

Spirit Empowered Witnesses - Acts 1:6-11

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Preacher: Scott Liddell

[0 : 00] I want to begin just with a word of gratitude as we begin our service this morning. Today was the first day of our classes that we began, our discipleship groups that we began today as our fall semester began.

So I would love for if you could stand, if you're in one of these groups and please remain standing. If you are a volunteer in the nursery or the toddler rooms, would you please stand throughout the semester?

If you would you please stand if you're one of the children's teachers, would you please stand and please stand? Would you please stand if you are a youth leader of some kind in facilitating a youth group in any way or young adults, and if you would stand if you are teaching an adult class of some type, one of the discipleship groups this Sunday morning.

I just want to say thank you to you. I recognize that each and every week you likely put forward many hours in preparing to teach the group that you teach, and I just want to say thank you to you and we as a church are blessed by that.

So thank you for your hours. I also want to say if you are here at 9 o'clock next week, we would love to help find a group for you and please come at 9 o'clock.

[1 : 21] You're welcome to do so. 845 to get a cup of coffee says Jay. So that would be great. No matter where you are on the spectrum of patience, likely we all could use a dose more.

There is sometimes one of the most difficult things to do is to wait. And our culture exploits that knowing this about us. They want to provide means where time is of the essence, time is money, and so now you can pay at the pump.

You have drive-through lines. You have self-checkout lines. Let's keep it moving. No one likes to wait any longer than they need to. Credit cards have been in part invented to facilitate or to satisfy two things, greed and impatience.

If everyone was okay with delayed gratification of the thing and they wouldn't go into debt over the thing, credit cards would not exist.

And so waiting is difficult. When one desires to be married and honor the Lord to bring someone into your life, that is difficult.

[2 : 44] To enjoy sex and the boundaries of marriage alone and to wait can be difficult. To wait for a medical diagnosis when you have complications and you're wondering what is going on, the waiting can be long.

Living under a totalitarian authority, not knowing when this will ever end, can be long. And when we are waiting for the Lord for an answer to prayer, and perhaps it has still been years and you are still waiting, it can be long.

I desire to be more like the Psalmist who says in Psalm 130, and in his word I put my hope I wait on the Lord.

And today we find the disciples waiting. We began a sermon series in the book of Acts last week and we find that they are waiting for the promised Holy Spirit.

And so to pick up our series in the book of Acts, I'm going to begin in the book of Luke. Luke is the first volume of a two-part volume, Luke and Acts of the same author, Luke, the disciple, Luke writing to Theophilus.

[4 : 03] And so Luke concludes his gospel in Luke 24. So if you have your Bible, please bring that out. In Luke 24, we're going to begin reading in verse 44.

Luke 24, verse 44 through 53, through the end of the letter, we're going to read it. Luke says this, and why are we beginning here? Because the book of Acts, what's important to Luke is the ascension of the Lord.

And he concludes his letter, the gospel with that, and he begins his historical narrative, the book of Acts, with that same event. So let's read this, the act of the Lord's ascension in the gospel of Luke. Then he said to them, These are my words, and I spoke to you while I was still with you. That everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures and said to them, Thus it is written that Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead. And that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name and to all nations beginning in Jerusalem.

[5 : 19] You are witnesses of these things, and behold, I am sending you the promise of the Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.

And he led them out as far as Bethany and lifting up his hands. He blessed them while he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried into heaven.

And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they continually, and they were continually in the temple, blessing God.

Luke concludes this event and we read now in the book of Acts. If you want to turn over to the letter of Acts where we covered this last week, but in verse 2 we see that the Lord had given commands to the disciples, to the apostles.

And what were the commands? If you still have your finger in Luke, you don't have to, but in verse 47 and 48 we read, What were the commands? That the repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning in Jerusalem.

[6 : 27] And they were witnesses of these things. So what was in part the commands that they were to proclaim his name to all nations beginning in Jerusalem?

We looked at last week that what were they to do though, find in verse 4, and while they were staying with him, 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.

They were to be waiting, waiting. They were to be his witnesses and preach to all the nations, but until you have the Holy Spirit, you are to wait.

And this is where we left off the disciples last week. This week we're going to begin reading in verse 6 through verse 11. And let's read this together, Acts chapter 1 verse 6 through 11.

So when they had come together, they asked him, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And he said to them, it is not for you to know the times or the seasons 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 in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

[7 : 45] And when he had said these things, they were looking on, he lifted up, and the clouds took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven, he went, and as, I'm sorry, and while they were gazing into heaven 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 has taken up from among you into heaven, he will come again in the same way that you saw him go into heaven. We look at this question that the apostles have in verse 6.

Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? Now, that is an understandable question if you were an apostle, because in verse 3, if you remember, it says he presented himself alive after sufferings by many proofs, appearing to them for 40 days, and speaking about the kingdom of God. So Jesus has been speaking to them, this is what the kingdom of God, this is the kingdom of God, and he has been teaching on this kingdom of God. And so, and they says, wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will receive power then, but wait.

And so, they're curious. When the Holy Spirit comes, is that when you're going to, if you will, fulfill this kingdom and bring this kingdom about that you were speaking of?

[9 : 18] And that question that they ask, Lord, is it at this time that you will restore the kingdom of Israel? It's a fair question, but it helps us understand that the disciples' concept of the kingdom was correct, but it was not complete.

And so, let's find what about their question was correct, but it's not complete. There's different parts of the speech of that question that I'm going to dissect a little bit.

I first want to draw attention to the word restore. Restore is a word to use to describe something to bring it back to its former glory. If I were to have this old barn find car that hasn't been running since the 1950s, and it was parked in a barn at that time, if I were to restore the car, I would restore that car to its former glory of what it was like when it was rolled off the showroom floor.

And so, to restore something to its former state of glory is how we kind of think of the word restore. So this demonstrates that the apostles were expecting a political and territorial kingdom. They were looking for and anticipating a kingdom that you could find on a map. They were looking for a territory that would beat back Rome's claim on their land, and the land that God had promised Abraham.

[10:44] They were looking for one who would reign over the whole earth and sit on David's throne. They were looking for someone to break the yoke of oppression by Rome.

And oh, that the former days of glory would be restored. It's correct that will happen, but it's not complete. It's not now.

Second, the word Israel. Notice, will you restore at this time the kingdom to Israel? Notice it just didn't stop at this time you'll restore the kingdom, or the kingdom of God.

No, it's the kingdom of Israel. They were expecting a national kingdom. They were just in Jerusalem. The Lord led them out over the Mount of Olives into Bethany, and then He was taken up.

They were just in Jerusalem. The Messiah will sit on His throne of David there. Now that you have raised from the dead, you have defeated Satan and death, is the kingdom going to appear now?

[11:52] Is it at this time that you'll restore Israel to a place of prominence over other nations and bless the other nations through the nation of Israel? Is that now? Is that going to happen when the Holy Spirit comes?

Thirdly, the adverbial clause, at this time. At this time, will you restore the kingdom to Israel?

They were expecting a kingdom, immediate establishment. When the Holy Spirit comes, that must be the time when they establish your kingdom. It will be at that time you will defeat Satan and death permanently, solely.

You will cast him into that lake of fire. Is it going to be then? Is it now? It is correct. He will do that, but it's not now.

And the Christian temptation is to make the same mistake the disciples did. To envision the Lord's kingdom as an earthly kingdom alone. It will happen, but not yet.

[12:57] In this last election cycle over last year, I heard some thinking kind of like that.

If there was one thing that we may be guilty of is looking for an earthly kingdom, and where the rule of God would be the rule of man, that will happen, but not yet.

And all too often we want the promises that are given to the final days, and we want them now on earth. We want all these things here and now, but we will never have them. We must wait.

Jesus in his teaching the disciples, he taught them this manner of thinking though. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

So sometimes I feel like we can be guilty of the very same thing. Perhaps we must, we have made a similar mistake demanding a kingdom and neglecting our responsibility that the Lord had given them, which is to witness.

[14:09] How is their concept of the kingdom incomplete? Let me say a few things. There's three things I would like to say if you're taking notes. The kingdom of God is a spiritual in character.

The kingdom of God is spiritual in character. The kingdom of God isn't advanced by soldiers, but by witnesses. This is the grave mistake of the age of the Crusades.

By the sword we do not make people Christians. The spiritual conversion of the ones life begins with the power of God and ends with the power of God, not by the power of a sword.

Number two, the kingdom of God is international in its membership, not national like Israel. All the peoples are to proclaim the name to all the nations beginning in Jerusalem.

The kingdom is for every tribe, every nation, every language, so the church ought to be reflected of that reality. There is no room for nationalistic pride that excludes others in the church of God.

[15:18] The kingdom is an international, multiracial, multiethnic in its membership, and so ought the church be. The kingdom of God is gradual in its expression.

Thirdly, the kingdom of God is gradual in its expression. This concern is responded to in the very next verse. We'll get to that here in a moment, but let me say here, there is an expanding witness that begins in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

No border, no political authority can keep out the good news of Jesus Christ. For good news is to reach all nations, all peoples without exception.

So then we come to verse seven. They've asked this question, is it that at this time when the Holy Spirit comes that you'll restore the kingdom to Israel, Jesus' response is in verse seven. It is, and he said to them, it is not for you to know the times or the seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. Jesus' correction gives us where he has tension. It is not in the apostles concept of the kingdom, per se.

[16:28] Jesus' immediate concern is one of timing. It is not at this time, it is not for you to know the times or the season.

The kingdom will be exactly what Jesus declared, and far more. Jesus will sit on his throne in Jerusalem. Jesus will judge the nations. He will rule for a thousand years before the eternal order of the new heaven and new earth.

Jesus' saints will rule with him. The issue is one of timing that the kingdom that you are longing for is still yet future. And the kingdom is here because Jesus is here, but in terms of its fullness, in terms of its total fulfillment, it is still not yet come.

So I appreciate Jesus' response. It is not yet, and it is not for you to know. The knowledge of such things, if you will, is above your pay grade.

It is not for you to know. Instead of giving the time, he gives them a more difficult assignment. Wait. Wait.

[17:33] In verse 8 he continues, But you will receive power. What will you receive? Not the kingdom, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea Samaria and the ends of the earth. They were asking for a calendar, and Jesus promises them power.

The timing of the power is given when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. We have to concede at this point that we are in a privileged position as disciples of Christ.

Over the disciples of Christ. The disciples were living and hearing and seeing and witnessing things that occurred in real time. Jesus didn't give them a preview. You and I can sit and we could read one of the Gospels in a few hours.

But if you were one of the disciples in Jesus' day, you didn't know what the parable was all about. You didn't know the ending of the parable. You didn't know if he was going to heal that person or not heal that person.

[18:41] He didn't know what question he was going to ask you. They were experiencing all of this in very real time. We have an advantage over them in this regard.

The revelation of himself and the kingdom came to the disciples in fragments and in pieces. It comes to us as a gift of the Holy Spirit and the whole. We see more than they saw.

And they were standing and listening to Jesus in real time. They were in a privileged position to be in the presence of Jesus. But we are in a privileged position to know more than they knew at the time.

We know how important the presence of the Holy Spirit is for the church and for the church to survive. We know that the gates of hell will not prevail against the church due to its power of the Holy Spirit. We know that the Holy Spirit empowers everything the church does.

We know that the Holy Spirit empowers the preaching of God's word. We know the Holy Spirit empowers the fellowship, the coinonea of the church. We know that the Holy Spirit must come for the church to even be the church.

[19:43] But he tells the disciples, wait. But you won't have to wonder when the Holy Spirit comes. Because the Holy Spirit comes upon you, everything is going to be different.

He will enliven the church. He will energize the church. And you are asking for the timing of the kingdom, but I am communicating, you must wait for the Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit comes, he will come upon you in power.

So a lot of misnomers, what kind of power this is speaking about. God is not speaking about personal power. God is not speaking about the church going into having organizational or institutional power.

Instead, he says that you will have the Holy Spirit, which is the very power of God. It is the power for the church to defy death. It is the power of the church to never cease.

God's people will always be by God's power in the gospel. The church is always going to be under the protection of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers the preaching of God's word.

[20 : 52] The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. And what do the disciples do with this empowerment of the Holy Spirit?

Well, you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea's Samaria, and the ends of the earth. The problem with the passage is that it makes sense to us.

What Jesus just said would not have made much sense to the disciples who heard it for the first time. It makes sense to us because for the last 2,000 years of church history, we have been communicating this great commission of the church, and so it makes sense.

But the disciples may have been a little shocked, if not a little offended at this point. There is an offense, there is a shock for perhaps the disciples.

What kind of kingdom was promised to Israel, a territorial kingdom, of one that was promised to Abraham with the dimensions of the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea?

[21 : 57] The disciples' concern was of an immediate territory of Jerusalem and Judea. That's their land. Some would see this progression of Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth as a 3-part pattern or a 4-part pattern or a 4-stage pattern.

Because of the language, some would say it's 3 parts, so it's Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth, 3. Some would say, no, it's a 4-part pattern of Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

Regardless of what camp you're in, it doesn't matter because they're all still included. Jerusalem, the apostles understood. That's the city of David. Judea is part of the land that was promised to Abraham, and so they understood that.

But Samaria, here is where the offense lies. You are to be my witnesses in a place that you think that Jews are not supposed to go. Samaria is a land inhabited by the people who had apostatized from Israel.

They violated Israel's faith. They had intermarried with foreigners that Israel was commanded not to do, which Israel was commanded not to do.

[23 : 12] They had their own worship, and even a syncretistic worship, where taking things of Judaism and mixing them with foreign religions and creating their own religion, Samaritans were unclean.

In the Jewish mind, it would have been unworthy of the gospel. This is why the parable of the good Samaritan would have been so shocking to the original hearers.

Where the Samaritan is the hero of the story, the one who had compassion on the one who was left for dead. And Jesus is sending his apostles into a territory that they perceived they were not supposed to go.

My kingdom, the power of God unto salvation, will become proclaimed in Jerusalem. My kingdom, the power of God unto salvation, will be proclaimed in Judea.

My kingdom, the power of God, shall be proclaimed in Samaria. This would be like Jesus communicating to us different ethnicities in our own community, whether they be refugees or international students, migrant workers, Native Americans, Africans, Mexicans, whoever it is that people may have a natural bias against, God is saying, no.

[24 : 31] You must proclaim the gospel. The power of God unto salvation is for everyone. No exclusion. I debated whether to share this or not, but someone was attending for some time last year, and I asked for a meeting with her, and Melissa had joined me in this meeting.

And in the conversation, it was very disruptive for me. I had sensed that there was some form of racism in her, and I asked her, unless she repented of that sin, that she is not welcome to return. I pray for repentance for this lady. Racism is something that can never be tolerated in the church. Whatever the community of Spokane has in terms of race, I want it to be welcome at Fourth Memorial Church. We all. There's no room. No room for that.

And we must be careful of subtle biases that may not be racism per se, but also have an exclusiveistic manner about the gospel.

[25 : 48] And I just want to mention two things. It exists in our culture in the Northwest, and I want to pray that it doesn't infiltrate the church, but that is a bias against Californians and those moving from the West Side.

And I'm not trying to be funny. Any form of bias against or racism cannot be tolerated in the Church of Jesus Christ.

It will hinder the very thing that we are called to do, to be his witnesses. The kingdom is going to include Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

Where is God's kingdom to extend everywhere? Where is the gospel to be proclaimed everywhere? Declaring the faith of Christ and the repentance of sin is to go everywhere.

I think Spokane has an amazing gift in training missionary aviators and moody aviation being out at Felt's Field, where many are being trained to go to the remotest parts of the earth and take the gospel.

[27 : 09] But we cannot neglect that there are national pastors in places who are hard to reach. And they are speaking their own people's language and taking the gospel to different villages that are very remote that even moody aviation will not yet reach, that can help but not reach.

So I am grateful that the gospel is to go everywhere. And perhaps you are sitting here as a young boy or a young girl and you say, I believe a Lord may be calling me to go to the nations.

I pray fourth would be a place where people are being sent often and frequently.

Jesus in back in Luke says, thus it is written that Christ should suffer on the third day, be raised from the dead, and the repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning in Jerusalem.

Here what Jesus had to say, here what he was relating, that Jesus is king and Jesus' kingdom will look like is that you will be his witness. One who testifies.

[28 : 26] What is a witness? It's one who testifies. In the modern sense of a courtroom, it is someone who has helped establish the facts by objectively speaking about verifiable things that he observed. Jesus, and I'm going to speak of things that we know that to be true, that you could testify of these things, that Jesus condescended to earth, taking on the form of humanity being born of a virgin.

He lived a sinless life. He died the death for sin. He was buried for three days and he rose victoriously over sin and death.

He spent time with people for forty days after his resurrection, and then he was ascended, which we were looking at, and then he is seated at the right hand of God and one day he will return.

This is something that you can testify of. We know this to be true, and we know the gospel of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ for the forgiveness of sin. We can declare that.

It's what we can testify to. I know this to be true. I'm staking my life on this. The essence of Christian evangelism is one who testifies the testimony that declares the repentance toward God and faith in Christ.

[29 : 55] He has not sent us to be as salesmen. He has not sent us as paid representatives. He sent us as witnesses to testify of the power of God unto salvation.

What's amazing is, did the early church witness the power of God in the early church to be his witness?

If you look by the end of the first century, 150 AD, end of the first century or so, the gospel, the church has expanded all around the Roman Empire.

As far as the Roman Empire went, so too did the gospel. So do the believers, and the gospel caught fire.

Let's look in verse 9. Let's continue. The conciseness of this passage could rob us of the drama that just is unfolding. Let's read in verse 9.

[30 : 57] And when he said these things, they were looking on and he was lifted up in a cloud, took him out of their sight, and while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood beside them in white robes and said, Men of Galilee, why are you looking standing into heaven?

This Jesus who has taken up from you into heaven will come into the same way that you saw him go into heaven.

Can you imagine standing there? There went Jesus into the clouds. You're one of the apostles, and now there are two people standing next to you in white robes, and they're asking you, Why are you standing looking?

That's an unfair question. What else am I supposed to be doing? I gave my life for this man. He asked me to follow him. I know what he said is true.

He's all that I have, and now he's gone, and that's the last place I saw him. What else am I to be doing? I don't like that question, but the question has a point.

[32 : 09] The point is this. He's just told you what you ought to be doing. You ought to go wait in Jerusalem till the Holy Spirit comes.

That will be for you an unmistakable event, and when that happens, you are to be his witnesses. So stop standing here looking into heaven. He'll come back. Don't worry about that.

That's the point. I want to talk momentarily about the three last events of the work of Christ.

I'm going to go from the end and work back. One day he will return again, his return. Before the return, between the Ascension of the Lord, which we just saw, he rose into heaven, the Ascension of the Lord, then you have this event that I'm going to talk about here momentarily.

You have the return of the Lord, then you have what's called the session of the Lord. Session comes from the Latin word *sesio*, which means to sit. Where is the Lord? He is seated at the right hand of the Father. You have the session.

[33 : 20] You have the Ascension, the session, and then the return. In that session time, why is it so important? Remember, the Ascension, both Luke concludes the Gospel and he begins the historical narrative book of Acts with this Ascension thing.

So the very next thing on the timeline of the event is the Lord's session before he returns. So why is the session so important? And why is the Ascension so important?

So let's speak firstly about the Ascension. What is Jesus doing right now as he is in heaven in that session period? So he said, rose, he's seated at the right hand of God. What is he doing?

We read in Romans 8, 34. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died. More than that, who rose? Who is at the right hand of God?

Listen to what he's doing in his session when he is seated at the right hand of God. Who indeed is interceding for us? And who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

[34 : 35] Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine, naganness, danger or sword? Who can do that? What is he doing? This is who indeed is interceding for us.

In other words, how is it that we are not separated by the love of God's intrubulation or distress because he is seated and he is interceding for you? Christ's work for us is not just in the past, in his sinless life, death and resurrection. It is right now.

He is seated. The value of Christ's ministry in heaven in this session period, who is it that is our advocate before the Father right now? Jesus Christ.

Who is it the one who speaks for us right now before the throne of God? Jesus Christ. Who is it that is enduring the protection of the church? Jesus Christ. Who is it that is ensuring nothing separates you from the love of God?

Jesus Christ in his session, seated right now before the Father right now, praying and interceding on your behalf. But there's a second component of what the Lord is doing that I want to call our attention to concerning this message and then we will conclude.

[35 : 48] What is else is Jesus doing right now in this session? Hebrews 10, 11 and 12, but when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice, he sat down at the right hand of God.

And notice what he's doing, waiting for the time until his enemies shall be put to be made a footstool under his feet. For his enemies to be humbled before him.

When he returns, his waiting will be over when his enemies have been made a footstool, when he returns. And so there is going to be this humiliation of all of his enemies, and he will rule and reign and establish that kingdom that the Jews were asking for, that the apostles were saying, is it at this time the kingdom will occur?

Yes, then. But what is he doing right now? He's interceding for us and he is waiting.

Waiting for the enemies to be made a footstool until the Father says it's time. It's now time for your return.

[37 : 03] His return will be glorious. His return will be unmistakable. Every eye will see him.

But we, what are we to be doing while the Lord is waiting for that day? Witnessing.

The reason for the waiting of the Lord is for us to be witnessing. Why is there time between the ascension and his glorious return? Why is there this time so that the gospel can be preached to the nations?

Why not just have a kingdom be established immediately? Because I wouldn't be saved.

If the Lord, on giving the Holy Spirit to the disciples or to the apostles in that event, when they said, is it at this time that you will restore the kingdom? If he restored the kingdom then, then I wouldn't be there.

[38 : 07] You wouldn't be there. We are evidence that the apostles took the good news of Jesus Christ to the nations. I'm a former Norwegian, my family heritage is from Norway, and then I'm a mutt.

There's a good portion of mutt. And I wouldn't be saved. You wouldn't be saved.

I am grateful the Lord is in his session and he's waiting. I'm going to conclude with a few remarks. So why is waiting while waiting is some of the most difficult to do?

The Lord is waiting for us to be witnesses. Sometimes the why question is the most difficult of the who, what, when, where, why, how questions that we can ask?

Who is often easy? What, when, where is often easy? Why is difficult? How can be difficult? But the why question is answered. Why is Jesus waiting so that we can be witnessing?

[39 : 16] The Great Commission isn't merely just an assignment given to the church. It is an explanation of why the church exists. So what are we to do? There are many commands about our responsibilities within the family, within culture, within our state, within our family spouses example.

But that is not why there is a wait. The waiting of Jesus is for the witnessing of the church. If a church isn't witnessing, it is not faithful.

And I believe there is sufficient New Testament evidence to make this next statement that if there isn't, if a church isn't witnessing, there is not even a church. The church will die.

For we find, where we find Christ's disciples, you find witnessing and Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. So what is the application for us as a church?

Are you one who testifies to that which you know to be true about the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you witnessing? Are you sharing the gospel with others?

[40 : 30] And if you feel, well, I don't know if I'm fully equipped. I don't know how to necessarily answer those some questions that people may ask. Then I would encourage you come next week at nine o'clock. The whole purpose of our discipleship groups is to grow into maturity and grow in confidence, grow in the Lord.

So that our testimony is true and we're equipped to respond.

The waiting of Jesus in his session is for the witnessing of the church. Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for this day.

I pray that we would be a people who would be faithful to the gospel witness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To declare, yes, in our Jerusalem, in our Spokane, in our inland northwest, and to the world. That what we know to be true.

[41 : 34] That Jesus Christ live a sinless life, that he died a death for sin. He rose victoriously over sin and death and one day will return.

And all who place their faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sin can be saved. They can have their sin forgiven and know you and may that message be on our lips with our friends, family.

Lord, thank you for the empowerment, empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit. Thank you for the gift that he is to us.

Thank you for the role that he plays in our lives that we have a fuller picture of later in the New Testament, of convicting the world of sin and leading us into truth.

We thank you for him. We love you, Lord. And may we be found faithful as you are waiting in your session being your witnesses.

[42 : 44] Thank you. Amen.