

## The Promise, the Power, and the Plan

Sermon Delivered on March 3rd, 2024  
AM Service

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### Text:

Acts 1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2: Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 3: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 4: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5: For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. 6: When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7: And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8: But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 9: And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10: And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11: Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

### Introduction

As we have done year after year, here at GTBBC we devote the whole month of March thinking about Missions. **Why do we do this?** For the simple reason that we are creatures who are prone to forget. It is easy to forget why we exist as a church. Devoting one whole month talking about missions **helps us to remember who we are and why we are here as a local church.** There is a danger to think of church as a place where we are served or worse, a place we simply attend. That is not God's plan and purpose for the church. God has called the Church into being for **a greater and glorious reason.** He has given us a mission and a purpose. It is vitally important for us as a local body of believers to have a sense of mission and a sense of purpose. **And what is our mission?** We have a threefold mission as a church, namely, to **Exalt the Saviour**, to **Evangelize the Sinners**, and to **Edify and Equip the Saints.** This morning I want us to focus just on the second aspect of our threefold mission, which is, to Evangelize the Sinners.

In the passage we read this morning, we find our Lord is getting ready to leave and return to Heaven, but before He ascended into Heaven, He left them some instructions. He left His church with this challenge to be His witnesses, saying, **"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy**

Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

**These are the last words of Jesus Christ** before He ascended into Heaven. Here our Lord reveals the great responsibility every believer possesses. If we are to be pleasing to the Lord and effective in service, we must give great attention to His last words. These last words are known as **the Great Commission**, and they give the main reason the church exists. It is significant that all four Gospels and the Book of Acts record Jesus' commission to the Church.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mark 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Luke 24:46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

John 20:21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Our Lord Jesus Christ's great commission to us is clear—we are to evangelize the sinners. As we consider this subject, I want to highlight three things about the Great Commission.

### **I - The Promise**

As we carry out the Great Commission, we need to remember the Lord's promise to His disciples and to us.

Acts 1:4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that **they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father**, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

You may remember, before Jesus Christ went to the cross, He promised His disciples that He will not leave them comfortless or orphans. He promised them that He will send the Holy Spirit as their Comforter—the *Paraclete* walking alongside them. Here we see our Lord repeating and confirming that promise in [verses 5-8](#).

Acts 1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. 6: When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7: And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8: But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

This is why the Holy Spirit is called **the Holy Spirit of promise**.

Ephesians 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with **that holy Spirit of promise**, The Spirit is called the Spirit of promise because He is the Spirit that was promised. He is the Spirit whom the Father and Jesus Christ had promised, and who was sent by them. He is the Spirit promised both in the Old and New Testaments.

Ezekiel 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27: **And I will put my spirit within you**, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

John 7:38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39: (**But this spake he of the Spirit**, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

The great promise of the Father was that He would send His Spirit into the hearts of men. This promise is worth waiting for as we shall see in the next heading.

## **II - The Power**

**The fulfillment of the promise brings power with it.**

Acts 1:8 **But ye shall receive power**, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

This world is filled with people who are fascinated and obsessed with power. They are so obsessed with power that they will have it at any cost, even if it means controlling, exploiting, and manipulating people. There are people who will live and die for **monetary power**, for **political power**, and for **military power**. While many devote their lives to achieving this goal, **these types of power can never satisfy the person**. The world's power is **temporary**, leaving a **person always wanting for more**.

However, our Lord has promised power to every believer through the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. The word “**power**” in Acts 1:8 is the Greek word *dynamis*, from which we get the

word **dynamite**. Our Lord told His disciples that before they would be able to witness and evangelize the world, they must receive the *dynamis* of the Holy Spirit.

This power is not a power that exalts one person above others. It does not control or exploit or manipulate others. No! **This power is not to exalt us, but to transform us and enable us.** This power is available to us believers so that we could live a godly life and **become effective and powerful witness for Christ.** The power of the Holy Spirit is the only power that is sufficient to win our spiritual battles and to enable and empower to be faithful witnesses for Christ.

You and I may not be the eloquent speakers (2 Cor 10:10; 11:6), or we may not have all the answers to all the questions and arguments of our unbelieving friends have. But, because of the Holy Spirit we can be confident as we testify of who Christ is and what He has done. And we can believe that “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).

### III - The Plan

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

After giving the disciple the **promise** of the Holy Spirit and spiritual **power**, our Lord then proceeded to give His disciples the **plan** in carrying out the Great Commission.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses ...

Upon receiving the promise of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were to become witnesses. As believers and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are called to serve as “witnesses” to our faith. **But what is a Witness?** What comes to your mind when you hear the word “witness?” Most people probably think of someone in a courtroom. **A witness is someone who has seen and can attest or testify to something.** A witness is someone who has seen something take place and who can tell of all that they saw, heard, and experienced.

Likewise, as Christians, we are called to be witnesses for Christ who present a testimony about the truth that we have experienced and heard. As believers and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are called to serve as “witnesses”. **Our role as witnesses is simply to share all that we have seen, heard, and experienced.** To be a witness to Christ is to demonstrate by our words, actions, and attitude what we have “seen” and heard and believe in our hearts about the Lord Jesus Christ Who has saved us from our sins and given us new life—eternal life. As believers in Christ, we are all called to witness and share about God’s goodness and greatness.

But then, to whom are we to witness? Our text says, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

God plan to use His people to be His witnesses “in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” The early Christians started in Jerusalem, then spread the Gospel to Judaea and Samaria, and then began to move out to the ends of the earth. They brought the gospel message not only to Jerusalem, Judaea, and Samaria, but also to other nations around them. As a result of their witness, the gospel reached Middle East, Asia, Africa, America, Australia, and Europe. This is a wise plan—we begin with **our family, close friends, and neighbors**. But the call is not only to witness to our immediate sphere of influence, but also into the world; all the nations around us.

Isn't that our Lord's last instruction to His disciple before He returned to His Father?

**Mark 16:15** And he said unto them, **Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.**

We are to be witnesses to all the world, that is to all seven continents. We are to make disciples **not only here in Murrieta, but everywhere, wherever people are**. We must go to all nations because God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. You may be thinking, this is impossible! **How could those 11 men disciple all nations? How can we at Grace & Truth make disciples of all men?**

**This is where the missionaries come in.** Not all of us are called to go to foreign lands but we can support those who are called to go and willing to go. This is why we have “**Missions Emphasis**” month. This is why we are exhorted to get involve in faith promise. This is why we have **faith promise giving on top of our tithes and offerings**. Because we are to obey this Great Commission of making disciples of all the world and of every creature.

We have the only hope for sinners, the only message of saving grace. And we must not keep it to ourselves. We must take this message beginning here in Murrieta into all the world and to every creature!

### **Closing Exhortations**

Just like any other organization, the church can sometimes lose its focus. All of us can at times miss seeing the forest for all the trees. In the midst of many activities, we can miss the overarching purpose. We can get so busy in our own little area, serving faithfully in our ministry and yet fail to see the bigger picture of what we are working toward together as a local church.

Our Lord Jesus has given us believers our marching orders when He said, “**Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.**” The question is, what are we doing to reach the lost around the world with the Gospel? That's what this “Missions Emphasis” month is all about. Maybe you are not called to go to foreign field, but **every person in this room can pray** and you **can give** and send others to go to the mission field to reach the lost around the world with the Gospel.

To those who are still lost, the command to you is not, be a witness for Christ. At least not yet. If you are still lost, the command to you is not, **Go!**, but “**Come!**”

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17: For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18: He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.

**AMEN!**