

Against All Odds: The Surprising Return - Part 2

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[0:00] It is a joy to us who come to the Word of God to know that however massive this task is, not only in understanding the Word, but especially applying that Word to our hearts isn't a task! It's a task that we invite the Spirit to do along with us and to help to do for us as we submit ourselves to the Scriptures as we seek to apply that Word to our lives. And then we see the work of God and how He does that in us and how He blesses us with the joy of seeing His work in the lives of others. What a privilege that is. Well, tonight, most of you, many of you, maybe all of you will be participating in an activity, probably watching the Super Bowl together.

Bright lights, packed stadiums, confetti, the celebration that's taking place. And for all intents and purposes, this is really kind of the center of attention for today, is it not?

Somewhere around \$800 million will be spent on commercials. About \$8 million per 30-second slot is going to be spent. Somewhere around 65,000 people will attend the game this evening and spending about \$4,500, upwards around \$30,000 on a ticket. With some tickets going around \$40,000 even.

About 127, 130 million people will be participating and watching the game tonight. Planning has been underway for the last 18 months. It will feel like the center of the world in many ways. But by tomorrow morning, all the crowds will have left, all the seats will be empty, and there will be those who will be there in the stadium cleaning up after a massive event. Here's the sobering reality. Many of you probably don't even know who's playing tonight. That would be me. I don't even know who's playing tonight. Many of you probably don't know who won last year, don't know who the MVP is, don't know where the game was played, don't know what the score was, all of those things that seem really important tonight. We won't have any clue what's happening just a few days from now.

[2:47] Moments that felt really massive, moments that garnered lots of attention, will fade into meaninglessness. That's kind of where we find ourselves this morning in the book of Acts, Acts chapter 1.

It's kind of how this whole movement of the church begins. It begins with this sense of a letdown after these massive crowds that were once so prevalent in the city of Jerusalem. And now, just a month and a half afterwards, all we're left with is just a spattering of followers, 120 people who seem to be left. This unexpected movement that seemed to garner the attention of an entire nation, now all of a sudden has faded into almost obscurity. Jesus was taken, of course, by religious leaders. He was put to death by Roman authorities. And all of a sudden, unexpectedly, this movement that seemed to be gaining steam was over. But the lesson of what happens in the book of Acts is unforgettable.

What if God does his greatest work when the stadium is empty? What if the mission of Christ was never built on crowd size, but was built on quiet obedience? What if the real story of the history is not the roar of the crowd, but the faithfulness of the remnant who were left? What if the difference between collapse of a movement in courage is that they return? These few returned. They obeyed. They went back to Jerusalem. They did what they were told. They followed the instructions that they were given.

And these four realities that we have come to begin to see last week in the surprising return of these disciples. And these realities that we started looking up last week. The promise of Christ, the promise of God that kept them. The power of God that was set before them. The pattern of God that was given to guide them in their efforts. And finally, the people who were determined to obey the

instructions that they were given. Now we bring all of that into focus through Acts chapter 1 verses 12 to 13. And I would encourage you, if you have your Bibles, please open with me Acts chapter 1. If you're using the Pew Bible there in front of you, it's on page 909. Luke will say, almost matter-of-factly, then they returned to

Jerusalem. And in that surprising return, God will begin to shape the hope and the life of this group of believers. And he will set a pattern for us on how we can enjoy and experience the benefits of the working power of God to accomplish his purposes through simple obedience. Simple obedience.

[16:05] So we see their obedient return in verse 12. Look with me there. It says, Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mountain called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.

And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and his brothers. As we saw last week, it's easy to read these verses as generally un-extraordinary. We see them as the automatic and natural expectation.

This is what we have come to expect. And as we, maybe as you're familiar with the book of Acts, you know the story. It's routine. And of course, the disciples come back to Jerusalem.

But when we read, Then they returned to Jerusalem, we need to pause for a moment and understand the significance of this response and what God is beginning to put in place and the pattern He's beginning to set for us as people who also want to comply to the instructions of God and to enjoy the benefits of His promise. We need to feel the significance of this work of God working through extraordinary means to accomplish His objectives. Take note of these words. Then they returned.

We saw last week that it was an immediate response. We understood through the text that the word then is meant to help you understand the immediate sequence of events that are taking place. That they receive these instructions from the angels. They've watched Jesus ascend into heaven. The angels come and say, hey, what are you doing, guys? Why are you standing around looking around? Do what He said.

[8:19] And so then they return. This immediate posture of obedience without hesitation, without delay, without question, without second guessing. They do what they're told. They follow the instructions that they received already from Jesus. So we saw the beginning of Acts chapter 1, verse 4. It says, And while staying with them, speaking of Jesus, He ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which He had said, you heard from me. This imperative order, this command, this instruction that was given. And the disciples saw it for what it was. Not just a suggestion, but as a command to follow. And they do it immediately, without hesitation.

And second, we saw last week that it was purposeful. That there was direction to their obedience. Again, verse 12, they returned to Jerusalem. Then verse 13, and when they had entered, they went up to the upper room where they were staying. And it's difficult to really appreciate what's taking place here in the English translation, but each of these four verbs, they returned, they entered, they went up, they were staying, are verbs that have a prefix, a prepositional prefix that has direction attached to it. This direction to their obedience, this design to their obedience. And what seems so natural to us is all a strategic way in which God was getting them to the place where He wanted them to be. Maybe you say, big deal. Why are you making such a big point about this? And the reason, of course, is because simple obedience is what activates

God's unstoppable plan. Simple obedience activates God's unstoppable plan. It's not going to be based upon your heroics. It's not going to be based upon your charisma. It's not going to even be based upon your giftedness. It's not going to be based upon your ability to defend what you believe or even articulate what you believe. The plan of God, the purposes of God will be worked out and put into motion as you decide to obey God's instructions. Simple obedience activates God's unstoppable plan.

Do what God says and you will invite God's power. But see, obedience wasn't automatic for these men. And that's what I want to spend our time this morning understanding. That while we see

obedience here, obedience was really not the pattern for these men. And there are four reasons that we can stand back and just appreciate the work of God that's taking place here. Last week, we saw that it was activated first by the promises of God. This promise of God that kept them. And we saw last week that Jesus' ministry there began in the Jordan Valley, in the Jordan River area. And right after His baptism, He was driven into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. And there He was tempted for 40 days.

Well, in Luke's account and in Matthew, in Mark's account, we get the impression that as soon as Jesus came out of temptation, He made His way immediately to Galilee. But John's account helps us to understand that there may have been as much as a year that Jesus spends in ministry there in Judea, there around the Jordan River, and Jerusalem before He ever makes His way back to Galilee.

[12:06] Jesus is there. He's performing miracles. He's casting out demons. He and His disciples are constantly surrounded by people. His ministry to them, Jesus' ministry to them is flourishing.

So Jesus, recognizing the press of the ministry on His disciples, when He, at some point that happens in John, Jesus encourages His disciples, hey, let's get away. Let's get some retreat. Let's have some time of refreshment. And so they go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, this retreat experience that they were supposed to enjoy. And who do you suppose meets them on the other side? Well, we find from Matthew chapter 14, verses 13 and 14, that Jesus and His disciples withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by Himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed Him on foot from the towns.

When He went ashore, He saw a great crowd, and He had compassion on them and healed their sick. Fortunately, Jesus is not like me. Fortunately, Jesus isn't like many of us. That when we decide that we deserve some time off, we deserve some time of refreshment, and then all of a sudden, the crowds come, and we're like, wait a second, this is not what I signed up for. Jesus, instead of pushing the crowds away, recognizing that Jesus, or that God was sovereign over that, He had compassion on those crowds. And you know the story. Jesus, He healed their sick. He spent the day healing their sick. But then He turns it into an object lesson, where He invites the disciples to begin to think about how they were going to take care of the physical needs of those who had come.

How are you going to deal with their hunger? And of course, Jesus cared about their hunger, too. But He cares more about their spiritual needs, and He wanted the disciples to recognize, even at the very beginning of the ministry, that the things that seemed impossible for them were possible with God. Jesus would meet their physical needs by feeding 5,000 men and as many as 15,000 women and children. Well, He would send the crowds away, and on the next day, those same people would return. And that's where we find ourselves in the book of John, John chapter 6. And Jesus, now, He's caring about these spiritual matters, not just the physical matters. And so He's going to begin to ask and make some very bold and defining statements about the fact that He is the bread of life that's come down from God, and that they would need to eat on His flesh and drink His blood. And the disciples that were listening, the crowd of people that had come to turn out to hear this were like, what is going on with this guy? So then in John chapter 6, verse 60, we find many of His disciples heard these things and said, this is a hard saying. Who can listen? And we find in verse 66 that after this, many of His disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him. These bold, confusing statements caused many of Jesus' disciples, the thousands that were there, to not even bother associating themselves with Christ's ministry anymore. And we would see this as a pattern just generally across the landscape of the nation of Israel. But what we find, a promise of Christ to His disciples that He would keep them.

John chapter 6, verse 61, Jesus now turns to His disciples. He says, knowing in Himself that His disciples were grumbling about this, He said to them, do you take offense at this?

[16:06] Then in verse 64, there are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray Him. And He said, this is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless it is granted to Him by the Father. Then in verse 67, so Jesus says to the twelve, do you want to go away as well? And Jesus answered them, did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil? He spoke of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. For he, one of

the twelve, was going to betray Him. Jesus understood the fickle hearts of the nation of Israel.

He understood how displaced the hearts even of His own disciples were. And yet the promise-keeping power of Christ in knowing His own, you are going to remain with Me. One of you will depart. And Jesus knows that it's Judas by name. So by the time we make our way to Acts chapter 1, verse 13, we see that they're all accounted for. They returned to Jerusalem from the mountain called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day journey away. And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room where they were staying. And here they are, all accounted for. Peter and John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James, Simon, and Judas, the son of James. The promise-keeping power of God to keep His own. The eleven apostles, here they are. Jesus fulfills His word. What if we believed the most important thing we could do as a church was obey the simple instructions of our Lord and trust Him to keep His promises? What if we believed that the instructions that God gave led to the results that we begin to see breaking forth in the first chapter of Acts chapter 1? What if we believed that it was just as simple as doing what God instructed? And we could trust Him with those results?

We didn't have to worry about strategies. We didn't have to worry about performance. We didn't have to worry about making things happen. We just trusted that the instructions that God gave to us were sufficient. We just did what He told us to do, and we trusted Him for the results, and we were satisfied with what He determined was right.

Remember the promises of God and marvel at the return of the disciples to Jerusalem. Those promises that kept them. Second, we say, and want to consider the power that was set before them.

The power that was set before them. You know, if we trace the public ministry of Jesus throughout the gospel of Luke, we find the extraordinary power of God.

[19:12] And really at the very beginning of Luke's account as Jesus will make His way into Nazareth, we see in Luke chapter 4, verses 18 and 19, it says, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives in recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who were oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. And then Jesus will, after reading the scroll, He sits down and He says, Today, this has been fulfilled in your hearing.

And the crowd there in Nazareth, there in the synagogue in Nazareth, marveled at what He said, the authority of His words. And the things that Jesus was teaching blew them away.

It became kind of the beginning of this movement that Jesus will begin to put into motion. Where people were seeking after Him. And so then we get to Luke chapter 5, the beginning of verse 1. And so many crowds are there coming after Jesus that Jesus has to get onto a little boat and move out into the Sea of Galilee so you have some space between Him and the people.

[20:27] We find in Luke chapter 5, verse 15, Jesus heals this man with leprosy. And it says, But now even more, the report about Him went abroad. And great crowds gathered to hear Him and to be healed of their infirmities.

Mark gives us a fascinating account of the ministry of Jesus. Notice this in Mark chapter 3, verses 20 and 21. It says this, They thought Jesus was crazy.

They thought there was something mentally wrong with Him because He was always surrounded by the press of the crowd. He never seemed to take a break. So that in a few verses later, Mark chapter 3, verse 31, His mother and brothers came again.

Standing outside, they sent to Him and called Him. And a crowd was sitting around Him. And they said, Your mother, your brothers are outside seeking you. This continuing ministry of Jesus that continued to gain popularity.

So that even as Jesus now leaves Galilee and begins His way towards Jerusalem, we find in Matthew chapter 19, verses 1 and 2. Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, He went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea, beyond the Jordan, and large crowds followed Him, and He healed them there.

[21:58] The prominence, the popularity, the ministry of Jesus that was so prominent. His popularity in Judea and Jerusalem was massive, was epic.

So that by the time that Jesus is now making His way into Jerusalem, this final time for the day of Passover, we find in Luke chapter 19, you're familiar with this story, that Jesus entered Jericho, He was passing through, and behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus.

He was a chief tax collector, was rich. He was seeking to see who Jesus was. But on account of the crowds, He could not because He was so small in stature.

There were too many people. The crush of the crowds, the press of the multitudes were there. And as Jesus now makes His way into Jerusalem, the same kind of thing is taking place.

We find that in Luke 19, 47 and 48. He was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy Him, but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on His words.

[23:10] It's repeated again a couple chapters later. Luke 21, 37. Every day He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and lodged on the Mount Cololivet.

And early in the morning, all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him. The crowds in Jerusalem would swell some figures, as many as 1.2 to 2 million people.

And the temple mount area could hold as many as 100,000 people. Now, all of them were probably not there, but you get a sense of the massive crowds that were taking place.

So what does Jesus need to do to prepare His disciples for this Acts 1 kind of ministry? He needs to help them understand that He's not going to be around forever.

He needs to help them understand that while the massive crowds are there, Jesus is the common denominator. What's going to happen when Jesus is absent?

[24:08] See, embedded in the messaging that He gives, that Jesus gives to His disciples, right leading up to His crucifixion is found in John chapter 14. He says in John chapter 14, verse 3, I am going away.

I'm going to prepare a place for you. Then in John 14, 19, Yet a little while, and the world will not see you. John 16, 6, I'm going away to Him who sent me.

Then John 16, 16, A little while, and you will see me no more. You get to see this clear sense that Jesus is preparing His disciples for what's coming.

What was this massive, prominent ministry that depended on the presence of Jesus? What will happen when Jesus is gone? And Jesus is leaving, and He wants to prepare His disciples for that moment.

He says this in John 16, 7, Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you.

[25:12] But if I go, I will send Him to you. And that's what we find in Acts chapter 1. We find in Acts chapter 1, verse 4 and 5, this promise of Jesus, Wait in Jerusalem.

Wait for the Spirit. The Spirit will empower you. The Spirit will fill you. The Spirit will help you carry out the instructions that I'm giving to you. Trust the Spirit.

Do what I say, and you will enjoy the results. You see, God had a master strategy. The disciples could never have anticipated that Jesus was going to go, and the Spirit was going to come.

He was going to fill them and empower them for the work that God had prepared for them. So marvel at the master plan of our Savior. Marvel at the return of the disciples into Jerusalem.

And it's this supply of power that was not just sufficient. It was overabounding to help create this unstoppable movement.

[26:14] Second, what if we were convinced that God delights in using His power to accomplish impossible things through very meager people?

You and me. What if we believed that God's power could accomplish the work that God promised to accomplish through the power of His Spirit? And to demonstrate, this work does not depend on us. So we just want to just briefly think about the frailty of the disciples. And that's our next point. I want to consider the pattern that would guide them. What was their tendency as a group of followers? What do we find throughout the course of Jesus' ministry? What is the pattern that they show, and what is the pattern they need to develop? Consider the pattern that guided them.

You see, the disciples have a tendency to fall away. You remember all of those times that the fickle hearts of the disciples seem to be carrying them away from Jesus instead of towards Jesus?

[27:24] But Jesus knows their tendency to cower. Jesus knows their tendency to be afraid. As a matter of fact, this is a tendency that has been built in from the very beginning of time.

One of my favorite verses going all the way back to sixth grade is Joshua 1.9. Have I not commanded you, be strong and have a good courage. Be not afraid, nor be dismayed. For the Lord, your God is with you wherever you go. You can trust in the pattern of power from God. You can trust Him. You don't have to be afraid. And so we find these disciples. They were so given to fear, weren't they? We find this over and over through their lives. Especially in the garden, we see this being set before us. This group of men who promoted their loyalty, remember? Oh yeah, we're loyal to Him. And just a couple of months before the crucifixion, you remember that Mary and Martha had invited Jesus to come and to heal Lazarus, their sick brother.

[28:30] And things were already very hostile in Jerusalem. And the disciples knew the danger that was in Jerusalem and Bethany, just a couple of miles away from Jerusalem.

They knew that Jesus had already been, excuse me, the religious leaders had already tried on a couple of occasions to throw stones to kill Christ. And here they were. Now, in the shadow of Jerusalem, in Bethany, and what does Thomas say?

Thomas, this obedient, loyal one, says, Let's also go that we may die with Him. Good Thomas. His desire to be loyal.

His desire to be faithful. Follower. Things were hot in Jerusalem. And now, during this week of ministry, this Passover week that we find, and Jesus, He's there in the Garden of Gethsemane, and He begins to establish this pattern.

He wants to put this pattern of faithfulness in front of His disciples. We find from Matthew 26, verses 30 to 35, When they sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

[29:39] Then Jesus said to them, You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.

Peter answered Him, They all fall away because of you. I will never fall away. Jesus said to him, Truly I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.

Peter said to Him, Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you. And all the disciples said the same. But you remember the story, don't you?

The crowds came. The soldiers were there. The religious leaders were in tow. And they had good intentions, but very poor follow-through. The crowds would come, and Jesus would respond, and there was this flash of courage, remember?

This flash of courage, where the disciples are thinking, Okay, should we strike right now with a sword? Should we defend you? And Peter reaches out, and he's the one who's cutting off the ear of the, excuse me, the high priest's servant, right?

[30:51] But immediately following this action, we find all the disciples fled. They left him and fled. You see, Jesus had promised this too, because Jesus understood the cowering, fickle hearts of these disciples.

He knows our fickle, cowering hearts as well. This timid band of disciples who were easily shaken, fearful, and disloyal.

And this promise of Christ, strike the shepherd, and the sheep will scatter. That's our tendency. Well, God says, Fear not, for I am with you.

Be not afraid. I'm your God. I will strengthen you. That's the promise. And yet, our hearts continue to fear. We struggle with fear. 30 years after this event, the Apostle Peter would encourage the church with the same pattern.

Remember, the pattern was watch and pray. That was the ground that was set before him. You don't have to fear, but if you're going to resist temptation, if you're going to stand in the face of the conflict, you need to watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

[32:11] Peter would respond and say much the same thing in 1 Peter 4, verse 7. He says, That's the pattern of a people who will be able to stand in the face of temptation, who will be able to stand in the face of fear and conflict.

They will be people who are strengthening themselves in prayer, in dependence on God. So be courageous, but not in your own strength.

Be courageous in the strength of the Lord. Marvel at the return of the disciples that God is shaping fickle hearts, that God is shaping fearful hearts.

He's making a man who are committed to Christ. And we see here in Acts chapter 1, what are they doing? They're coupling themselves to God's purpose through prayer.

Waiting and praying. What if we believed that God's pattern of prayer was not just a good idea, it was the only option.

[33:26] It was necessary. It was essential. I love how A.C. Dixon puts this. He says, when we depend upon organizations, we get what organizations can do.

When we depend upon education, we get what education can do. When we depend upon man, we get what man can do. But when we depend upon prayer, we get what God can do.

Oh, may God help us to depend on Him through prayer. And it's a pattern of life to anchor us in the hardest times. Finally, let's consider the people who remained with them.

Consider the people who remained with them. You see, many would fall away and we get immediately after the crucifixion, we kind of get this story in Luke chapter 24 of essentially these disciples, two disciples on their way to Emmaus and they kind of explain that the general tenor of the nation really at that point we find these two disciples, Cleopas and perhaps his wife, that other disciple's name is not given and there's a seven mile hike from Jerusalem to Emmaus and they're having a conversation with one another.

No doubt they were talking about the crucifixion, no doubt they were talking about this messianic expectation and all that Jesus was going to do and all they saw, the multitudes that were gathering, this three year ministry that had turned the nation upside down and then all of this sudden, this unexpected, this unexpected turn of events, the religious leaders who come, the Roman authorities who take Christ, he's tried, he's scourged, he's crucified, there he dies and they must be thinking it's over, what just happened, how did this take place?

[35:23] And then they hear these remote discussions and conversations about some women who saw Jesus at the tomb and this mystery that surrounded this news and here they are having this conversation when all of a sudden Jesus shows up.

They don't know who he is, they see him walking there in Luke 24, 15, while they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself draws near and joins their journey and asks them what they were talking about but they didn't recognize him and they say, are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened in these days?

Where have you been? What are you, what news channels are you listening to? This illustrates the prevailing heart of the people of the nation.

Confusion, discouragement, uncertainty, heartache, who was this one we thought was the Messiah? And the effects of these events will speak for themselves as we look at the remnant who is left there in Jerusalem, we find only 120 who are left of the thousands and tens of thousands who had followed Jesus at some point throughout his ministry.

And only 120 are left. We find in Acts 1, verse 15, in those days Peter stood up among the brothers. The company of persons was in all about 120.

[36:57] What a meager group. Of course, the 11 apostles were there. Maybe a spattering of the 72 who had followed Jesus at some point. Perhaps some of those who were of the 500, remember Jesus showed up to 500.

He revealed that He had been resurrected. Where are they? Where are these massive crowds? We're left at this point wondering what is going to happen to this movement that Jesus began.

Even the disciples themselves are floundering in this 40-day window. We find from John chapter 21 that they are in Galilee, but what are they doing? Well, they're fishing.

They're fishing. And not just fishing, but they're not even together. We find from John 21, 2 that there's only seven of the 11 that are left that actually go out together to fish.

Where are the others? Why did they return to their former life? What is the lesson we can learn? And it's Jesus that comes. He meets them there.

[38:09] It's Jesus that begins to realign their perspective. It's the presence of Jesus that helps them recognize once again that the mission

that they've been called to has not failed and they're called back to that purpose of being fishers of men.

In the beautiful part we find in Acts chapter 1, verse 14, they're together with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus and his brothers and some translations even have and his sisters.

This family had wondered if Jesus was out of his mind. God changes their hearts, transforms their opinions and here they are.

They're represented in this 120. These believers who God will use to turn the world upside down. This ragtag group, this meager group, this surprisingly infinitesimal small group compared to the thousands who had come.

but it's all by design to draw attention to the mighty work of God. God doesn't need a crowd to accomplish his purposes.

[39:19] He needs a few. A few faithful, obedient followers of his and then he can multiply the loaves and he can multiply the fishes and he can do the work.

It rests in the power of God not in the power of men. What if we believed that God works through small things to accomplish his amazing purposes?

What if we believed that the results didn't really depend on us but depended upon God? What would that change? What would that begin to change for this week? What one step would you alter in your week to align your hearts to the truths that we've seen this morning?

To remind ourselves of God's instructions and what he has called us to do and simply obeying the things that God has said. How that will lead to the results that he's promised.

Remember what he says in Acts chapter 1 verse 8? He says, You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be witnesses.

[40:30] God's promise for those who obey God's instructions. Oh may God help us to be able to enjoy the benefits of obedience that result in God's promises.

Let's pray. Thank you Lord for the example of this group. Thank you for the mighty work that you exemplified. Thank you for the wonder working power of your spirit working in a very meager group to accomplish extraordinary things.

Father, thank you that you use weak vessels. You use us. Help us Lord to not only know your instructions help us to faithfully carry out your instructions so we can enjoy the benefits of your power in our lives and also your power working in the lives of those around us.

To your glory we pray in Jesus name. Amen. God bless you. Have a great week. God bless you. Thank you.