be clear.

[18:22] Being a Christian is not simply saying that you believe a God exists. Being a Christian is not simply getting all of the answers right on a test.

None of us are promised tomorrow. We've got to make sure that we understand the gospel, that we've given our life to this, that we understand that this isn't something that we can do on our own, but it's something that we have to have Jesus for.

You see, none of us are promised tomorrow. Jesus could come back at any time and at any moment. He could come back right now. And I hope and pray that he does one day. I hope and pray that when he comes back, I'm doing exactly what he's called me to do.

I hope I'm preaching. I hope it's one of those moments like that where I get to see Jesus come back, doing what he's called me to do. But if he doesn't come back before our life, in our lifetime, the statistics are still holding strong.

The mortality rate for human beings is still holding at a hundred percent. Meaning that at some point, we are going to give an account for, for what it is that we've given our life to.

[19 : 32] And so there's the first question that I want to ask you this morning is this, are you ready for that reality? Have you given your life to Jesus? Have you given your life to him?

Because here's the, here's the thing that we must understand. It can be described like this. And I often will describe this way as, as bad news, worst news, good news, best news. You see, the bad news is this.

The bad news is that each and every one of us are sinners. Each and every one of us are sinners. And because of that sin, we are separated from God because of that sin.

If we don't give our life to it because of that sin, if we left on our own, we will all one day spend an eternity apart from God in hell. That's the bad news.

And here's the worst news. The worst news is you can't do a thing about it on your own. We can't save ourselves. We can't decide, you know what? I've been bad, but now I'm going to be good.

[20 : 30] And so from this moment on, I'm going to be good. And then that way it's all paid for. It doesn't work that way. Present obedience doesn't make up for past disobedience because present obedience is what's required.

We can't be good enough. We can't do anything about it. But here's the good news. Here's the good news that Jesus left the glory of heaven. He lived the life that you and I couldn't live.

He lived a perfect life, a life that we have no hope of living on our own. He lived that perfect life. And then he died the death that we deserve. He died the death that we deserve.

And that makes him able to pay for those sins. And here's the best news. The best news is if you want, you can give your life to him right now. You can go from death to life.

You can go from a path that is leading you to a hell to a path that's leading to heaven. By placing your faith and your trust in Jesus. That's the bad news, worst news, good news, best news.

[21 : 31] This is the gospel that we are called to share. And in just a moment, at the end of our service, we're going to have a time of response. We're going to have a time of reflection, a time of prayer.

And when that time comes, I want to encourage you to respond with a sense of urgency, to respond in a way that you're saying, I need Jesus more than anything else.

This is the gospel message that we are called to share. The message of salvation is the only hope for a lost and dying world. And keeping this at the center of what we are doing is key to going with power.

Keeping Jesus as the focus of what we are called to do is key to receiving that power. One pastor years ago, note, he says, the less Jesus is the core of witness, the less power we have.

So we go with power. We go with a mission, but this passage also reminds us where to go. So we must remember that all disciples go with power.

[22 : 37] They go with a message and they also go where God leads. Disciples go where God leads, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.

I was listening to a message by Vance Pittman a number of years ago. Talking about the great commission in this Acts passage. And he brought out some really good points.

To begin with the call itself, you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. Oftentimes we hear this and we think only in geographic terms.

We only think in geographic terms. For example, if you look on a map, you will essentially see that where they were was Jerusalem. And the surrounding area around them is Judea and Samaria.

And the end of the earth is, well, it's the end of the earth, right? And so you think of it in these geographic terms. And there's absolutely that. God has called us to be a witness right here where we are.

[23 : 45] He's called us to be a witness to those places around us. He's called us to be a witness to the end of the earth. But I think there's more to this than that. Because a lot of times we hear that and we think, well, well, you know, some of us are called to be a witness where it's easy, right?

And just, we don't have to move anywhere. We don't have to do these things. And so some of us are called to be a witness where it's easy. Some of us are called to be a witness where it's a little bit more challenging. And then those that are super spiritual, they're, they're called to be a witness where it's hard.

But I want you to think about those areas at this time. He says, be a witness in Jerusalem. Do you know what happened in Jerusalem 40 days before this? They killed Jesus there.

This was not a popular thing to proclaim in Jerusalem. And so what he's telling him is he says, go to where they hate you. Go to where you will be despised when they're sharing this message.

And then he says, go to Judea and Samaria. Now Samaria, the Jews hated the Samaritans. In fact, this is why Jesus uses a good Samaritan to describe his neighbor to being a good neighbor and the good Samaritan, because they hated the Samaritan.

[24 : 54] So what Jesus is, is telling us is go to where they hate you, go to where you hate them, and then go to the end of the earth, go to places you've never even heard of before. And so this call to share is a call that is going to be challenging, no matter where you are, but it's a call that is worth it.

These are the final words of Jesus before he returns to heaven. I've said it before, but Dr. Akin, Southeastern, he would often say, tell us concerning the great commission.

He would say, last words are lasting words. There is a correlation with what God wants us to be focused on. And the last words with which he instructs us as he ascends to heaven.

In Jesus's last words before ascending to heaven, he tells us that we are his primary means of reaching the world. And so as Jesus is getting ready to ascend to heaven, he says, hey, here's what's important.

Here's what I want you to be focused on. I want you to understand that this message is for the nations. This message is for everyone. And you are my primary way of taking this message to a lost and dying world.

[26 : 06] Christians have no tribal deity. We have a savior who loves and died for the nations. For people who look like us and people who look nothing like us.

For people who grew up with similar values and ones who grew up with completely different values. For people who have many things in common with us.

And for those who have very few things in common with us. God desires people who worship him from every tribe, tongue, and nation.

God desires to see lost people, whether they have no religion or a false religion. He desires lost people to come to faith in him. We must repent of any unconcern that we have for lost people across the street or across the world.

And recognize that Jesus sent ordinary people to the nations just as he sends us today. We've got to have his heart for the nations.

[27 : 11] It was Jesus' heart. It was Jesus' heart 2,000 years ago. Still his heart today that we see lost people come to faith in him. And just this past week, Jason and I had an opportunity to go to Saratoga Springs, Utah.

We went there to meet with Pastor Josh Rowland and Gospel Fellowship Church there in Saratoga Springs. Saratoga Springs and its kind of neighbor Eagle Mountain are two of the fastest growing cities in Utah.

In fact, they're growing so fast they're having trouble keeping up with schools. They're having trouble keeping up with water. All of these different things are becoming issues for them. But here's the thing.

The views there are amazing. You would go and think this is just a beautiful place. The people are friendly. The schools are good. Very low crime rate.

The median age, this is crazy. The median age for this area is 20. And unless people go and share the gospel with them, around 99% of the population will spend their eternity in hell.

[28 : 21] You go and you look around at it. It's beautiful. People everywhere. Backdrop against the mountains. The lake that's right there nearby. The people are friendly.

Schools are great. Low crime rate. All of these things. But yet, 99% of them are going to spend an eternity in hell. Unless somebody tells them about Jesus.

You see, Saratoga Springs is 85 to 90% LDS. Roughly 9% have no affiliation with anything. Maybe 1% are Catholic and about 0.5% are evangelical Christian.

With such a low percentage, what this means is if somebody never left Saratoga Springs, if they spent their whole life in Saratoga Springs, they could easily spend their whole life without ever meeting a Christian, without ever hearing a gospel conversation. It's a short four-hour flight. Beautiful area. Beautiful community. Yet, deep lostness. Deep lostness. [29:37] They need people to share. But here's the good news. You know, that sounds like just bad news. Here's the good news. God can change that. God can change that.

He can use Pastor Josh and Gospel Fellowship to change that. He can use you to help change that. He can use me to help change that. See, here's the thing. If you keep reading and continue to read Acts, you'll realize that from Acts 2 to Acts 4, roughly 15,000 people come to faith in Christ. From Acts 2 to Acts 4, 15,000 people roughly came to faith in Christ. That's a two-week period. Two weeks from Acts 2 to Acts 4, and you see roughly 15,000 people coming to faith in Christ. God can work and move with people who are willing to share the gospel message. It's the same gospel. It's the same God. It's the same Holy Spirit is at work today.

This morning, I want to close a little differently than we typically close a message. We'll still have a chance to respond, but I want to encourage us all to respond today.

[30:45] You see, Clay is going to come and play some music in the background, and I'm going to ask you to stand. But instead of asking you to stand and sing, I'm going to ask you to stand and pray.

And maybe that looks a little different for you. Maybe you stand and you decide to sit back down and pray, or turn around and kneel and pray, or I'd love for you to come up here and pray with me. It gets kind of lonely here in the front sometimes. I would love for you to come and pray with me here. But I want to challenge you to pray. Now, we'll still have a chance to sing and respond, but I want to encourage all of us to pray.

And here's the things that I want us to pray today. I want us to pray and thank God for our salvation in the gospel. And also that we had a chance to hear the gospel.

This will also be a time for you to respond to the gospel. Maybe earlier when we were talking about the bad news, worst news, good news, best news, maybe you realized, hey, that's something that I need to get right.

[31:50] That I don't have a testimony yet, but I need Jesus to give that to me. This is a time for you to respond. Don't hesitate. Don't wait.

Move as God leads. But I also want you to pray and thank God for the Holy Spirit who gives us power, who equips us, who we're reminded is going to be with us wherever it is that we go. But also I want you to pray for lost people and salvation is right here in our community. I want to encourage you to commit to this daily.

This isn't just something that we should do once in a while when we're prompted to do, but this should be a burden on our hearts to pray for the lostness right here in our community.

You know, it's often said, but it still carries a lot of weight. If God were to answer all of your prayers that you've prayed over the past week, how many lost people would be saved?

[32:50] So let's pray for those who are lost in our community. But I also want to encourage us to pray for God to work around the world in general, but specifically in our partnerships that we have.

If you go through the back here, you'll see a list of people that we are committed to that are our partners all over the world. Yes, we want to come alongside them and encourage them when we can.

Yes, we want to go and visit them and serve alongside them when we can. Yes, we want to give sacrificially and financially to them when we can, but we also are going to commit to pray for them and pray for God to work and move in mighty ways.

And then finally, I want you to pray this, and this is a hard one. I want you to pray and genuinely ask, how can I be a part of this call to go?

And I want you to pray the even harder part of it. How can I lead my family to go? Not only how can I be a part of this, but Lord, prepare my heart, prepare my kids, my grandkids' heart to be a part of the mission of God.

[34:10] And so I want to encourage you now, let's all stand together and let's pray. Amen.