

The Beginning of Something Big

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And while you're turning there, let me just say how much I love worshipping with you. Just what a joy it is to gather on Saturday night or Sunday morning and worship with the people of God.

And we just come in this place and it's really simple and laid back. And we're here to just exalt the name of Jesus. So thank you for worshipping tonight. And now we're going to turn our attention to God's word.

So turn to the book of Acts and get used to turning to the book of Acts. Because this weekend we start a brand new series that will last us probably the next 15 years.

As we work our way through the book of Acts. And those of you that are used to series that I do, you're not, wouldn't be that shocked if it lasted that long. But now sometimes people will ask me, like, why a certain series?

[1:36] Like, why do you preach certain things at certain times? And I thought I would just kind of quickly answer that, which will also answer kind of why the book of Acts. Sometimes I will preach a series because I feel as the pastor of this congregation, it's something that we as a congregation needs to hear.

And so the Lord has laid something on my heart that I feel like his people gathered in this place need to hear. So that may be why we do a series. Sometimes it's something that I'm really excited to teach.

And so the Lord has given me something that I've studied and I just want to pass that on to you. Or thirdly, sometimes it's because there's things that I've been learning that I want to just kind of share my heart.

And kind of the last few weeks as I got back from sabbatical, there were things that the Lord really taught me through that. And I thought, like, I want to share that with my faith community here at Faith Family.

And then lastly, sometimes there are things that help shape our culture here at Faith Family. So it might be a sermon series on grace because we're big on grace here at Faith Family.

[2 : 46] Amen? If you don't think you need grace, right, you should scream amen, all right? And so it might be just a series that helps shape our culture. Well, why the book of Acts is because we're at a season in the life of Faith Family, like two and a half years in, where we're dealing with some things that the book of Acts is going to help us think bigger than the way we've thought the first two years.

And by bigger, I don't mean like megachurch. In fact, most of us want to vomit when we hear the word megachurch. We have no desire to be a megachurch.

We do have a desire to have a mega impact for the gospel. And those are two different things. Like our desire is not to be a big institution where we're megachurch.

Our desire is we at Faith Family want to have a mega, mega, mega, mega, mega impact for the gospel of Jesus Christ, okay? Well, the book of Acts is going to help fuel that passion and that flame to be witnesses for the gospel here in the South Metro and to the ends of the earth.

And so the book of Acts at this season of our church really hits that well. It also is going to help us think outward. That is, I don't want us two and a half years in to start settling into just gathering for religious services, okay?

[4 : 13] This is not the end game of Faith Family Church. Now, it's important for us to gather, and I'll explain that even in tonight's sermon. But our desire is we want to be on mission.

We want to be a part of this gospel global movement that God is a part of. And that means at the soccer game and in the school cafeteria and at your workplace. And so I don't want Faith Family because this is the problem that happens with churches is the longer you're around, you start thinking inward.

And so I want to just even early on in this infancy say, no, no, no, no, no. This isn't the end game. The end game is make disciples of all nations to the ends of the earth.

And so the book of Acts, I think, appropriate for this season in our church to take our minds there. Here's just a few things to note on the screen, and then we're going to dive into the text. As our Faith Family is on the move for the gospel, I want us to learn from and be inspired by the early church as they were on the move for the gospel.

So that really helps explain the why behind this series. We are on the move for the gospel. Amen? So I want us to learn from and be inspired by the early church who is doing the same thing.

[5 : 29] Here's one more. I want us to be encouraged with how God used a small group of people with the power of the Holy Spirit to do impossible things for the sake of the gospel.

That's a mouthful, but amen, right? Keep it up there. Let's go back. I want to read it again. To be encouraged with how God used a small group of people with the power of the Holy Spirit to do impossible things for the sake of the gospel.

Are you excited about the book of Acts? That's what these next several months and more is going to do in our own soul, I hope, and our faith family. So let's dive in.

Acts chapter 1, beginning at verse 1. Let's do this. If you're able to stand, please do so as we honor the reading of God's Word. Acts chapter 1.

Luke here is writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He says, And so when they had come together, they asked him, And he said to them, Listen, it's 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, not you might be, you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

[7 : 31] And when he had said these things, they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 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 you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven. There's a lot to unpack there, right?

And we're going to take our time through this series, through this study. We won't cover every single thing, every single night, but let's just pray now and ask God to come and teach us from his Word.

And Lord, I'm excited, just even having studied and spent time reflecting on this already of what you're going to teach me through tonight and through this series.

And I pray the same for your people. As we're gathered in this place, we're here because we want to hear from you. So come talk to us. Stir our affections for Jesus and for the good news of Jesus to be witnesses of that wherever we go.

[8 : 38] In Jesus' name we pray. And God's people said, Amen. You can be seated. It happened in a small town, in a pretty small congregation, with a very inexperienced and young pastor.

The town was a little town in the upper northeast. The church was a spiritually apathetic, unmoved by the Word of God, lacking any zeal for Christ type of church.

It was a dead church. The pastor was inexperienced in ministry, and to be honest, boring. He would often just read his manuscripts with a very low voice, rarely even looking up at the congregation.

And yet, even though it looked like it was going to be a total disaster that this young and experienced pastor, in this small, apathetic, unmoved church, in this small town, it would be a complete disaster.

And yet what happened would not only impact the northeast, it would impact across America. That young pastor started proclaiming the gospel.

[9 : 55] He started proclaiming the good news. And God just decided to do a work. He started capturing the hearts of the people that were gathered and listening. Lives began to become transformed.

And before long, that little tiny congregation was busting at the seams. It wasn't long after that that what was happening in that little church began to spread into the city.

And what was happening in the city began to spread to neighboring cities. And before long, all of New England was being turned upside down with the power of God.

That young preacher, you know his name? Jonathan Edwards. That little, small, spiritually apathetic church was the Congregational Church of Northampton.

And the movement that spread across New England, the northeast, and America, you know as the Great Awakening. Here is how Pastor Edwards, how Jonathan Edwards, described what was taking place, not only within his congregation, but the community as well.

[11 : 09] And I quote, This work, that is the work of God, soon made a glorious alteration in the town. The town seemed to be full of the presence of God.

Oh, and as I read this, Faith Family, pray it, dream it, vision it, see what God might do. And he goes on to say, There were remarkable tokens of God's presence in almost every house.

Parents rejoicing over their children, husbands their wives, and wives their husbands. And the things of God were then seen in his sanctuary, that is at church.

God's day, when people were gathered, was a delight. Our public assemblies were beautiful. The congregation was alive in God's service.

Everyone earnestly intent on public worship. They couldn't wait to get to church. Does that describe you? They couldn't wait to intentionally engage in worship.

[12:17] He said, That might be a little bit of a stretch here, all right?

And he said, Faith Family, God showed up in a little bitty church with a young and experienced pastor in a small little town and did a mighty work.

Which reminds us of this, and if you don't know that, or don't know this, I hope that you leave tonight believing it and knowing it. It's this. Our God has a way of taking little things like inexperienced pastors and apathetic congregations and accomplishing impossible and mighty things.

Do you believe that? He is, after all, the God that took the small Gideon army and defeated the mighty Midianites. He is the one that took the few loaves and fed the 5,000 plus. He is the one that took the congregation, not of noble birth, and reached the pagan city of Corinth.

Notice it on the screen. Our mighty God can do mighty things whenever and with whomever he chooses. Like, our mighty God can do mighty things whenever he wants.

[13:50] And with whoever he wants. It doesn't matter what they look like in the eyes of the world. It doesn't matter if they look small. God takes small things and does mighty things in and through them.

That is exactly, that is exactly what we see in these early verses of the book of Acts. The world is about to be turned upside down.

And do you know why I know the world is about to be turned upside down? Because we're over 2,000 years after this moment and we're still a part of it. It's still going on. Even in Minnesota.

Who would have thought, right? It got here. Like, this movement is still taking place. And how did God launch this mighty movement that has turned the world upside down that is still going on globally today?

Will you remember if you know your biblical history? A group of politicians got together, right? And they passed legislation making Christianity the religion everywhere.

[14:59] Is that how it happened? No? Let me try again. It was some Wall Street investors and some hedge fund managers that got together and ponied up billions to launch the effort.

No? Let me try again. A Harvard Business School class got together and put together an impeccable strategic plan. Eh!

Those are not the ways God chose to birth this mighty movement of God. Let me remind you how it actually happened. A few ex-fishermen.

A few ex-fishermen. And some social outcasts. Men and women who just a few days before the words that we just read a few moments ago were hiding in an upper room terrified because their Messiah died.

They were scared for their lives. They were scared for their lives. And God says, yeah. I'm going to birth a movement that's going to change the world.

[16:08] And they look perfectly qualified for the task. Oh, they were small. And they were insignificant.

And no one would have ever written this story this way in Hollywood. But our mighty God can do mighty things with whoever he wants. Whenever he wants.

So that he gets all the glory. Four things I want to show you quickly here that I believe that God did in this small group of people.

These men and women who were social outcasts. Who were not impressive in any way in the world. And yet there were four things I trust taken from the text.

We won't cover everything in the text. But four things from this text that I believe these individuals had that God used to change the world. Here we go. Number one is that these men and women were absolutely confident in the risen Christ.

[17:05] What I mean by that is they were absolutely certain. And I mean absolutely certain that Jesus is alive. It's a great place for an amen. You missed it.

Maybe you'll wake up later. Right? Like these men and women. This wasn't a joke to them. This wasn't like just an Easter celebration kind of once a year thing. They literally believed with everything that they were that Jesus was alive.

Let me show you starting in verse 1. It says in the first book, O Theophilus, I had dealt with all that Jesus had begun to do and teach.

Let's stop here for just a moment. You might ask if you're new to the faith, if you're new to the Bible, you might say question what first book? Luke, and as some of you know, but all of you might not know, is that the author of Acts is Luke, who also wrote what?

The Gospel of Luke. So the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts are like a two-volume set that go together. And so Luke here is referring to the Gospel that he wrote.

[18:10] In other words, he's picking up where he left off. It's like the TV series where the opening scene of one episode starts with the final scene of the previous episode.

That's how the Book of Acts started. He's picking up where the Gospel of Luke left off. And where does the Gospel of Luke end? With Jesus appearing to his disciples, which is what is happening here at the beginning of the Book of Acts.

Look at verse 3. Now, why does Jesus present himself alive to them?

Why does he meet them in his resurrected state? Well, if you know the end of the book of Luke, where were they last left?

Or the Gospel of John. You remember Thomas? Thomas was like, I don't care if I ever see him, I will believe.

[19:16] No, that's not how Thomas was. Thomas was the opposite. If he doesn't walk in this room and show me physical hands with nailed scars in them, I'm out.

I'm not believing in this. Peter was returning to his prior occupation of fishing. Well, guys, that was a fun three years or whatever walking with Jesus.

But I guess it's over now. Let's go back to fishing. In other words, listen, listen, listen, listen. These disciples took Jesus at his word when Jesus said, it is finished.

Except they didn't think he was referring to their sin. They thought he was referring to the mission. It's over. It's done. We're going to go back to fishing. I'm not going to believe. So it's kind of hard to get excited about a dead Messiah.

So Jesus here enters into their space in his resurrected state. He meets with them in verse 3. He says, presents himself alive to them after his suffering with many proofs.

[20:20] And he did this for 40 days speaking to them about the kingdom of God. And this faith family absolutely changed everything.

It totally changed the... They... Am I a little excited tonight? I feel like I'm a little excited, right? And that's all right. Because I am. Like, there's no going back after this.

I mean, this was... Like, their lives are never going to be the same. Why? Because they encountered the resurrected Christ.

Notice this on the screen. Listen. When you are certain Jesus is alive, you can't help but boldly live. Somebody say amen. Like, when you actually believe Jesus died and he rose from the dead, that's going to give you a transformation of boldness to live like you're not afraid of anything.

Which is exactly what the church is going to do against government, against all kinds of things in the book of Acts. Stonings, this and that and everything.

[21 : 30] The church is going to say, we don't care what you do to us because if God is for us, who can be against us? Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Listen. Listen. And I hope this is practical for you. If the one you're following defeated death, then what are you afraid of?

Oh, they kill you. What's a good thing you're following? The resurrected one. Like, are you following? The point here is that they were confident in the risen Christ and that confidence changed everything when it came to boldly being on mission for Jesus.

Let me give you just a few examples in the apostle Paul's life. These will not be on the screen. But a verse that some of you know, many of you do, Romans 1 16. I'm not ashamed of the gospel.

I'm not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. So why was Paul able to say, I'm not ashamed?

[22 : 36] I'm not afraid to proclaim the gospel. We'll go a few verses earlier. He says this concerning Jesus, who was a descendant of David according to the flesh and declared to be the son of God and the power according to the spirit of holiness.

By his resurrection from the dead, Jesus our Lord. In other words, the reason why I'm not ashamed of the gospel is because the gospel is based on the risen one.

What could I be ashamed of? I'll give you one more from the apostle Paul. This is in 1 Corinthians 15. He says, if Christ has not been raised, your faith is in vain.

But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. And then here's how he ends that reality. Here's the implication for the believers. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

In other words, if you know that Jesus is alive, and he is, then be steadfast. Be immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

[23 : 46] Like, what would you be afraid of? Why would you stop? Why would you quit when you know Jesus is alive? Can I ask you a question, faith family? And I'm asking this for me, and I'm asking this for you.

Why do so many Christians live dead when their Savior is alive? Why do so many churches live dead?

Like, we're afraid to do anything. We're afraid to step out in faith. We're afraid to dream big. We're afraid to do these things. Listen, do you realize who you're following? He is the one that defeated the grave.

Listen, the early church was a small, unimpressive group of men and women. They are in no way a Hollywood script worth writing about. And yet God will choose them to impact the world because they were confident that he is risen.

That Jesus is alive. Listen, the early church was little, but they were confident in the resurrection. Here's the second thing.

[24 : 54] Is that the early church was clear about the mission. They were confident that Jesus was alive. And secondly, they were clear about what the mission was to be.

I'll pick it up in verse 6 and 7. So when they had come together, they asked him, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel? I love Jesus' reply.

Hush. It's not for you to know these things that the Father has fixed by his authority. Right? You want to start debating end times. Tell me that's not applicable today.

It's like all anybody wants to know. Let's talk about the end times. Here's an idea. Be a witness until the end times. Like that's actually what the mission is about. And so here the disciples, they're concerned about when the kingdom would come.

And Jesus is like, it's not for you to know when it's going to come. Can I preach? Can I go on a little soapbox here? Can I go on a little soapbox here? So listen, it's fine if you want to study prophecy.

[25 : 53] I've taught seminars on the book of Revelation. You know that. We've done that as a faith family. But why the obsession of when he's going to come, when Jesus wants you to be concerned about how the kingdom is going to come?

And how the kingdom is going to come is by we being witnesses to the ends of the earth. There should be more amens. And I'm really, really disappointed in you tonight, faith family.

Right? Because, and maybe it's because I experienced this so much as a pastor. Right? Is you do a prophecy seminar. Hundreds of people show up.

You do an evangelism seminar. Four. And it's like, there's a problem in our thinking. Like we're just like these disciples. Hey, is this when it's going to happen?

Is the kingdom of Israel going to be restored now? Guys, cut it out. That's not what I'm here to talk about. What I'm here to talk about is how the kingdom is going to come.

[26 : 54] Verse 8. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

In fact, notice here on the screen you'll see the similarity with Luke chapter 24. So this is how Luke ends. And it says, And that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in the name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem.

So that sounds a lot like the book of Acts. And everybody say this with me. Say this out loud. You are witnesses of these things.

Do you see the book ends? How Luke ends, he picks up in this second book in the book of Acts and picks up that theme. That is that we are to be witnesses to the ends of the earth about the things concerning Jesus Christ.

So let me ask you this, faith family. What has Jesus commissioned us to do? Have Bible studies? Be a part of a fellowship group.

[28 : 04] I love the awkward silence here. This just means this is working. Attend worship services. Not at all.

Listen, don't zone out on me on this point. Those are means whereby you are equipped to do what he's called you to do, which is to be a witness of the gospel.

Oh, I'm not downplaying Bible study. And I'm certainly not downplaying weekend gatherings for worship. No, these are actually good things, biblical things that you should be a part of.

But this is, once again, where I have messed up in my thinking from time to time. I'm too programmed by church life growing up. It's where you get off track at times. And here's what happens.

You start thinking the end is the Bible study. The end is I went to church. The end is I've grown in my biblical knowledge. And Jesus is saying, no, no, no, no, no. That's actually not the mission.

[29 : 04] The mission isn't to have more Bible studies. It's not to attend church more. Do those things so that you can be equipped to actually do the thing I've called you to do, which is to be witnesses for me.

So go to the Bible study and go to the church service, but get fired up about Jesus so that you can go tell others about Jesus. Like that's the mission.

The early church didn't confuse the mission of God for religious activity. Well, we went to the temple. We did our stuff. No, I'm clear with you what I'm calling you to do.

And that is be a witness. That's the mission. Be a witness. Because as you are a witness, sowing seeds, I'm going to bring about the kingdom of God.

Now, if you're like me and you grew up in church, you get real nervous about the word witness. He said, I have to be a witness. Okay, that probably means I've got to attend the 12-week course, show up to church on Tuesday night, and go door to door, knocking on people's door, because that's what we think witnessing.

[30 : 20] How many of you show of hands like that's almost kind of what your tradition made you think witnessing was, right? Got to go door to door, and got to walk up to somebody at the coffee shop and say, okay, I'm going to rudely interrupt your conversation and tell you about Jesus, right?

Well, maybe you could do that. There can be a time and place for that. But let's actually understand what the word is. What does it mean to be a witness? The Greek word is actually martus.

Say that with me. Martus. Martus. That's the Greek word. It's actually where we get the word martyr or martyrdom from. And the word simply means one who reports what he's seen or heard.

That's pretty simple, right? One who reports what he or she has seen or heard. Let me give you a great example of a witness in the Bible. Do you remember in John chapter 9, Jesus heals a man that was born blind?

We actually did a series on miracles, and we dealt specifically with this one. And you remember that after Jesus heals the man of his blindness.

[31 : 30] By the way, here's a trivia question. On what day of the week did Jesus accept? Some of you, Sabbath, of course, because we learned in that series, if Jesus is a miracle, it's probably on the Sabbath, right?

Just to mess with the Pharisees. And so Jesus heals this man on the Sabbath, and he just starts getting peppered with questions one after another. And look, here's a witness for you.

Here's what a witness is. He doesn't go door to door, you know, knocking on, you know, clay doors saying, hey, let me go through the Romans road with you or whatever. This is what happens. Notice on the screen.

This is John 9, 24. For the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, give glory to God. We know that this man that is Jesus is a sinner, okay?

And here's his answer. Listen, whether he's a sinner, I don't know. Here's what I know. I was blind, and now I see.

[32 : 27] That's a witness, faith. You don't need a 16-week evangelism course to do that. Listen, I don't have every answer. I can't solve the holiness of God and the problem of evil with you today.

I mean, I'll study that, but I can't solve that tension for you, and I can't answer every biblical question you want to ask me. Listen, here's all I know. I was blind, but now I see, and the one that made the difference is Jesus.

I don't know. There's nothing else I can tell you. I was dead, but now I'm alive spiritually, and the only one I can give credit to is Jesus. That's what it means to be a witness.

Oh, this ought to set some of you free. Look at it on the screen here. If you've been changed by Christ, you're fully qualified to be a witness for Christ. That's it.

If you've been changed, if Jesus has made a difference in your life, in other words, if you have a story of God's grace in your life, a salvation story, you are fully qualified to be a witness for Jesus.

[33:36] Jesus. So please don't make this, you're going to be my witnesses to the ends of the earth, way too scary or more complicated than it needs to be. It just simply means you're going to go tell the world what I did in your life.

You have encountered the resurrected Christ, and it has changed your life. And I'm telling you, the mission isn't going to be to get in a holy huddle and study the book of Romans. I know it hasn't been written yet, but it will be, right?

And study that. No, you're going to do that so that it will empower you and strengthen you to just tell people your story of my saving your soul and changing your life.

And you're going to do that wherever you go. And guess what? As you do that, you won't see it happening, but the kingdom of God will be building, and the church of Christ will be advancing, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

It is that simple. Listen, the early church was confident that Jesus was alive, and they were clear about the mission. That is, we are to be witnesses for Jesus.

[34:51] Listen, we've got to rethink what it means. We do that even here at Faith Family, what it means to be a church, and that is that the end is not to come and observe, but to come and be inspired and encouraged by the word to go out.

Far too often in Christianity, the Christian experience is like a football game, right? There's a whole lot of people on the field, or a few people on the field, really exhausted, and a whole bunch of people in the stands just sitting there watching, right?

Put that up on the screen. I want you to get that image. And this is often how it looks. You've got a few people doing the work of witnessing, and a whole lot of people just up there like, I went to Bible study, I went to church.

Listen, I hope what the book of Acts does for you and for me is it gets us on the field. And the field looks like where you work, and the neighborhood that you live in, and the relationships that you have.

And it's not beating people over the head with, you know, 16 points of theology. It's just like, can I tell you the story of what God has done in my life? But far too many people are on the stands watching a few.

[36:02] And the book of Acts ought to inspire us to get in the game and to get on mission for Jesus Christ. Number three, number three is this.

Not only were they confident in the risen Christ, not only were they clear about the mission, but there was the coming of the Holy Spirit. In other words, confidence in the resurrection is good.

You've got to have it. That is, you've got to really believe Jesus is alive. And you've got to be clear about what the mission is, that is to be his witnesses. But here's what I want you to know. If that's all you had, you still don't have enough to be used by God to change the world.

And here's why. Because you still don't have any resources. Like, you don't have any ability to carry that mission out. And that is why Jesus says, listen, I know you can't do this, but I'm going to send you power.

And that power is going to come in a person, and it's the person of the Holy Spirit. Look at verse 5 of Acts 1. And while staying with them, he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which he said, you heard from me, John baptized with water, but you will be baptized by the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

[37 : 19] Now, we're going to unpack a lot of what that means as we go through the book of Acts. Tonight, all I want you to see is that the Holy Spirit is going to come upon them to be able to do this mission.

That is, listen, being witnesses for God is not something you can do in your own resources. God gives you the resource and the power to be able to do that.

Look at verse 8 of Acts 1. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. Do we have Luke chapter 24, 49?

Let's put that up there. Behold, I'm sending you the promise of my Father upon you, but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high. Very similar to how Luke ends the gospel of Luke and begins the book of Acts.

So, you got to be confident that Jesus is alive. You got to be clear of what the mission is, but you can't do this without the Holy Spirit. You can't do this without the Holy Spirit. So, who is the Holy Spirit?

[38 : 20] Here's a crash course and what the Bible teaches about the Spirit. We're going to do more of this in the book of Acts. Number one, first of all, get this down. The Holy Spirit is a person. It's not an it.

He's not a thing. And if sometimes I slip up or you hear somebody slip up, you don't have to like, you know, thump them with your Bible. You can be gracious. But let's just know that theologically, the Holy Spirit is a person.

It's not an it. It's a he. Second, he is God. It's the Holy Spirit of God. It's the third person of the Trinity. Number three, the Holy Spirit always leads to truth, not confusion.

Listen, if you're a part of a Holy Spirit work and you leave more confused than when you came in, it wasn't a work of the Holy Spirit because the Spirit leads to truth, not confusion.

Number four, the Spirit, according to Jesus, glorifies Jesus. This is John 16, verse 14. So here's another mark of the work of the Spirit.

[39 : 27] And I'm trying to teach y'all. You can rebuke me afterwards if you want to. But if you're a part of a movement that exalts the Holy Spirit, you need to be cautious about that movement.

What you want to be a part of is a movement that exalts Jesus because the role of the Spirit is to glorify and exalt Jesus. So sometimes people will come up to me and they'll say, you need to really make more of the Holy Spirit.

And I'm like, I agree with you. At the same time, we're here to make much of Jesus, which, by the way, is what the role of the Holy Spirit is. So how do you know when you're a part of a church where the Spirit is at work?

Jesus is exalted. Not the Spirit. Okay? So if you go into a church and they have a dove instead of a cross, you might want to leave.

Right? I'm kidding. All right? But the point is, it's not let's emphasize the Spirit. It's let's emphasize Jesus as the Spirit is going to exalt and glorify the Son.

[40 : 31] Next is the Holy Spirit dwells in believers. This is one of the beautiful things that we're going to see in the New Testament, that the Holy Spirit actually comes and lives in us.

Paul says this, do you not know that you are a temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you? You receive the Holy Spirit when you put your faith in Jesus, which is part of, which we'll look at, the baptism of the Holy Spirit later on.

And then lastly, there's more, but this is where we're going to stop tonight, is he can dwell on believers. So he dwells in believers, but he can also dwell on.

You say, what's the difference? The dwelling on is the language of anointing. And this is usually where the Spirit of God comes on someone for a specific task or work.

The Holy Spirit's dwelling in you because you're a part of the temple of God. You belong to God. That is not taken away. The Spirit comes on people as anointing language to do the work that God has called you to do.

[41 : 42] The Holy Spirit coming on them and will ultimately come in us as well is giving us the authority to be witnesses and an ability to do what we otherwise by ourselves could not do.

So if you're here and you're like, I'm really terrified about this whole witness thing, here's the good news. God is actually going to give you all you need. So you don't have to worry whether or not you need to supply anything.

In fact, here's maybe a bad illustration, but maybe it'll help you think through this. Imagine yourself as a tool. Now that hammer by itself can't do a thing.

You lay that hammer down, what's it going to do? I guarantee you it won't drive a nail. You can yell at it. You can speak to it. You can command it. It ain't doing a thing.

Why? It can't do anything in and of itself. But when the power comes upon it and takes a hold of it, then that tool can be used to do great things.

[42 : 48] But it has no power or ability without something beyond itself to come in and to come on and take over. That's what the Holy Spirit does in our lives.

Right? So go hammer the world for Jesus. Okay? With the Holy Spirit. So here it is. Notice this on the screen. Okay? When you realize how big the mission is, you realize how incapable you are without the Holy Spirit.

And I'm telling you, God reminds me of this all the time. I can't do this. I'm terrible at this. I really am. I really am. I cannot do the Christian life.

I cannot do pastoring. I cannot lead a church. I can't. Where are the amens? Like I'm just waiting for y'all to go, amen, amen, best sermon ever.

Right? I can't. But God can do whatever he wants with whomever he wants for his glory in and through our lives.

[43 : 50] Amen? And so just realize it isn't about you. And even in these last several sermons, you've learned how God has been teaching me that. Like, listen, this isn't about your strength.

This is about the weakness. And in your weakness, his power is made perfect. These are a small group of insignificant people. They aren't hedge fund managers or politicians.

Christians. And God is going to use them to change the world. They were confident in the risen Christ, clear about what the mission was. And thirdly, there was the coming of the Holy Spirit.

And if you're here and you're like, you know what? I've never really experienced the power of the Holy Spirit. And we could even have a conversation as to what that looks like. We're going to see examples of that in the book of Acts. I say this as an encouragement.

I'm almost done. I say this as an encouragement to you. Notice this on the screen. If you've never experienced the power of the Spirit, it may be because you've never put yourself in the position to need Him.

[44 : 50] I want you to just think about that. And I say maybe. Like if you've never experienced the power of the Spirit, it may be you've never put yourself in the position to need Him. That is, you live such a safe, comfortable, secluded Christian life.

Well, like you're the hammer laying on the table. Well, you don't need the hand if you're just going to lay there and do nothing. But when you actually start to step out in faith and that gets scary, but listen, that's where you learn the power of God.

And you're like, there's no way I could have done that. I just had that conversation I never, ever, ever would have been able to have on my own. I know. That's how it works.

You were given power by the Spirit to do what you couldn't do in your own strength. And here's why God always does it this way. You ready?

Because when it's all said and done, the only one that will get the glory won't be you. The glory will only be, God, you did that.

[45 : 52] By the power of your Spirit, you did that. All right. One more. It won't be long. One more. It won't be long. Now, this ragtag group of bad news bears here in Acts chapter 1, they were confident in the risen Christ, clear about the mission to be witnesses.

They had the coming of the Holy Spirit to give them the power to do what they couldn't do. And then lastly, number four, is they were committed to one another. They were committed to one another. I'll show you this in verse 4, and we're wrapping it up here.

And while staying with them, Jesus ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father which he said, you've heard from me.

Jesus tells them to wait. And I imagine there was like excitement and let's go, let's take on the world for Jesus. And he's like, listen, I want you to hold up. You're not ready yet.

And what takes place in the Holy Spirit is going to come shortly. We'll see that in Acts chapter 2, but not in this exact moment. Why? Not because this is a time of inactivity, but this is a time of preparation.

[47 : 00] They're going to have to come together. And look at verse 14 of Acts 1. All these with, say it, one accord were devoting themselves to prayer together with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus and his brothers.

They were committed to one another. This is what they needed to learn early on. And if you know me, you know I preach this a lot and there's a reason for it, but this is what they understood at the beginning.

Notice it on the screen. Is that the mission was more important than my mission. They had to realize by coming together, listen, this is not about us.

It's not about what we want. It's about what God wants to do through us. And the unity of the church is the very thing Jesus prayed for before going to the cross.

That his people would be one as he and the Father are one. Listen, nothing disrupts the mission of God more than the disunity of the people of God.

[48 : 09] Say that again. Nothing disrupts the mission of God more than the disunity among the people of God. God. So, what was it? At least a few things from this text.

Confident that Jesus is alive. Clear about what he's called us to do. The power of the Holy Spirit which we have so this doesn't depend on us and we're committed to doing this together. We're not doing this alone.

We're not out there by ourselves. We have a faith community committed to one another where we will encourage one another and rebuke each other when we make it about our mission instead of his mission.

And that is what our mighty God chose to change the world. Let me close with this one final story. It's about Jeremiah Lamphere.

Jeremiah was burdened. This is back in the 1850s. He was burdened. He lived in New York and there was lots of businessmen that worked there, some 30,000 businessmen that didn't know the Lord.

[49 : 12] And this really burdened him. And the church that he was a part of was a dead church. It was not alive. It wasn't involved. They didn't take serious the mission of Christ much like Edwards' church in Northampton.

And so Jeremiah simply decided, you know what, I'm going to start. This is one man. One man decides, I'm going to start a noontime prayer meeting in the financial district of New York.

He invited everyone that he knew to be there and by the time it came for the meeting to start, guess how many people showed up? Eh! Jeremiah was all alone.

By the end of the time, by 1230, one person had arrived. So they were late, but one person showed up. Finally, they decided they'd do it again the next week and that week, six people showed up.

They met again the next week, 14 people showed up. They met again the next week on Wednesday and 23 people showed up. The next week they met again, 40 people showed up.

[50:24] Then they realized they couldn't just meet weekly, they were going to have to meet daily. And let me just fast forward the story. Within six months, over 10,000 businessmen were gathering daily for prayer in 20 different New York locations.

These are stories historically known from that. On one occasion, there was a man who showed up with the intent on murdering someone and then committing suicide.

God. And when he heard the prayers of God's people, he asked, what must I do to be saved? And he was. There was another man that prayed out loud for his son who didn't know that his son was in the back of the room.

And in hearing his father pray for him, surrendered his life to God. And faith family, before long, what is known historically as the prayer revival of 1857 spread across America and around the world?

I want you to leave here tonight believing in something. Whether you are a pastor in a small, apathetic church in New England, whether you are an untrained layman alone in New York City, or whether you are a group of former fishermen devastated at the death of your leader, or whether or not you are a two and a half year old church that meets in Burnsville and Rosemount, God has a way of taking little things and doing mighty things by the power of his spirit.

[52:20] And we ought to believe that and you know why we ought to believe that because we already know that there is nothing impossible with him.

And I mean this, imagine what he might do through us. Pray with me. Lord, thank you for your word tonight.

God, I pray that it it awakens in us, renews in us the passion and desire to be your witness.

This is what you've called us to do as a church, as believers, to be witnesses to the ends of the earth. Wherever we are, wherever we go, we're just telling the story of your grace and salvation in our life.

And so what I pray that you would do and continue to do mighty things in and through this family and through our lives. Lord, and we know it's not about us, but the power of your spirit that is in us that gives us the ability to do the things we cannot do.

[53:35] And so Lord, I pray that you have talked to us tonight and spoken to us that the preaching of your word and that Lord, we are as focused as ever on what you've called us to do.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.