

Acts 1:8  
Witnesses

**Summit Search Update**

Good morning... I'm Brian Agovino, I'm one of the pastors at the Summit. If you are new, we are excited you are here. In May we announced that our founding pastor John Ryan, who has been with the Summit for 20 years, is transitioning to be a pastor at Mathias' Lot to be a leadership development pastor. It has been an amazing season of watching God lead, guide and speak.

I wanted to bring you up to date on just a couple of things before we dive into our passage this morning.

On John...

-tonight, we are having a celebration for adults where we are going to remember, rejoice and roast John and Fran. We will have dinner in here, and it will be from 6-8. If you haven't already registered you can this morning at the welcome center as we will be setting up after 2<sup>nd</sup> service. Don't forget to bring a side for the pig roast.

-Also, we have a love offering that we are taking for John and Fran. We want to send them on a trip and so we are inviting everyone to show their appreciation for what God has done through over the years in this way. If you would like to give towards that you can just drop it in the offering.

-And thirdly, in regard to John, his last Sunday will be Aug. 5<sup>th</sup>, and we will be packing everyone in for one big service at 11am. So, mark your calendars.

On the transition...

The current step that we are in the middle of is finding an interim preaching pastor. We had several conversations as a staff and elders and will be finalizing the job description this week. I've talked with several people who have an interest in serving the Summit this way, which is exciting. We are still praying and believing that we will have an interim in place by October, and see that happening. Then our next step will be to start the search in January for the replacement.

So... there's a quick update... I'm excited to continue our series on the values this morning. So, let's pray...

## **I. Intro**

### **What is the greatest thing you have witnessed?**

Right now, we live in a world of extremes. Everything is either the greatest or the worst...

I find people using this expressing in every area of conversation.

It starts in sports... Muhammad Ali declared it. Currently we debate is it Lebron or Jordan?

People outside of St. Louis wonder, is Brady the greatest QB ever?

We declare it in our entertainment... PT Barnum was the greatest showman.

We declare it in our food... the world's best cup of coffee.

On the internet there are many websites where people can debate and declare their top 10 Greatest of all time: Books, Games, Presidents, Countries, Comedians, Jobs,

We as a culture are on a desperate search to witness something great!

We are in the middle of a series on the values of the Summit. There are five things we value:

### **Making Disciples, Declaring the Word, Life Together, Caring for the Vulnerable, and Sending Church Planter & Missionaries.**

Today I want to engage on the topic of Sending.

Our world is in desperate need of witnessing something great.

I believe that you and I have witnessed something great, and the world desperately needs to witness it as well.

Jesus, in His very last words on earth, made a profound declaration about His followers. He calls them witnesses. And this morning we are going to process three thoughts in regard to what He says.

We'll discover, that as a follower of Jesus:

You will be a Witness.

You will be an Empowered Witness.

You will be an Empowered Witness Everywhere.

## **II. You Will Be A Witness**

The disciples have been with Jesus for over three years. They had seen miracles, heard sermons that would blow your mind, and saw Jesus rise from the dead. And Jesus is now going to depart...

### **Acts 1:6-7**

And Jesus, still with so much grace and understanding for these guys... He looks at them and says

#### **Acts 1:8**

And then in an ultimate mic drop moment, with all the theatrics that Hollywood could muster, Luke says.

#### **Acts 1:9**

And you could imagine, the disciples were awes struck. They were just standing there watching, wondering...

And two men appear and awaken them and say...

#### **Acts 1:10-11**

Have you ever wondered why Jesus didn't stay?

I had a friend several years ago, that really struggled with this. He would always debate with me and say if I could just see Jesus, that would change everything. I wish that He didn't leave.

Have you ever considered this? Did Jesus really need to ascend? Why not just stay?

In some ways the disciples were confused themselves. They thought they were losing Jesus.

That this was the end. But the reality of it was, it was exactly the opposite. You see...

**The ascension is not the absence of Christ in this world, it's the increased and heightened presence of Christ.**

Jesus ascends and now sits on His throne in heaven so that everything He promised, everything He declared about life could become a reality. And that reality now becomes available to everyone. Jesus' plan of action was not to be the one to tell everyone about what He had done, but to send into the world those who had been transformed by what He had done.

It's an amazing marketing plan really. There are countless studies out there that say the best way to grow your business is through personal testimony. I read several articles this week talking about it. I mean when you go on amazon and buy something that's important, what do you go look at? The reviews!

Now, listen... I'm not trying to limit the ascension and the gospel story to a marketing strategy... But what is going to be the most impactful way for people to experience the life-changing freedom that Jesus wants to bring? It's going to come through the witness of those who have experienced it! Jesus unleashes His followers to be His witnesses in the world. His presence explodes into the world because anyone who has encountered Him can speak of His greatness.

I love what Jesus says here. He says... YOU WILL BE... It's not I need you to be, or go and try and be... it's when you experience my sacrificial love, when you experience perfect acceptance, when you experience adoption into a heavenly family with a perfect Father, when you experience the security that nothing can break your relationship with God, when you experience the inheritance that is beyond any amount of gold what will happen...

YOU WILL BE JESUS' WITNESSES. You will tell of His greatness. There won't be a debate. There is no place where you can find such blessings. Nowhere...

Friends, have you experienced the greatness of Jesus? Has your heart come to grips with who He is? There is nothing you need to do to preform, there is nothing you need to clean up, can I declare to you that Jesus invited me to experience Him when I was 15 into His presence: a nerdy, simple, unathletic, broken, sinful, mess... and still today I will declare He is the greatest one I have ever witnessed. There is none that compares. And He has sent me and sends you if you have experienced Him to tell others about Him. You are a witness.

Now, I know what you are thinking... Brian, I'm not really that good of a witness. I mean how can I be a witness for Christ... Well Jesus addresses that...

### **III. You will be an Empowered Witness**

Look at **Acts 1:8** again...

Jesus knows that we are going to need power to be witnesses. We are going to need strength to declare all that Jesus has done, and so part of the reason He ascends is so that He can release the Holy Spirit into our lives.

This is very significant. You see many Christians think that when they confess their sins and their need for Jesus, He forgives them but now they have to work really hard to be a good Christian.

That is one of the most dangerous lies that Christians can give in to. You see the only person who ever lived the Christian life was Jesus, and so Jesus doesn't say... ok... good luck, go get 'em. No!! He sends Himself, in the Holy Spirit to come live in us.

Now I want to help clarify for us what Jesus means by that word power. It doesn't mean that you are going to be able to lift cars, and people will be like, oh, I should follow Jesus!!

I think there are two ways the Spirit gives us power. There is internal power and external power.

## **Internal Power**

The Spirit wants to transform you into the likeness of Christ. He wants to take all the effects and impacts sin has had on your life and heal them. And how does He do that? By taking everything that Christ has done – the acceptance, the forgiveness, the adoption, the security and weaving that into your soul.

And friends, this is the primary aspect of what our witness is. If we aren't empowered to be different people than we have nothing to offer the world. If the love of Christ, the grace of Christ, the adoption of Christ, the majesty of Christ isn't transforming us then the world is going to look somewhere else for greatness.

## **External Power**

This idea of being a witness means that you are going to have to use words. When you witness a car accident you don't play charades with the police to describe what happened. No, you tell the story.

If Jesus is changing you and giving you the power to become a different person... a more patient person, a more loving person, a more gracious person, a more forgiving person, then people are going to ask... they are going to wonder what's up... and Jesus is saying, the Spirit will be in you and give you the power to speak of what you are witnessing Christ doing in your life.

Which brings me to a very important part of this message.

### **You will never be a witness for Christ unless you are witnessing Christ.**

Jesus left this world to unleash His power. And that means for you Christian, it is an ongoing thing. Our witness of Christ is not just that He saved me once, it's that He is saving me every day. I'm witnessing His power and beauty and majesty everyday...

And so can I ask you? Are YOU? Are you witnessing Jesus?

Friends, some of us in this room are not. We've become complacent and forgotten how great Jesus is. A friend of mine this week said: when Christians have the fruit of the spirit in their lives, they will stick out like a sore thumb in our culture.

Now there is no condemnation... there is no get better message... the invitation is to come back into His presence. Take time to engage with Him. Maybe this week you just need to read His word, or spend some time in prayer... We need to be witnessing Christ every day, not just for a few moments on Sunday morning.

So, if Jesus has transformed us so that we can be witnesses of His greatness, and He has given us the power to be witnesses, where should we do it?

## **IV. You will be an Empowered Witness Everywhere**

### **Acts 1:8**

In the book of Acts, which is the account of the first church, the disciples took Jesus' declaration literally and the book is an accounting of how the gospel spread through Jerusalem, then to Judea and Samaria and then to the ends of the earth.

Have you ever considered that when Jesus explained this to the disciples, we were the ends of the earth? O'Fallon Missouri is a fulfillment of the witnesses of Jesus.

Actually, in the book of Acts, literally everyone in the early church, EVERYONE, tells people they encounter the good news about what Jesus did for them.

Michael Green, author of Evangelism and the Early Church wrote out the explosive growth of the early church saying:

The explosive growth of the church was accomplished by informal missionaries. That is, Christian laypeople – not trained preachers and evangelists – carried on the mission of the church not through formal preaching but informal conversation in homes and wine shops, on walks, and around market stalls. They did it naturally and enthusiastically. -Michael Green

Look... if you witnessed Lebron James and think He is the greatest... everywhere you go, you are going to talk about it.

If you are witnessing you Jesus... everywhere you go, you will talk about Him. That means in your home, in your workplace, in your neighborhoods... everywhere. **You will be an empowered witness everywhere.**

Witnesses don't have slick methods, they have transformative experiences...

Do you?!

#### **IV. Conclusion**

##### **What is the greatest thing you have witnessed?**

My friends... my hope is that you will discover Jesus is the answer to that question.

You will never be a witness for Christ unless you are witnessing Christ.

Let's witness Jesus this week... so, we will be witnesses for Jesus this week.

I want to invite you into a moment of reflection... so, let's pray...

We've asking God to move in us and through us during this series...

So, would you take a moment and ask God to move in you? Ask God through the power of the spirit to bring the fruit of the spirit love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and gentleness. Ask God to remind you what Jesus has done.

Now, let's pray for God to move through us... would you pray about being a witness? Would you ask God to send you?

#### **Communion**