

IT'S A PROMISE, NOT A COMMAND.
SUNDAY, JUNE 8, 2025
ACTS 1:1-14

The central message of Pastor Mark's sermon was simple but profound: Acts 1:8 is a promise, not a command. Jesus' final words to His disciples before His ascension were not a directive to go and do something, but a declaration of what will happen when the Holy Spirit comes upon them.

This promise is rooted in the two Greek verbs found in Acts 1:8: "*lepesthe*" (you will receive) and "*esesthe*" (you will be). Both are in the future tense, indicative mood, second person plural, and middle voice. Each of those grammatical aspects tells us something essential about the nature of the Spirit's work. Future tense assures us that what Jesus promised was going to happen. The indicative mood signals that Jesus wasn't issuing a command but stating a fact. Second person plural shows that this promise wasn't given to one or two standout disciples — it was for all of them. And the middle voice reveals that they would not be the primary actors making something happen, nor would they be entirely passive—they would be empowered by God and participate with Him in the mission. So Jesus wasn't telling them to go do something, (like witness), but was promising that they would be witnesses. We are witnesses not because we're trained or qualified, but because we've been acted upon by the Holy Spirit. It's who we are, even when we're not trying.

ACTS 1:1-14

In my former book, *Theophilus*, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day He was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen. After His suffering... He presented Himself to them. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while He was eating with them, He gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit...."

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

After He said this, He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight... Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

ACTS 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and

filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our own native language? Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Some, however, said, "They have had too much wine."

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

"In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.
Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.
And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.

QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

1. Have you ever felt pressured to “witness” out of obligation rather than identity? How did it feel? What was the outcome?
2. What changes in your understanding of God when you hear that Acts 1:8 is a promise, not a command?
3. Can you describe a time when you realized the Holy Spirit was working through you — even when you weren’t trying?
4. How are you already bearing witness to Jesus — perhaps in ways you’ve never acknowledged?
5. What would change in your spiritual walk if you trusted that the Spirit was already active in you, instead of believing that the Spirit was requiring something of you?
6. What’s one fear or hesitation you have about being a “witness”— and what promise of God could speak to that fear?

PROMPTS FOR ACTION & RESPONSE

1. **Practice Holy Awareness:** This week, journal daily moments where you sensed the Holy Spirit's presence, movement, or prompting — even in small ways. Reflect on how your simple presence or demeanor might have borne witness to Christ.
 2. **Affirm Your Identity:** Speak Acts 1:8 over yourself aloud each morning this week: “I will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on me; and I will be His witness.” Say it not as a to-do list, but as a truth to be lived and embraced.
-