

## **The Same Spirit      August 05, 2018**

### **Acts 1:1-5**

1 In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning  
2 until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit  
to the apostles whom he had chosen. 3 After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by  
many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of  
God. 4 While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the  
promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; 5 for John baptized  
with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." 6 So when  
they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the  
kingdom to Israel?" 7 He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father  
has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon  
you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the  
earth."

The Gospel of Luke is about the life of Jesus. It ends with the post resurrected Jesus  
appearing to the disciples and showing them his wounds on his hands and his feet. He told them  
that the Messiah had to suffer and rise for repentance and the forgiveness of sins to be  
proclaimed in his name to all nations. He also reminded them that they are witnesses of these  
things. Then said "I am sending upon you what my Father promised, stay here in Jerusalem until  
you have received the Holy Spirit." Then Jesus ascended into Heaven. The disciples worshiped  
him. They were filled with joy and they were constantly in the temple blessing God. Then Acts  
begins.

Acts was written by the author of Luke and is about the history of what happens next.  
Acts begins with a review of the end of Luke. This is the conventional way to start a second  
volume. When you watch a TV series, and there is a new episode, they give you a brief review of  
previous episodes, or the last episode, so that you can remember where the story left off. The  
author introduces to the audience his Gospel. He wrote about Jesus and the teachings of Jesus  
from the beginning to the end which is the ascension of the risen Jesus. This inaugurates the  
ministry of the apostles as they continue the ministry and teaching of Jesus. In the Gospels they  
are known as disciples. In Acts they are called apostles. A disciple is a follower and a learner. An  
apostle is on a mission and a teacher.

Luke highlights what is important - the Holy Spirit and sending forth. Luke understands  
that what Jesus did is through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus gave instructions through the  
Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is very significant. It is the Holy Spirit that leads the disciples to  
continue the ministry of Jesus. Now the Holy Spirit leads us, directs us, strengthens us, and  
empowers us to continue.

In regards to sending forth, the verb "send" applies to someone that is sent out with  
something important to give to another. In this case they are sent with the word of salvation to be  
proclaimed to the ends of the earth and with mighty works to be performed in the name of Jesus.  
But there is a problem. In the Bible there is always a problem. It deals with human nature. We  
are humans and as human beings we are weak. So, the apostles need the power of the Holy Spirit  
to empower them to be witnesses to the world.

The problem remains contemporary as there is a contrast between dutiful practice and  
sincere devotion. Dutiful practice is when you act or respond out of duty. It is of the attitude that  
you do something because you should and you are compelled out of duty. Dutiful practice

eventually gets tired, or loses interest, and quits. Sincere devotion is when you act or respond out of love and appreciation. Sincere devotion is full of joy that comes out of gratitude. With sincere devotion you may get tired and need to take a break (everyone needs a Sabbath rest) but does not quit. Everyone that is lapsed fails to understand this disparity between dutiful practice and sincere devotion.

What causes people to lapse is actually selfish in nature. The lapsed prefer to do their thing instead of worship or they place a higher value on the self than worship. Anything you place in front of worshiping God is an idol. They might have hurt feelings where someone else did or did not do or say something. When the Spirit is with you hurt feelings is significantly diminished. Some may simply have an attitude of indifference that does not care to realize the importance of devotion. As I was preparing this sermon I was thinking of the potential for more reasons but then I realized that Jesus explains it best with the parable of the sower found in Luke chapter 8. People who prefer to do their own thing instead of actively participating in worship do so because thorns (wealth of society) chokes out the word, or due to rocks (weak roots) conflict causes them to fall away because the roots are not strong, or path (never had a chance to grow) because Satan takes the word away. When someone has sincere devotion these issues that causes one to lapse are non-applicable. With sincere devotion you have surrendered your life and don't have these setbacks that come with normal human emotions because the Holy Spirit is with you.

The contemporary lesson for us is that we receive the same Holy Spirit. We receive the Spirit if we are sincere - and if we are sincere we have devotion and our devotion is sincere. The Holy Spirit encourages, empowers, and directs us if we are open to receive it. If we are not open to receive it then we get the setbacks that cause one to be lapsed.

Acts is a story that instructs readers to continue what Christ began. What we learn from Acts is the church's mission and that it is a Spirit led mission. Acts presents an intentional spiritual crisis of whether or not the followers of Jesus can follow after Jesus without his physical presence. The same is true today. How can we live as earnest disciples now that the Lord has departed? Discipleship is active witness to the risen Jesus. Discipleship continues what Jesus did and said. When we consider all that God has done for us, we offer praise and thanksgiving. We can't help but offer praise and thanksgiving for we have received the same Spirit - the Holy Spirit.