

Open your Bibles. Title of the message, “Don't Go Without The Holy Spirit.” We're going to Acts Chapter 1.

Last week we looked closely at the Great Commission (the last words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew.) And you might have thought we were finished in our “One Year With Jesus” series at that point.

But... that was only our 51<sup>st</sup> message. There is one more very critical message to end our series. It's this one – “Don't Go Without The Holy Spirit.”

After three and a half years of living with and teaching his original disciples, today Jesus tells his disciples – don't go anywhere UNTIL you are BAPTIZED (immersed) IN the Holy Spirit.

And Jesus tells *us* the same thing. *Do not go anywhere* – do not move – do not do anything for Jesus Christ until you have been immersed in, until you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Then, and only then, can you be assured that the genuine life and power of Jesus Christ is working IN you and THROUGH you.

Let's pray. *Heavenly Father, please, make this real to us Lord. The enemy has so successfully either scared us of your Holy Spirit or caused us to be over-responsive, over-active in your Holy Spirit. The extremes are so prevalent that the enemy wins at both extremes. Help us, Lord. Help us to break through and see that without you – Holy Spirit – without being immersed in who you are, and in you as the power of God living in us, without that Lord we are useless to you. And we can't even truly follow you. Show us how true that is today, please, for your sake, for your glory, and in your name, Jesus, amen.*

We're going to Acts Chapter 1. Acts is the historical continuation of the Gospels and the historical record of the birth of the Church. And the beginning of Acts 1 is actually like a “Part 2” of our message last week on the Great Commission.

Last week – Jesus *commissioned* us to go

This week – Jesus *empowers* us to go.

Luke (who wrote the Gospel of Luke) also wrote Acts and he wrote them both to a (probable) high official in the Roman government named Theophilus.

And so Acts opens up in Acts 1:1-2,

**Acts 1:1-2 (NLT)**

***1 In my first book I told you, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began to do and teach***

***2 until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions (Commands) through the Holy Spirit.***

Those “further instructions” are clearly a reference to the Great Commission (that we saw last week.)

Continuing in Acts 1:3-5,

**Acts 1:3-5 (NLT)**

***3 During the forty days after [Jesus] suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God.***

***4 Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, “Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before.”***

***5 John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”***

There it is (verse 4) Jesus says do not go anywhere *until this happens*. Just wait. Don’t go anywhere. Don’t do anything *until* you are baptized (immersed) in the *Holy Spirit*.

And the reason Jesus tells the disciples to not go until they are baptized in the Holy Spirit is because they cannot “go it alone.” They *cannot follow* Jesus on their own. They *cannot be used* by Jesus on their own. Because we don’t have (in our own nature) what it takes to either follow Jesus or be used by Jesus without us being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

God’s Word is clearly saying *to us*... Before you attempt to do anything for Jesus Christ you *must wait* until you are operating in the Holy Spirit. (We must get this.) God is saying to us, “Listen, if you are not operating in the Holy Spirit it’s best if you would just sit down and be quiet. And just wait until you are operating in the Holy Spirit and then you’ll be able to actually do some good.”

In Acts 1:5 the Greek word for “Baptized” = **BAPTIZO**. It means to “be immersed in order to bring on a permanent change.”

And that is what was coming for the Apostles and the disciples in just a few days. They were going to be immersed in the Holy Spirit and they were going to be *permanently changed*.

And guys, that is what we need today.

We must be immersed in – baptized in – the Person and the Power of the Holy Spirit, in order for us to be permanently changed so that we can both follow Jesus and serve Jesus in the power of the Spirit and not in our own flesh.

In Acts 1 and 2, Jesus is preparing the disciples for their role in the eternal work of his Kingdom. And Jesus is preparing us for the same thing and for the same purpose. Unfortunately, the Apostles (like us) were still thinking more in the immediate time frame.

When Jesus died on the cross they were crushed. Partly because they thought Jesus was going to set up an earthly political kingdom, at that time. And so now that Jesus is back, the Apostles are thinking: ***HEY, Maybe we got another shot here, Maybe Jesus is going to take things over from Rome – NOW!***

You can see their mindset in Acts 1:6.

**Acts 1:6 (NLT)**

***6 So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?”***

So... maybe the Apostles still hadn't quite grasped the big picture (like us.) But the Holy Spirit hadn't come yet! And so there's still hope for them (just like there is for us.)

So, instead of rebuking them for their short-sighted question Jesus responds with something much more important for them (and for us) to learn.

**Acts 1:7 (NLT)**

***7 He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know.”***

Guys, we cannot know the details of the plan of God. Those things only God knows, and we can trust God with those details. But... if the details of God's great plan are not for us to know, then what is for us to know?

What *is* for us to know is *our role* in God's great plan and our “over-riding” and “all-encompassing” role in God's great plan is laid out in two very simple scriptures – the one we looked at last week and the one we are looking at today.

Last week in Matthew 28:18-20 we saw The Great Commission. Today, in Acts 1:8, we see the Great Power to fulfill the Great Commission. These two scriptures go perfectly together. Acts 1:8 – is the Great Power – that we must have in order to fulfill – The Great Commission.

Acts 1:8 is the key verse for the entire Book of Acts.

Acts 1:8 is the key verse for us to understand our role in God's plan.

Acts 1:8 is the key verse for us to receive the POWER needed to fulfill our role.

So here it is. Acts 1:8.

**Acts 1:8 (NLT)**

***8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere - in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”***

This is our role – which is directly connected with the Great Commission and *this is the POWER* for us to accomplish our role.

- 1 ) We receive the power of the Holy Spirit
- 2 ) To go be his WITNESSES
- 3 ) And to be making disciples.

That is our role:

**Receive power**

**Be witnesses**

**Making disciples**

Sounds easy enough, right?

So, let’s break down receiving the power. In Acts 1:8 Jesus says you will receive POWER when the Holy Spirit comes UPON YOU.

The Greek word for “power” = **DYNAMIS** (Dunimis) from which we get our word “dynamite.”

When you are baptized in the Holy Spirit (when the Holy Spirit comes upon you) you receive supernatural, divine, power in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

And that power (in the Person of the Holy Spirit) is what enables you to be a witness, a testimony and a reflection of Jesus Christ.

But, here’s a truth we need to know right up front (and prayerfully never forget.) This power is not a hand-off power. This is not the Holy Spirit saying, “I have this power, like a stick of dynamite, and I’m gonna hand it off to you so that now *you* can have this power.”

That is not how it works.

This Greek word **DYNAMIS** (POWER) is defined like this: ***Power or ability residing in a person or thing***

But listen carefully; the person that this power is residing in is not actually *YOU*. This power resides *only* in the PERSON of the Holy Spirit and then the Holy Spirit resides *in you*.

We've got to always remember, the Holy Spirit does not give us our own power. The Person of the Holy Spirit *EXISTS AS* (he IS) the supernatural power of God *who is residing in us*.

What's the point? The point is – it is only as you are *submitting to* the Holy Spirit's ruling and leading in your life that you will have his power actively working in your life. It is only as you are being *constantly filled* with the Holy Spirit (as Ephesians 5:18 says) that you will continually have the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit *working in your life*.

This supernatural power of the Holy Spirit is only active in our lives as we are continually “immersed in” – “baptized in” – “being filled with” – the Holy Spirit. And when we are in that place, the Holy Spirit becomes the dynamite power of God, *living inside* us and *enabling us* to bring glory to God by being his witnesses *and* by making disciples.

And so, (therefore) – just like salvation – being baptized in the Holy Spirit is not just a one-time event that we somehow participate in then we just go on living our lives under our own power. Being baptized (immersed) in the Holy Spirit is an ongoing “life commitment” just like following Jesus is.

It is so important that we understand the Bible presents an ongoing, growing relationship with the Holy Spirit just like the Bible presents an ongoing, growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

Now, I had a large section prepared here about the critical importance of a growing relationship with the Holy Spirit, but then I pulled it out and decided we'd do a follow up message to this message next week to specifically and in detail focus on our need for an ongoing growing relationship with the Holy Spirit. But – it can't be part of our “One Year With Jesus” series because we're at our 52 weeks. So, for people listening later, search Word By Mail for a message called “Growing In The Holy Spirit” and that will be the follow-up message to this message.

BUT... I can't leave you guys hanging today without addressing this critical truth. So grab something to write with and I'll give you a scripture overview of our growing relationship with the Holy Spirit.

1 ) In John 14:17 – Jesus tells the disciples the Holy Spirit is with them and will be in them.

2 ) In John 20:22 (after the Resurrection) the disciples “receive” the Holy Spirit (He is now in them.)

3 ) Here in Acts 1:8 Jesus tells us – You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

So that is the Holy Spirit *with you* – then *in you* – then *upon you*.

4 ) Then Galatians 5:16 &25 tell us to order our steps by the Holy Spirit and follow the Holy Spirit's leading.

5 ) And then Ephesians 5:18 tells us to CONTINUALLY BE "being filled" with the Holy Spirit.

Next week we'll dive into the growing relationship that those scriptures address. But today I can only try to make this one thing clear.

God's Word calls us to an ongoing, growing relationship with the Holy Spirit and in that growing relationship with the Holy Spirit IS the supernatural power that you and I must have in order to fulfill our roles in God's great plan.

So now (finally) we go back to Acts 1:8 and look at what it means to be a witness.

It's in Acts 1:8(b).

**Acts 1:8(B) (NLT)**

8 (you will receive Power when the Holy Spirit comes Upon you)

*. . . **And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.***

*YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES!*

Our role in God's great plan is to *be witnesses* for Jesus Christ and to *make disciples*.

The Greek word for "witness" is **MARTYS** from which we get our word "martyr."

(Definition) – WITNESS – *One who affirms or declares what they have seen, heard or know to be true.*

*That* is being a witness.

We are called – *to affirm or declare what we have seen, heard and know to be true – about Jesus Christ.*

But then, the definition continues.

(Definition) – WITNESS: *Someone who bears testimony for another person – even to their own death.*

To be a witness also means: ***"Bearing Testimony for Jesus Christ to the Unsaved World even if it means . . . DYING . . . to SELF."***

For most of us the death required for us to be a true witness (a MARTYS) is death to self, and I believe that is a harder death to die than being a physical martyr.

And notice the *process* in Acts 1:8 starts “close to home” then expands out. Our “being a witness” for Jesus Christ starts in *our Jerusalem* (your closest relationships.) This is your spouse, your kids, your family.

Far too many people are a testimony for the devil at home and then pretend to be a testimony for Jesus in public. Don’t do that – because Jesus sees you just as well at home as he does in public.

And honestly – your “Jerusalem witness” (at home witness) is the most important witness for Christ – of all. Then, after your “inner circle” (your Jerusalem) next your witness goes to Judea and Samaria these are your neighbors, both the ones you like and the ones you don’t like.

The Jews liked those who lived in Judea but they did not like those who lived in Samaria. Maybe you have neighbors like that, one you like and one – not so much.

Jesus says

AFTER you become a WITNESS in your own *home*

THEN become a WITNESS to the *neighbor you like*

THEN become a WITNESS to the *neighbor you don’t like*

And then finally you can be a WITNESS to the *ends of the earth* – which means wherever Jesus sends you.

And as you go, and as you are being a witness please remember this famous line: “*Your actions speak so loudly that I can’t hear a word that you’re saying.*”

There is much to learn and much to grow in for us to be continually immersed in the Holy Spirit and for us to be an effective witness for Jesus Christ.

But today, would you make a commitment to set yourself to this task? Would you make a commitment to learn what it means to be immersed in the Holy Spirit and to grow in that experience? And would you make a commitment to be filled with the DUNAMIS power of the Holy Spirit so that you can be a witness for Jesus Christ –

First in your home

Then in your neighborhood and work

Then wherever God would send you.

Let’s pray. *Lord, Jesus, today we pray you would inspire us. Lord, that you would remind us, that you would teach us, that you would renew in us this life or death – spiritually – need to be immersed in the Person and the Power of the Holy Spirit. To surrender to your power in the Holy Spirit. To allow you, Holy Spirit to rule and reign, to lead and guide, to direct our lives, to set our steps. Would you please give us the faith and the conviction to die to ourselves today? To lay down our attempts to follow you in our own flesh? To stop trying so hard and instead start surrendering to your supernatural power? To desire*

*more than anything else to be filled to overflowing with your presence in our lives? That we would hear you when you speak? That we would follow you when you lead? That we would respond when you convict? That we would have an ongoing growing relationship with you, Lord. You won't relent, Lord. And so Lord, if we are yours today, we will surrender. We'll willingly crucify self and pray that you would fill us with your power. That you would baptize us in your Spirit. That you would transform us, Lord, that we would be a witness, a testimony, a reflection of who you are. We surrender to you today, Lord. Transform us into your very image, by the power of your Spirit and in your mighty name, Jesus, amen.*