



Acts

Amplifying Hope | November 19, 2023

Sermon: The Great Invitation - Gospel Conversations

Scripture: Acts

Summary: The book of Acts opens with the Risen Christ instructing the first followers to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit. His instruction was followed by a promise: "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." Acts 1:8 NLT. The rest of the Book of Acts unfolds the expansion of the New Testament Church from a tiny band of mostly Jewish Christ-followers to an expanding number of congregations across the Roman Empire with an increasing number of Gentiles in each location. The promise of Jesus in Acts 1:8 becomes a reality. Acts comes to a close with the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul, awaiting trial in Rome.

- **The Three Avenues Humanity Travels in Pursuit of Purpose:**

- 1 **John 2:16–17 (ESV)**

- For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

- 1. APPETITE - "the desires of the flesh"**

2. APPEARANCE - "the desires of the eye"

3. ACHIEVEMENT - "pride of life"

- **The One Way to Receive Purpose**

Acts 28:30-31 (NLT)

For the next two years, Paul lived in Rome at his own expense. He welcomed all who visited him, boldly proclaiming the Kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ. And no one tried to stop him.

- THE GOSPEL

- **The Invitation of Every Gospel Conversation**

Jesus in Matthew 11:28 (NLT)

"Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

Life Application Questions

1. An achievement or "pride of life" question - What are some ways the absolute truth claims of Jesus Christ create challenges in gospel conversations? What is a Christian's ultimate authority? In your opinion, what or who is the source of ultimate authority in a secular culture?
2. An appearance or "the desires of the eye" question - Do you think the Church of the West in the 21st century has adopted the culture's definition of success? Explain your answer. In your opinion, how does the culture's perception of the church help or hinder our opportunity to engage the unchurched in gospel conversations?

3. Three avenues humanity travels in pursuit of purpose are listed citing 1 John 2:16. Two of avenues are mentioned in the previous questions. Discuss how you would approach a Gospel Conversation with someone pursuing purpose through his or her appetite. Are there examples given in scripture?

4. "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." is the invitation of Jesus recorded in Matthew 11:28. What are some of the "burdens" the people you know who do not have a relationship with Christ are carrying? How can you pray for them? How can you approach a gospel conversation with them?