



## **You Will Be My Witnesses**

*Series: Acts -- Worldwide Witness to the Worth of Jesus Christ*

Acts 1:1-11

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Introduction This morning we are beginning a series in the Book of Acts, short for The Acts of the Apostles, It is a book that would be better named “The Acts of the Risen Christ, by the Holy Spirit, through the church He redeemed by His blood.” -- a little longer, perhaps, but more accurate. It was written as a companion book specifically to the Gospel of Luke, but truly for all of the gospels. It is unique among all the books of the New Testament, serving as a chronicle of the rise of Christianity, the spreading flame of the gospel carried along by men who were empowered by the Holy Spirit of God to give testimony to Christ as Lord and Savior and coming Judge of the world.

The Book of Acts is, for us, the perfect counterpart and continuation of the Gospel of Matthew that we have just finished. How will walking with Christ for the last three years in Matthew affect us? Many times when we come to Acts and the sacred history recorded for us there, we forget that the church it describes was in its spiritual infancy. It had no completed canon, no pastoral epistles to guide the structure and the order of the church, no formalized list of qualifications for elder or deacon, no established guidelines for church life, no full development of the doctrines that we so love – but what they did have is love and passion for Christ. This picture in Acts is of a church that is vibrant and strong, unashamed, bold, willing to take the gospel everywhere, filled with lovers of Christ, wholly committed to His cause and wholly committed to one another. Not a perfect church, but real one, an infant church, fully saved but not yet fully developed, alive with power and devotion but not yet fully sanctified, yet a church that was fully obedient to Christ’s commission and His commandment to be witnesses of the Risen King, witnesses who preached the Kingdom of God and who believed that the kingdom of God burst forth in power in the person of Jesus Christ the Lord and it demanded their utmost allegiance. They are a picture of the kind of church we have been saved and gathered to be. So this study of the book of Acts is vital for us, a lesson for us in the kind of church we must be.

Recurring Themes in the Book of Acts As we work our way through the Book of Acts, we are going to discover that there are some recurring themes that we will see throughout, recurring and forever relevant themes for us to consider. What do we see woven in to the tapestry of the book of Acts? One of the first, and primary themes that we see emphasized in Acts is this:

Christianity is a faith that is rooted in history. Christianity is not a made up religion, not the musings of a groups of brilliant thinkers and philosophers, not a collection of religious speculations. Christianity is God's revelation of Himself in the person of Jesus Christ. The Apostles faithfully handed down to us what they had seen and heard concerning the life, death, resurrection, and teaching of Jesus Christ. Our faith is "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone," (Ephesians 2:20, ESV) For that reason, we can have great confidence in our faith because it is rooted in history, but its full history is yet unfinished. This book closes rather abruptly with Paul in prison in Rome. It does not close like all of the other books in Scripture do and there is a reason for that – it is because there are chapters yet to be added by the faithful church until the end of the age when Christ comes again in glory. There remains much history yet to be written.

All that takes place is brought about by the will and purpose of God in fulfillment of the Scripture. One of the main themes that emerges in Acts is the fact that God is sovereignly ruling all things for the purpose of fulfilling His will to redeem out of this earth a people for His own possession as described first in the OT and brought to greater light in the ministry of Christ in the gospels. Nothing happens by chance. Nothing in this book is without divine purpose. Throughout the whole of this book is seen the providential hand of God ruling over believers and unbelievers, to bring His redemptive plan to fruition. In connection with this:

Salvation in all of its aspects is a sovereign work of God: planned by the Father, accomplished by Christ, and mediated by the Holy Spirit. The story of the book of Acts continually highlights for us the truth that salvation has been prepared by God the Father from before the foundation of the world. Far from being an afterthought, it was planned and promised for centuries. As Peter said on Pentecost: "Jesus (was) delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God..." (Acts 2:23, ESV) Salvation was the Father's plan and it is found only in His Christ. Throughout the sermons of Peter and Paul, and especially in the defense made by the first Christian martyr, Stephen, Jesus -- His life, death, resurrection, reign and His gift of the Holy Spirit – is presented as the only way of salvation. In fact, as Acts 4:12 says, salvation is found in no one else, for "God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give

repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.” (Acts 5:31, ESV) Time and time again we see that the main message the Apostles preached centered on the truth that Jesus has died and God has raised Him from the dead, which was the primary sign authenticating Jesus as the Christ, and through Him alone is offered the forgiveness of sins.

And it is through the gift of the Holy Spirit that the disciples witnessed to the truth of the gospel, the same Holy Spirit who would grant repentance and faith to all whom God has chosen.

The gospel of the Kingdom is the continuation of the God’s work in the OT to bring salvation to all peoples. It's important to recognize that the church did not simply arise out of nothing. It did not merely burst upon the scene from out of nowhere. The church is in reality the continuation and climax of God’s saving work begun in the OT and which was promised through Abraham’s offspring, Jesus Christ, as a blessing to all nations, to bring salvation to all peoples, through His sacrifice and resurrection. Committed to us is a cross-cultural gospel, a gospel which has the power, God’s power, to penetrate through language and cultural barriers, to tear down the walls of division between men and God. The epicenter of this movement began in Jerusalem and extends itself first to the regions of Judea and Samaria but then to the uttermost parts of the earth.

And the spread of the Kingdom is not accomplished by the ingenuity, creativity, human wisdom or initiative of Christ’s disciples. Although we are his vessels, the expansion of Christianity remains God's work. He provides the resources, the power, the vision, the motivation, the courage and the ability to accomplish the work.

There is great opposition that surrounds the spread of the gospel and the message of the Kingdom. We read about martyrdom, imprisonments, beatings, stonings and plots to kill the apostles. It is not to be unexpected. The servant is not greater than his master and the sinfulness of man is such that even the greatest news of all – the gospel of Jesus Christ, generates fierce opposition and hatred in the hearts of fallen men ungraced by the Spirit of God. Although discouraging, resistance to our witness for Christ is to be expected. That leads to the next theme, which is:

Despite all opposition, the spread of the Kingdom continues its triumphant progress by the power of God and the firm faithfulness of His disciples. Despite the presence of real opposition, the church flourished and expanded and enveloped the known world. How did that happen -- by the power of God through His disciples, through the Lordship of the Risen Christ and because of Spirit wrought faithfulness of the disciples – and that faithfulness is key.

By modern standards the believers in Acts may seem to be naïve, not as cultured, not as educated, but perhaps because of their very simplicity, perhaps because of their readiness simply to believe, to obey, to give, to suffer, and, if necessary, to die, the Spirit of God was able to so work in them and through them, and so as Acts 17:6 testifies: they turned the world upside down.

Acts shows us the indispensable need of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. The book of Acts presents a rich theology of the Holy Spirit. It describes him as the one that empowers the church to live transformed lives and to evangelize the world. It records the many signs and wonders to validate the ministry and message of the apostles. Acts describes the ways in which the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit granted great courage and passion to these believers in the face of opposition and persecution. Believers were empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit, and this remains true today.

The Holy Spirit is the one who, by His power, enables the spread of the gospel and the kingdom, tearing down ethnic barriers and creating a people who live devoted and faithful lives to God and to the people of God.

Acts shows us the vital necessity of preaching the Word of God and prayer. As a result of the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the preaching of the gospel and the witness of the newly formed church sparked a flame that spread across the Roman Empire. This is how the church is established and continues to grow, by preaching the Word in power of the Holy Spirit, spreading locally and then continuing to the ends of the earth. Repeatedly we see references to the power of preaching God's Word. After Peter's sermon on Pentecost we read: "So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:41, ESV) "But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand." (Acts 4:4, ESV) "And the word of God continued to

increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.” (Acts 6:7, ESV) “But the word of God increased and multiplied.” (Acts 12:24, ESV) “So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.” (Acts 19:20, ESV) Preaching is the appointed means of the progress of the Kingdom.

Not only does preaching figure centrally in the book of Acts, we need to see as well the prominence of prayer. Central to that early church life was prevailing prayer: “All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.” (Acts 1:14, ESV) Notice the word, “devoting.” Prayer wasn’t a spiritual discipline that they practiced when things weren’t going well or when someone was sick. It wasn’t just for times of opposition and hardship. Rather, prayer was part of them, an underpinning of their faith, an expression of devotion and dependence. They prayed constantly. This sort of dedicated passion for prayer and the power that accompanied such praying is one of the defining characteristics of the early church as recorded in the book of Acts and should be equally true for Christians in every age.

Acts will bolster in our hearts a picture of the incomparable beauty of the church, as it should be. What we see in Acts is a picture of the beauty of the church as it should be. Not that there were not difficulties to be ironed out, or that the inclusion of the Gentiles was not without its challenges, and not that the church was not made up of sinners who needed to be sanctified, but the faith, the experience, the life of the church, was beautiful and attractive. Repeatedly we see in this story people living as those moved by the grace of God, filled with love for God and faithfulness to Him, consumed with His Lordship and believing His promises. In this book we see a picture of true Christianity – that it is not some nice middle class lifestyle, but is, in fact, a calling so demanding and so invigorating, a way of life so satisfying and so worthy of the full dedication of all that we are and have, a life so far above every other philosophy or morality in the world, that it will require everything we are and grace upon grace from God to live it out as we should. The true church is beautiful and, by God’s grace, powerful in this darkened world.

Acts will restore our confidence in the power of a faithful, God-honoring, Christ-believing, Spirit-empowered church. We need to come away from this study in Acts with a greater confidence in the power of Christ through His people in this world. It is striking how similar to our culture is the world that the early Christians engaged for the sake of the Gospel and the glory of Christ. It was a dying civilization that had seen its better days. All manner of religious

and moral views proliferated the culture – none taken too seriously. It was a decadent society where the love of pleasure, the love of sin, entertainment and ease were of paramount importance. Abortion, homosexuality, sexual promiscuity, and scandal raged out of control. Crime was a chronic problem, taxes were skyrocketing, political intrigue was ever-present. And into this world came a band of Christian disciples -- just a few hundred of them, and turned this world upside down! That is the power of God in His people, the power of the gospel to bring light and life into death and darkness, the power of the faithful church ready simply to believe to gospel, to obey Christ, to give the whole of their lives, to suffer, and, if necessary, to die in order to be faithful to her Savior and to proclaim His Name for the sake of souls and the glory of her King. Acts will restore our confidence in the power of a faithful, God-honoring, Christ-believing, Spirit-empowered church.

And for that reason, Acts provides the standard by which we can examine the modern church, beginning in this fellowship. This book lays before us the kind of church that we are called to be, the kind of church that make an impact for the gospel, the kind of church that lives to witness to the indispensable worth of Jesus Christ our Lord. So let's get started beloved. Let's start today by looking at Luke's introduction to this amazing book beginning in verse 1 and let's work our way through this text and I'll make application as we go before we get to the central message from these first several verses.

Exposition of Acts 1:1-11 Luke writes: "In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen." (Acts 1:1-2, ESV) Now, no one is certain who Theophilus is. Besides having a really cool name that means "loved of God" we do not have much information about him. Most people think that he was quite possibly an important dignitary and Theophilus was his code name so he would not be discovered, and that he was already a Christian when Luke wrote this book for the purpose of giving him a reliable account of Jesus Christ and the beginning of the church.

One thing we can be certain of is the way that Luke viewed the book of Acts. He gives us a clue when He says about his first book: I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up...He does not see a break between the gospels and the book of Acts, no a differentiation between the ministry of Christ and the ministry of His church, but rather, he sees two stages of the ministry of the same Christ. In his first book, he dealt with the ministry that Jesus began while He was on this earth, exercised personally and publically, and in

Acts he is describing Jesus' ministry from heaven exercised through the Holy Spirit by His Apostles.

Thought His incarnation, Jesus began His ministry on this earth. Now it is true that He finished forever the work of propitiation and atonement, but that completed ministry was a springboard for future ministry. After His resurrection, ascension, and the sending of the Holy Spirit, he continued His work first through the foundational ministry of His chosen Apostles – men who were not self-appointed, but men who were directly and personally chosen and appointed by Jesus Christ Himself -- and then afterward through the post-apostolic church up until this very age.

So Luke wants us to see from the very beginning that He is telling the story of the historical Jesus who lived and the contemporary Jesus who lives even now and is active by His Spirit in His church and in the world. And then Luke tells us how Jesus commissioned His Apostles for their work. He says:

“He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. And while staying (that is, eating) with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”” (Acts 1:3–5, ESV) When Jesus rose from the dead, He was determined to give His Apostles some convincing and decisive proofs that He was indeed alive again – appearing to them repeatedly over a period of forty days, eating with them, speaking with them and teaching and commanding them.

Luke tells us the subjects of Jesus teaching and commands – the Kingdom of God, which had been the heart of His message during His incarnation, and the promise of the Father – the baptism of the Holy Spirit. So the two main topics of conversation that Jesus had with the eleven between the time of His resurrection and ascension into heaven were the Kingdom of God and the Spirit of God. This connection between the Kingdom of God and the Spirit of God was not unlike the message of the Prophets before Him. They had taught that when God established the Kingdom of His Messiah, the rule of the Christ, He would pour out His Spirit on His people and would be one of the major signs and blessings of His rule. For instance, let me

just give you a couple from the book of Isaiah, where he records the effects of the establishment of the Kingdom saying: “the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest. Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.” (Isaiah 32:15–18, ESV) And in chapter 49 he writes: “Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise. “Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob; but you have been weary of me, O Israel! You have not brought me your sheep for burnt offerings, or honored me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with offerings, or wearied you with frankincense. You have not bought me sweet cane with money, or satisfied me with the fat of your sacrifices. But you have burdened me with your sins; you have wearied me with your iniquities. “I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.” (Isaiah 43:19–25, ESV) And of course, who can forget the prophecy of Joel who wrote: ““And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit. “And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.” (Joel 2:28–32, ESV) These prophecies and many more connect the establishment of the Kingdom of God with the pouring out of the Holy Spirit and so the question that the Apostles asked next makes perfect sense.

“So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”” (Acts 1:6, ESV) By asking this question, they reveal that they yet do not understand the nature of the kingdom of God nor its relationship to the gift of the Holy Spirit. They are still thinking of the kingdom in the way they had always understood it. They were thinking in terms of a political and territorial kingdom, a kingdom that was centered in the nation of Israel, a restored earthly monarchy that would be established immediately. And in their response we can see why it is that Jesus had to continue to teach them regarding the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is not an earthly territory, not a political dominion – it is



a spiritual Kingdom. Wherever Christ's kingly rule is acknowledged and obeyed and embraced by faith in the human heart, there is the Kingdom of God manifested. The Apostles needed to understand that Jesus had established a Kingdom founded on His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead, a Kingdom entered by repentance and faith, a spiritual kingdom in the midst of the physical kingdoms of this world. The rule and reign of Jesus Christ, now and forever, had been inaugurated right now, and one day would be openly revealed and consummated with His return and His open and everywhere acknowledged reign over the universe, when "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:10–11, ESV) But that time was not yet here. So He tells His disciples not to be concerned about when that day may be, but instead to understand the commission that they had from Him, the central message of this text.

The Central Message – "You will be my witnesses..." Look at verses 7-8: He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:7–8, ESV) Here is the central message of this text as it regards the rule and the reign of Christ, as it regards the Kingdom of God. Until the time that God has fixed when the Kingship of Christ will be openly revealed from heaven, Jesus says the Kingdom of God will grow because, "You will be my witnesses." See what Jesus is both commanding of His disciples and promising them power to accomplish – that they would be witness to His Kingship, to His saving power, to His resurrection, to His Lordship, to His glory, to His worth – throughout the known world starting in Jerusalem and going to the end of the earth. They must be worldwide witnesses to the worth of Christ. The kingdom of Christ is not limited by geography, by culture, by color, or by language. The Kingdom of Christ is universal and they are to be witnesses to call all peoples to repent and believe in Him. The disciples were simply men under authority, laboring as bondservants. They were not entrepreneurs building their own little fiefdoms, not inventors of their own message, not men doing their own thing, formulating their own plans and building their own empires. They are witnesses – relaying to others what they had seen and heard of Christ.

When I hear that call to be witnesses, I am immediately struck by the four things that a witness needs to be effective – four things I want you to write down and understand – four things that need to be present in us: You need the message, the life, the power of the Holy Spirit and the passion.

The Message (Logos): First, you need the message, and the one that the Apostles preached, the message that saves is a simple one, a marvel of simplicity. Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh; He died to pay the penalty that we deserved for our sins; He was raised from the dead by God the Father to prove He is the Son of God; He has been exalted to Heaven and sits at the right hand of God from which He will come to judge the living and the dead; He commands all men everywhere to repent and to believe in Him, and to obey Him as King and Lord. This is the message that the Apostles faithfully preached. They did not talk of themselves, didn't try to sell the church, they spoke freely, openly, and plainly about the Lord Jesus Christ. They knew the gospel message, they believed the gospel message, they preached the gospel message and they lived the gospel message. They had

The Life (Ethos): That is the second thing that the early church had that made them effective and powerful witness of Christ – they had the life, the ethos. It is totally self-defeating for someone to speak for Christ, to tell the gospel story and yet have a life that does not measure up to biblical truth. We are not talking about sinless perfection before you can bear effective witness to Christ, but in order for our witness to be believable, we must, in the words of Titus 2:12: “renounc(ing) ungodliness and worldly passions, and (living) self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,” (Titus 2:12, ESV) Otherwise, our words fall flat.

This matter of our ethos – how we live – demands that we really do some heart-searching because it is so easy to deceive ourselves, especially in the gospel-rich atmosphere of this church. When we talk much and hear much of spiritual truth, there is a temptation to be deceived into thinking that talking is the same as doing. It is not. Being an effective and faithful witness demands a sensitive heart that is always growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must always in our hearts: “honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,” (1 Peter 3:15, ESV) That is, of course, impossible apart from the third necessity, which is:

The Power of the Holy Spirit (Dunamis): In order to be witnesses to Christ, we need the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit of God. Now the way that the Holy Spirit comes upon us in this age is different than at the beginning of the church. This was the transitional stage in the history of the church. We receive the Holy Spirit at the moment that we believe and we will

talk more about that in the future but mark this down: The Holy Spirit has not been given to the church in order to make us feel good about ourselves, or to make us feel spiritual, or so we can do some neat miracles or parlor tricks; He has been given to us so that we would be powerful in our witness for Christ. And we need His power.

We need His power to understand God's Word. Jesus said: "“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” (John 14:26, ESV)

Every believer needs to understand the Word of God. But apart from the Spirit's power, it is impossible.

We need His power for boldness in living and testifying of Christ. “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” (John 14:16–17, ESV) The Holy Spirit is our Helper who has come to indwell us, who took the place of Jesus Christ walking in our midst, as He did with the disciples, in order to abide in them and in us, to give boldness and courage in face of opposition.

We need the Holy Spirit's power to be able to witness effectively of the good news of Jesus Christ. Like Jesus promised His disciples: ““But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.” (John 15:26–27, ESV) What was true of them was true of us.

They did not have the power to convict a sinner of his sin or to convince a sinner of the finished work of redemption He had accomplished on the cross, that God's justice had been forever satisfied for believing sinners. But that is just what the Holy Spirit, working through Christ's people is able to do. “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to

the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” (John 16:7–11, ESV) The Holy Spirit alone can do this.

The Kingdom of God demands the powerful working of the Holy Spirit. It is spread by witness not soldiers, through the preaching of the gospel of peace, not by human force, and by the work of the Spirit, not human philosophy or earthly wisdom. The gospel witness demands the power of the Holy Spirit, given by Jesus Christ and last, it requires:

The Passion (Pathos): Read Acts and immediately you are struck by the passion of these first disciples -- Peter, Philip, Stephen, Paul. They were a band of zealous believers. Fervor, passion, urgent and loving service – that is the way that the Kingdom is spread in this earth. Whether we are at home or making our way to the uttermost parts of the earth, we must be people of one vision, one passion, living for one thing, to please God and to make the glory of Christ known in this earth. Whether we live or die, have health or battle sickness, whether rich or poor, well-received or hated, our desire must be for His glory, for His fame, for souls to come to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We need the message, the life, the power of the Holy Spirit and the passion. Having related all these things, Luke closes this introduction with an amazing scene.

“And when he had said these things – after He had taught them all these things, at some point after these forty days -- as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. He ascended into heaven. Enveloped by the Shekinah glory of God, He left them not to be seen by them again. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men – two angels -- stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”” (Acts 1:9–11, ESV) The angels said them in effect, “Get about your business. Get to work. Do not stand here waiting for Jesus to reappear. He will come again, but until He does, you be about the business of being His witnesses in this earth. Do not be distracted, looking up into the sky, go to work.” Those words are words for us today beloved.

It is certain that Jesus will return. He will come in all of His transcendent glory to receive His people to Himself and to visit judgment on the unbelieving, and in the interim, we are to be

about His business. It is so easy to be distracted isn't it? We may come out the service today, committed to being the kind of witnesses that Christ called us to be, but it isn't too long until worldly concerns overshadow the most important calling in life. Even good things can distract us from what we are here for.

We have been redeemed to be witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not a question of whether or not we will be witnesses but what kind of witnesses we will be. Will we be faithful witnesses to Christ? -- That is the question. Nothing can exempt us from this highest of callings. If we are going to be faithful witnesses for Christ, we need to take stock of our lives, of the focus and the direction of our lives. Acts will help us to do that and I pray that having studied this incredible book, the fire of real revival will be stoked in all of our hearts.

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