

How Are You Helping The World Hear About Christ?

Series: Roadmap For Christian Living

What are you doing to help the world hear about Christ?

What Does The Bible Say?

15 And then he told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. (Mark 16:15)

We are all to tell people about Christ.

How are we supposed to do that?

How Can You Obey?

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 Holy Spirit must lead.

9 But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) (Romans 8:9 NLT)

All Christians have the Holy Spirit in them.

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)

Give your testimony.

Giving your testimony should be easy, because you are talking about something you know a lot about... you!

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)

Begin in your own backyard.

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)

See the bigger picture.

Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to lead you in sharing your faith?

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Explore:

The power of His Holy Spirit (vv. 4–8). John the Baptist had announced a future baptism of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; and see Acts 11:16), and now that prophecy would be fulfilled. Jesus had also promised the coming of the Spirit (John 14:16–18, 26; 15:26–27; 16:7–15). It would be an enduement of power for the disciples so that they would be able to serve the Lord and accomplish His will (Luke 24:49).

John had spoken about “the Holy Spirit and fire,” but Jesus said nothing about fire. Why? Because the “baptism of fire” has to do with future judgment, when the nation of Israel will go through tribulation (Matt. 3:11–12). The appearing of “tongues of fire” at Pentecost (Acts 2:3) could not be termed a “baptism.”

Acts 1:8 is a key verse. To begin with, it explains that the power of the church comes from the Holy Spirit and not from man (see

Zech. 4:6). God's people experienced repeated fillings of the Spirit as they faced new opportunities and obstacles (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9). Ordinary people were able to do extraordinary things because the Spirit of God was at work in their lives. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is not a luxury; it is an absolute necessity.

“Witness” is a key word in the Book of Acts and is used twenty-nine times as either a verb or a noun. A witness is somebody who tells what he has seen and heard (Acts 4:19–20). When you are on the witness stand in court, the judge is not interested in your ideas or opinions; he only wants to hear what you know.

Our English word martyr comes from the Greek word translated “witness,” and many of God's people have sealed their witness by laying down their lives.

We hear a great deal these days about “soul winning,” and the emphasis is a good one. However, while some of God's people

have a calling to evangelism (Eph. 4:11), all of God's people are expected to be witnesses and tell the lost about the Saviour. Not every Christian can bring a sinner to the place of faith and decision (though most of us could do better), but every Christian can bear faithful witness to the Saviour. "A true witness delivereth souls" (Prov. 14:25).

Acts 1:8 also gives us a general outline of the Book of Acts as it describes the geographical spread of the Gospel: from Jerusalem (Acts 1–7) to Judea and Samaria (Acts 8–9), and then to the Gentiles and to the ends of the earth (Acts 10–28). No matter where we live, as Christians we should begin our witness at home and then extend it "into all the world." As Dr. Oswald J. Smith used to say, "The light that shines the farthest will shine the brightest at home."

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary (Vol. 1, p. 403). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Explore:

The Mission Itself

The core commission is seen in the heart of verse 8: "... and you will be my witnesses." We are to be "witnesses" for Christ! This is the recurring message of Acts. The word occurs no less than thirty-nine times. For example:

"God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact." (2:32)

"You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this." (3:15)

"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem." (10:39)

“ ‘You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.’ ” (22:15)

This witness about Christ is often counterfeited but never duplicated. Perhaps you have had the experience of having some neatly dressed young men come to your door and, after some friendly conversation, invited them in, only to have them set up a flannelgraph while saying something like, “Wouldn’t it be nice if we had prophets today?” They then present an incredible religious maze: the Aaronic priesthood, the priesthood of Melchizedek, a modern prophet from upstate New York (who was heralded by an angel with an Italian name), the Urim and Thummim (i.e., a pair of giant spectacles through which their prophet translated their sacred book), a “plan” that can promote you to the Terrestrial, Celestial, and finally Telestial Heavens, etc. An amazingly complex religious system given under the guise of being a witness for Christ’s latter-day church, their

gospel is in reality a complete reversal of the good news of Christ's grace.

The true witness to which Christ referred is not like that. To be a witness for Christ is to bring a message that is a marvel of simplicity: Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh; he died to pay for our sins; he was resurrected; now he is exalted in Heaven; he calls us to believe in him and so receive forgiveness of sins. This is good news. There is nothing to join, no system to climb—just a person to receive and, in him, eternal life.

Though this witness is simple, it requires costly commitment from its carriers. It radically touches our inner complexities—who we are deep inside. Not only must we have the message, the logos, the Word, but we must also attract the magnificent compliment that Sir Henry Stanley gave David Livingstone after discovering and spending time with him in Central Africa: “If I had been with him any longer, I would have been compelled to

be a Christian, and he never spoke to me about it at all.”

Livingstone’s witness went far beyond mere words.

If we are to be effective witnesses for our Savior, we cannot be water boys in the game of life. We have to roll up our sleeves and pitch in. Our lives must display the inner reality of what we externally proclaim. That is why gospel flames raced across Asia. The apostles walked their talk. That is why Paul was able to reach the Praetorian guards while under arrest in Philippi (see Philippians 1:13). Are we witnesses like that?

This matter of ethos—who we are—demands absolute, soul-searching honesty because it is so easy to deceive ourselves.

Those of us with a Bible-believing heritage who constantly hear and talk about spiritual things can by the sheer weight of discussion come to believe that we live up to what we talk about, even if we do not. Being an authentic witness demands an open,

tender heart that is always growing in the experience it proclaims.

To be a witness we must have logos —the Word of Christ, ethos —the inner reality of what we proclaim, and pathos —passion.

The apostles were passionate for Christ. Observe Peter at Pentecost, Stephen at his stoning, Paul before Felix. They fervently promoted their faith. They were a band of zealous believers who turned their world upside-down.

When George Whitefield was getting the people of Edinburgh out of their beds at 5 o'clock in the morning to hear his preaching, a man on his way to the church met David Hume, the Scottish philosopher and skeptic. Surprised at seeing him on his way to hear Whitefield, the man said, "I thought you did not believe in the gospel." Hume replied, "I do not, but he does."

The message is simple, but the demand on the messengers is serious. For effective witness, there must be the Word, the inner reality, the passion.

The command to be Christ's witnesses is for all true believers in him. There are no loopholes. No one can say, "This does not apply to me." Our honor exceeds that of any worldly ambassador, whether it be Mainland China, France, or the private offices of the Prime Minister of England. Christ's last word to us is, "You will be my witnesses."

Hughes, R. K. (1996). *Acts: the church afire* (pp. 15–17).

Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Explore:

The Mission's Extent

How far is this witness to spread? "In Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (v. 8). We have heard

these words so many times that it is difficult to feel their impact. But what a shock these geographical designations must have been to the disciples. Jerusalem? The Lord was crucified there. Judea? They had been rejected there. Samaria? Minister to those half-breeds? The ends of the earth? Gentiles too? The words were not only spiritually revolutionary, but socially and ethnically unheard of.

We all know the story. The Lord's outline was carried out to the letter. Jerusalem was filled with the preaching of the gospel, and 3,000 were saved in one day. Later Philip broke the taboos of Judea and crossed over into Samaria. Social revolution!

Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, male and female, Jew and Greek, learned and ignorant, clasped hands and sat down at one table, and felt themselves all one in Christ Jesus. They were ready to break all other bonds, and to yield to the uniting forces that streamed out from His Cross. There never had been

anything like it. No wonder that the world began to babble about sorcery, and conspiracies, and complicity in unnameable vices.

The good news of Jesus was even being whispered in Caesar's own kitchen (see, for example, Philippians 4:22).

How impressive is the scope of the missionary heart. Followers of Christ yearn for the gospel to go to the ends of the earth and into their own community. There can be no burden for distant unreached peoples without a burden for unreached neighbors. Christian believers see that it is their duty to cross over ethnic divisions. Christ demands a world heart! A heart that prays for those at home just as much as for those being touched by overseas missionaries. Jesus' final words to his Church demand expansive hearts.

Christ's words taken seriously are nothing less than the declaration of a benevolent war. They are a call for every believer—every forgiven sinner now following Christ—to spend

and be spent. Nechayev, a nineteenth-century disciple of Karl Marx, was thrown into prison for his role in the assassination of Czar Alexander II. Prior to his death he wrote:

The revolutionary man is a consecrated man. He has neither his own interests nor concerns nor feelings, no attachment nor property, not even a name. All for him is absorbed in the single exclusive interest in the one thought, in one passion—

REVOLUTION.

Although his motives and goals were wrong, Nechayev stated well the heartbeat of true commitment—the kind needed to accomplish the objectives of the Church, God’s missile of salt and light hurled into the world to proclaim the triumphant message of sins forgiven and lives transformed. Too often we are overly concerned about personal comfort. If the Christian faith is worth believing at all, it is worth believing heroically!

Jesus' words are a call to zeal, and zeal—fervor, passion, urgent and loving service—is the medium by which the spiritual war is waged. Whether we are at home or bridging society's barriers or making our way to the ends of the earth, we are to be people of one thing—seeing one thing, caring for one thing, living for one thing—to please God. Whether we live, whether we have health, whether we have sickness, whether we are rich, whether we are poor, whether we get honor, whether we get slain, our deepest desire is to please him. And what does he want? “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.” The apostles did this, and we are to do likewise. What a call—to be personal witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ! That is too much—it is too hard! And to demand that it be to the ends of the earth—impossible! That is why our Lord prefaced the statement with a promised provision of power.

Hughes, R. K. (1996). Acts: the church afire (pp. 17–19).

Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Explore:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.” There was a brief interlude of about ten days, and then the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, there were tongues of fire, they spoke in other languages, and spiritual power rolled through them. It was thus no surprise when Peter later walked by the Beautiful Gate, saw a lame man, and said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” And suddenly there was a high-jumping cripple in front of the temple. And again, John and Peter stood before the entire Sanhedrin and said, “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and

heard.” Consider also the first gospel concert—in Philippi after Paul and Silas were beat up and tossed into the slammer. Power!

When the Holy Spirit comes upon followers of Christ, the most unlikely people become fountains of power. This spiritual power is always available, and he displays it according to his sovereign plans. God imparts his power when and how he wants to. Years ago when I was a youth pastor I noticed that a lot of young people would show up on Sunday morning, but when it came to Wednesday night Bible study I could hardly get a baker’s dozen. I would have eight, then fifteen, then eight... I almost quit. I was so discouraged that I had to depend on the Lord. I remember finally just giving it all to the Lord, and one night when there were only eight a young man came to know Christ. He brought another young man to the group, and he came to know Christ. In two months my group went from fifteen to ninety, and then to 120! I only remember four Wednesday nights out of a year and a half that someone did not trust Christ!

This was a most unlikely occurrence, and it had nothing to do with me. The kids were praying and bringing their friends, and their friends were weeping, repenting, and trusting the Lord. There was life-changing power at work!

The power of the Holy Spirit is the supreme qualification and assurance of Christ's witnesses. The mission? To be "my witnesses." The mission's extent? "In Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." The mission's power? "When the Holy Spirit comes on you."

This is a dramatic text—Christ's final statement on earth and the key to the book of Acts. But then things became even more dramatic: "After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight" (v. 9). Some other versions suggest that the cloud came right down onto the mountain. That cloud may have been the Shekinah glory—a visible representation of the pleasure and presence of God. This

was the same symbol that Moses had encountered on Sinai when God covered him with his hand so that Moses only saw the afterglow. It was the same cloud that traveled before Israel by day (a pillar of fire by night). It was the cloud that lay over the tabernacle and filled the temple. It was the cloud that Ezekiel saw depart over the east gate. It was the same presence that surrounded Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration when his face shone forth like the sun (Matthew 17).

The apostles' hearts were pounding, and their eyes were wide as saucers as God powerfully underscored his Son's final words to his Church! The truth conveyed through these events should resound in the inner chambers of every believer's heart.

The ascended Christ was to be the confidence—the flame—of the apostolic movement. Having ascended, he now intercedes for the Church and has sent the Holy Spirit, “another Comforter” just like Himself. And so we can be his witnesses.

Verses 10 and 11 give us the stunning epilogue:

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

The teaching here is clearly meant for a missionary church.

“Jesus is returning again—so get going!” How does your life stack up? How does mine? Like a day-old glass of ginger ale?

The life of a Christian can and should be exciting, effervescent.

The key is genuine commitment to God’s plan. Some of us are

moved with such thoughts, but give us an hour watching our

favorite sports team and it all vanishes— “the worries of this

life.” Or a young husband and wife who are struggling

financially may feel unable to think about anything except their

limited funds or an uncertain future, though in actuality that does not exempt them from being witnesses for Christ and following him. Regardless of the particular difficulties confronting us, we are called to be his witnesses.

Commitment is the key to a sparkling, meaningful life. Logos , ethos , pathos —what a life!

Hughes, R. K. (1996). Acts: the church afire (pp. 19–20).
Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Question 1 of 5

What was the commandment Jesus gave to the church and what does it mean to you?

Question 2 of 5

Where does the word “witness” originally come from?

Question 3 of 5

How are you being an ambassador for Jesus?

Question 4 of 5

Do you believe the whole Bible is from God? why or why not?

Question 5 of 5

Why is it a slippery slope when you doubt the truth of Scripture is from God?