

Acts 1-2

Expanding our Gospel Impact

Image Church // Abide and Abound Week 4

Introduction

Caleb and Brittney are on stage with me...

We've been a series based out of **John 15:4-5** called **Abide and Abound**

I told you that we have **two primary goals** that we're going to be orienting around...

1. Abide: We want to abide in the riches of the gospel in order to take us deeper in our knowledge and love of God.

2. Abound: We want to abound in the gospel by bearing fruit that expands our impact locally, nationally, and internationally.

Brittany and Caleb are a tangible expression of what it means to embody these two goals as a family...

As they have abided in the riches of the gospel God's pricked their hearts for those who've not heard the gospel...

They put their yes on the table and let God put it on the map- and the place where God is calling them is **Eastern Europe...**

- To work with an unreached people group that doesn't have gospel access...
- They will be there with one other family with the goal of planting a church to reach this city!

And what you need to understand is that their city is our city!

When we look at the NT what we see is a model for sending and supporting missionaries...

The Cobbs are part of our family and so together we send them, we support them, and we care for them...

This is **financially** and **physically**... They have to raise the funds to be part of this mission- we are going to be stakeholders in that... That is our call...

I've told you that **The Abide and Abound initiative** is what will help give us the *financial means* to fuel our missional efforts...

That every dollar that you give toward this **Abide and Abound initiative** will go toward, and enhance, our missional efforts locally, nationally, and internationally...

Those efforts have faces, the Cobbs are where we're going to invest internationally!

And so, as you continue to pray about what you're going to give toward our **Abide and Abound Initiative** I want you to consider the Cobbs and how your giving fuels their missional efforts to uproot their lives to take the gospel to a people who have not heard...

And on **November 7th** we're going to have a **Commitment Weekend** where we'll come together and commit our **above and beyond gifts** toward this **Abide and Abound Initiative!**

- And then you'll have the opportunity to give toward your above and beyond gift over the months of **November and December...**

Alright well, we want to take a minute and pray for the Cobbs as they embark on this mission together as a family and all that goes with it as they prepare to move overseas...

PRAY...

Alright, well we've been in this **Abide and Abound Series** what I hope is becoming more and more clear is that the Christian life is characterized by **the gospel working in us and then through us...**

We started off with **our own hearts**, and how **abiding** in Jesus has to be the foundation that gives way to **abounding...**

And then my goal's been to help you see how this should be playing out in our lives through some very specific things that the bible calls us to in order to help cultivate a healthy foundation that we're going to build on together as a church over the next year...

This morning we're going to continue on that journey as we look at how we want our abiding in Jesus to lead us to abound beyond our local context...

I want to show you **why, how** and **what** that looks like practically for us as a church...

I know for many they don't know what to do with the idea of missions beyond their context...

Example: Yesterday my daughter had a milestone moment in her life...

For many of us this is how we view missions that goes beyond where we live- it's like a millstone that only a few people view as such and at best it's for the elite- when the reality is that it should way more part of our lives...

So, here's how I want to set up, where we're going to start in **Matthew 28:18-20...** If you have your bibles go ahead and turn there... Then we're going to move from there to the establishment of the church and see the connection and the look at our call... Let's look at Matthew 28:18-20... This is know as the great commission that Jesus gives right before he leaves...

Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. **19** Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Notice the call...

- Go, therefore, and make disciples of **all nations...**
- baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you.

Jesus closes with this: **And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**

Ok, now flip over to **Acts 1** and let's see how all of this fits together and what this means for us...

Luke, who wrote the **Gospel of Luke**—is also the author of **Acts**, and what he does here at the very beginning is circle back around to the end of Jesus time on here on earth...

He covered this in **Luke 24**- but he's circling back around to it in order to lay out some very important details that happen just before Jesus heads back to Heaven, and it's important because it sets everything up for the establishment of the church!

Let's pick up in verse 4:

Verse 4: While he [Jesus] was with them, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise. "Which," he said, "you have heard me speak about; **5** for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days."

John baptized to prepare the way for Jesus... The people he dunked recognized their sin and the need for a **Savior**... But now after the

resurrection of Jesus, the Disciples are about to be given the Holy Spirit...

Verse 8: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." After he had said this, he was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

Jesus last words here and they are powerful...

- *Not about your best life or warm bubbies...*
- *Jesus is better than all of that and He offers something incredible, so His last words are go tell people about that...*

Now, it's important that you see how all of this fits together: Before Jesus is about to go back to heaven, and he tells his disciples in **verse 4** to not to leave Jerusalem but to **wait for the promise of the father.**

What is the promise of the Father? Jesus says in **John 14: 25-26** it is the **Holy Spirit**... Jesus also makes that connection here in **verse 8**...

But here's the thing... Jesus says in **John 16:7** that the He has to leave in order for the **Spirit to come**...

So, watch this, Jesus' departure from earth is what enables the access and indwelling of the **Holy Spirit**...

What's about to happen here is such a powerful moment in time because up until this point the unlimited indwelling presence and power of God wasn't possible or accessible because of sin...

In fact, everything in the OT was set up to show the reality of this divide between God and man, but what Jesus is talking about here is God being able to dwell with man again because of what He accomplished...

See you have to see the beauty of this, Jesus came and lived life in our place, died in our place rose from the dead, and we're at the last part here where He would ascend into heaven to sit at the right had of the

Father as our great high priest, our mediator the one who delt with our sin and our separation sits down and says it is finished!!

And the proof that **it is finished**, is coming of the **Holy Spirit** – that unites and restores God and man as a result of the finished work of Jesus!

Which listen, means this: access to the Spirit means that there's now access to the presence and power of God!!!

How incredible is that!!

And it's the presence and power of the Holy Spirit that will enable the mission that Jesus has given here in **verse 8!**

*Ok let's pick back up in **verse 12** and see how this plays out... So Jesus ascends back to heaven- I can only imagine the celebration that's happening there...*

Meanwhile the disciples ~~Then they~~ returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem—a Sabbath day's journey away. ... **Verse 14 and** They all were continually united in prayer, along with the women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

I want you to notice how they responded to everything Jesus had said... Their very first activity together after Jesus ascends into heaven is that they were in continual prayer together...

What we see here is a deep dependance on God from these disciples... They had just gotten this crazy mission from Jesus, who said oh by the way hang tight on that, they didn't know for how long...

They were probably scared and overwhelmed- You have to understand, their livelihoods their reputations and even they're very lives were at stake- and what do they do, they anchor their dependance on God by praying...

Prayer has to be our first response and not our last resort...

Prayer helps us assume the posture of dependence- it helps us abide; it is where we be with God before we do for God... Because it's our being with Him that gives way to our doing...

Let me show you the first thing I want you to see this morning...

Abiding through prayer is foundational to abounding to the ends of the earth

We've talked about this before, but prayer is an act of abiding...

Remember **prayer at its core is something that displays and orients our dependence on God**... [put under point above]

This is where we have to start... When it comes to processing the mission we've been given... It's a big one...

What's your role in it?? Pray and watch what God does. You're going to see that He's going to bring clarity for them, He will bring it for you to...

And not only do we start here, **but we continue here** as it relates to the advancement of the gospel to the ends of the earth...

I don't think that these details are here *just because*, I think these details are intentional because it sets up an important reality...

In the book of Acts there are about 30 references to prayer which is more than any other book in the NT... And what you will find is that almost every major move of God **is preceded by prayer**...¹

We'll talk about this more practically in a little bit but prayer is foundational- it's imperative for the advancement of the gospel to the ends of the earth...

Let's keep reading, pick up in **Chapter 2:**

¹ Tim Barnett, *What we need to learn about prayer from the early church*.

1 When the day of Pentecost had arrived, they were all together in one place. **2** Suddenly a sound like that of a violent rushing wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were staying. **3** They saw tongues like flames of fire that separated and rested on each one of them. The distribution of tongues is described like a spreading fire as evidence of the presence of God coming to dwell in His people that's now possible because of Jesus had accomplished...

Verse 4: Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them. **5** Now there were Jews staying in Jerusalem, devout people from every nation under heaven. These were **Jews or Jewish converts** that were in Jerusalem -- some probably lived there, and others were in town for the celebration of **Pentecost** which is *a Jewish festival*... These Jews from out of town were from all over...

Verse 6: **When this sound occurred,** [a bunch of people speaking in different languages 120 to be exact- Acts 1:15] **a crowd came together and was confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language.** **7** They were astounded and amazed, saying, "Look, aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? **8** How is it that each of us can hear them in our own native language? **Verse 11:** **—we hear them declaring the magnificent acts of God in our own tongues."**

These **tongues** allow the disciples to speak about the **work of God in the languages of their audience**... Again, remember these Jews were from all over they would have been born in different places that spoke different languages- and now they're hearing the language from the places where they were born...

This is an incredible miracle that God does through the disciples to get the attention of the Jews so that they would see and hear about the work of God in a very intentional way...

And what I love about this is right off the jump we're seeing God's divine initiative² to push forward His mission through his power... Don't miss that! It's the power of God that enables the first step forward in the mission that he's given...

² Bock, D. L. (2007). *Acts* (p. 102). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

And then **Peter** preaches his first sermon ever where he lays out the complete gospel, and **verse 41** tells us 3000 people get saved... This is incredible!!

What we see in all of this is a blueprint for God's plan and evidence of God's power...

And we get here, a foreshadow of what God's going to continue to do beyond here in Jerusalem how he will advance the gospel to all nations through Spirit-filled believers that make up the church...

Don't miss this, the start of the church was formed around... It was formed around a weekend event- it was formed around the person and work of Jesus and the mission to make Him known to the ends of the earth...

Here's what we have to understand...

God's plan is to use Spirit-filled people through the vehicle of the local church to advance the message of the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Image Kids: Saved people save people

I want you to see this imagery: The says the Spirit came on them like a rushing wind- literally like a hurricane force wind.

- **Ever been in a beach windstorm... running after a beach ball**
- *Blows everything all over the place...*

In the same way hurricane winds propel things everywhere, the followers of Jesus are to be propelled out to advance the message and ministry of the gospel!

And notice the intentional progression Jesus gave... **Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth...**

- Local, state, nation, world...
- *I don't believe in international- to much work here... BULL*
 - *It's not an either or...*

- *3.2 Billion unreached people- little to no gospel presence or access...*

Listen, this is the call of the church, this is our call!

- This is why we talk about local
- It's why we partner with church plants
- It's why we want to plant churches
- It's why we want to see people raised up to go overseas like the Cobbs...

We believe that God's call and God's plan are clear...

***It's also very logical:** Gospel, Spirit, new life, new mission...

See, instead of Jesus staying and bearing witness about Himself, He leaves, so that the Spirit can come and empower His followers to be witnesses for His message and ministry to the ends of the earth!

But we have to really take this call to heart...

Romans 10:14-17

14 How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? **15** And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: **How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.** **16** But not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, **Lord, who has believed our message?** **17** So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ. **It's easy for us to miss this, because we live in a culture where the church is like and Uber...** Where we only get in when we need a quick *spiritual lift*... When in reality it's more like a **Red Cross rescue vehicle** that's designed to be deployed in order to provide a rescue to dying people!

Here's a spoiler alert: Let me tell you the sad part about all this from the book of **Acts**. After all that had happened, and after this big

missional charge... at the end of Acts chapter 7... **They're still are in Jerusalem! They haven't moved!**

That cannot be us!! We cannot be a group of comfortable country club Christians!!!

Some of you need to consider what it would look like to establish another outpost of the gospel through a church plant or overseas...

You need to begin praying about it today...

Goal... Dream with me:

- Cobbs are the first family of many from Image... A church is planted there as a result!
 - *2 ppl came to Christ in 7 years of work... we need more laborers...*
- Church planter sitting in here today or on the college campus... We see them raised up here and then we send them out to plan and many of you go with them...

You want to talk about a mission I you can get excited about!!

When we talk about the church being an **organism** that's moving in a direction rather than an organization you're associated with this is what I am talking about... This is where we're headed!

What we know today is that these early Christ-follower's impact would **FAR** exceed anything they ever imagined...

Would the same be true for us!

Feels like a lot, you think I don't know if I can do this, I feel like when we start talking about missions it's only for the elite... Not true...

I want you to understand this and we see it clearly here in the text...

The Holy Spirit gives the power and brings clarity

Peter was a knucklehead... He denied Jesus 3 times... He could never figure it out...

You know how there's *that guy* in every group...

The guy who tries too hard and has **no feel** and says things and everyone at the same time is like *did he think at all before he said that?!?*

You know exactly what I'm talking about... Peter's *that guy*... **By the way wives, that's not an application point from this sermon today for your husband...**

Peter was probably the least capable of all the disciples, and yet that's exactly who God used to advance the message to 3000 people... *So, if you're that guy, there's hope for you!*

Peter simply responded in faith, and then **through the power of the Holy Spirit**, God advanced the mission through the mouth of Peter and 3000 people responded in faith!

It's the power of God, through the Spirit of God that moves the mission forward here in Jerusalem, and it will be the same power that continues the mission to the ends of the earth!

Some of you need to respond in faith... We want God to give us the specifics... (HE HAS) but we want more... He will...

Example: Ash and I looking at JAX to plant...

Take a faithful step and watch what God does, understanding that the same power that was given to them has been given to you for the purpose of advancing the message and ministry of Jesus to the ends of the earth!

OK, let's get really practical:

Bottom Line, there isn't an option for us in this... The Church is God's plan for reaching the world- so that means that as the church each one of you plays a role in this... The question is not if, but how...

Christopher J Wright (OT Scholar in London) says:

Most of us have asked the question, how does the mission of God work into the story of my life, but the real question is how does the story of my life fit into the mission of God? – Christopher J Wright

Listen, what would it look like if every one of you were asking the question, how can the story of my life fit into the mission of God?

I want to give you 3 practical ways to engage when it comes to advancing the scope of the gospel beyond our city...

You are either a goer, prayer or a giver... Let me flesh these out...

1. Goer

2 categories: Long-term, Short term

- Cobbs, other opportunities...

Long-term

What if you started looking at you job as a means for the mission field...

- **Example:** Micah

Some of you need to join the Cobbs...

Some of you need to join David our mission partner in Honduras...

College Student: 2 years... CP or overseas

Be a church planter, be part of a church pant...

- We will have new CP partner, hope to have our own next year... Trying to work to where we can bring in a family for a year-2 years and then plant them...

Short Term

Trips to visit CP partners...

- Nashville
- Myrtle Beach

College Students: Summer Project

International options:

- Global Gates...
- Honduras...
- Eastern Europe to visit the Cobbs...

If you are a covenant member, the goal is that every covenant member would go on at least one short term trip...

2 Prayer

Specific people by name...

- Cobbs
- David

Be on their mailing list... Interact with them... Ask them how you can pray... Pray specific things over them...

Don't be removed from the process...

Pray that God would raise up laborers...

Luke 10:2

The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.

3. Giver

Best way to do this... Through the local church... This is the model we see in the NT...

Para exists in places where the church has failed, one of those is faithful giving to fund the mission...

A&A Initiative is a way to specifically give...

But setting up a regular giving philosophy is important...

Another option: Compassion Int. who we're starting an official partnership with this coming year that is holistic so giving there is essentially through our church...

Goer, Prayer, Giver

According to the framework of the bible and the call of Jesus... You should fall into **at least** one of these areas...

- God hasn't called you to go... Doesn't free you from the mission, you just engage differently...

You are either in one of two places:

- 1. You're tethered to a local church and being sent out**
- 2. Holding the rope for those that have gone out**

Conclusion [VAMP]

GOSPEL- Jesus has to be worth it...

*Flesh out the gospel... 1 Cor. 5:20 for the love of God compels us...
Not guilt, but love!!*

You have to be abiding or you will never be motivated to abound...
Some of you lack the desire because you lack being with God...

Appeal to non-Christian... This mission exists for you... If you're here you have the advantage of hearing would you see and believe in Jesus!

how does the story of my life fit into the mission of God?

Pray...