



First Baptist Church At The Villages

COMPANION STUDY TO MESSAGE: REDISCOVERING CHURCH (7/19) •

STUDY TITLE: UNSTOPPABLE MISSION • ACTS 1:4-14 • FOR USE 7/19 THROUGH 7/25/2020

MAIN POINT

The Holy Spirit empowers us (the church) to spread the gospel.

INTRODUCTION

As your study time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of this study.

When is your least favorite time to wait (i.e. in traffic, at a restaurant, on your spouse, etc.)?

When has something definitely been worth the wait?

What is the hardest part of waiting in this current season of COVID-19?

At the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus told His disciples to wait. He was going to give them—and us—an incredible gift: the presence and power of His Holy Spirit. The disciples couldn't have fully appreciated what all that meant, but they waited nonetheless. When the Holy Spirit came, He empowered Christ's followers for a mission that was unstoppable. From that single location, their mission spread across the world, and continues today. The disciples' longing for the Holy Spirit's presence was surely worth the wait.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic. Use the Commentary section below to enhance your study.

| READ ACTS 1:4-5

To which "Father's promise" is Jesus referencing in verse 4?

Why did Jesus tell the disciples to wait in Jerusalem? Why did they have to wait in Jerusalem before the Holy Spirit's arrival?

To truly live the Christian life is borderline impossible. To love people when they are hurtful, to take the ethical high ground, to forgive those who have wronged you—doing as Jesus commanded is not an easy task. The good news is, Jesus Himself knew how difficult walking with Him would be. Jesus never expected us to live this life in our own power. Indeed, Jesus Himself lived His life on earth in union with and empowered by the Holy Spirit. That same Spirit is the secret to the power we need to live and follow Jesus today. Living the Christian life is only possible with the power of the Holy Spirit living through us.

What do you personally find difficult about waiting on the Lord? (Pause, and really give this some prayerful consideration)

Apart from the power of the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing of importance in our lives. But once we receive His power at salvation, we can do anything He calls us to do.

A little boy once heard that if he asked Jesus to be his Savior, God would come live inside his heart. The boy asked his parents, "How can God live inside my heart? He's so big! He made the whole world! If He lived inside my heart, He'd stick out! Precisely!

If God truly lives in our hearts, He's going to stick out. His love will stick out. His forgiveness will stick out. His power will stick out. And the world will know.

| READ ACTS 1:6-8.

What did the Israelites expect from Jesus in this passage? What were they hoping He would do?

Whose authority does Jesus reference?

What does the power of the Holy Spirit enable His disciples to do?

What is the job of a witness? How are we witnesses for Christ?

In verse 8, Jesus laid out God's agenda succinctly. His mandate in this verse laid the foundation for the rest of the Book of Acts, which is largely about how the early believers carried out this mandate. Jesus told His followers to remain in Jerusalem and wait, because they would soon receive the power the Father had promised (see v. 4). When they were filled with the Spirit, they would be His "witnesses" telling what they had experienced with Jesus. They would do this with His power, not their own—the power of the Holy Spirit.

What do these verses teach us about God's mission?

The Greek word for "power" is *dunamis*, from which we get our English words "dynamo," "dynamite," and "dynamic." By the power of the Spirit, a tiny handful of believers turned the whole world upside down as the "gospel earthquake" rumbled from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

"Jerusalem . . . Judea and Samaria, and . . . the ends of the earth." Jesus laid out a deliberate plan of expansion that began at home and moved outward geographically to include all people.

We can apply "Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria" to The Villages and surrounding communities, Florida (our state), The United States (our nation), and our world. How can you personally impact each of these three areas for the gospel of Jesus Christ? How will the Holy Spirit empower you to do so?

| READ ACTS 1:12-14.

What do you do when you find yourself waiting on the next thing God has for you?

For many of us, prayer is often a last resort. We sometimes think, "When all else fails, pray." Why is this a wrong approach to prayer?

What are some of the benefits of praying together as a group?

Look at verse 14. How did prayer unite the disciples? How does it unite us as modern-day disciples of Jesus?

Prayer maximizes "Thee" and minimizes "me." Prayer says, "My agenda is unimportant, Lord, but Your agenda is all-important." The reason for so much disunity in the church is because many Christians contend for their own agendas, rather than God's. Yet, we cannot know God's agenda without reading His Word and spending time with Him in prayer, both privately and corporately.

CONTEMPLATION & APPLICATION

Identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to your life.

How can you commit yourself to serving Jesus on His mission this week? How can you put His agenda above your own?

What common mission can our church pray for together?

PRAYER

Thank Jesus for sending you the Holy Spirit when you placed your trust/faith in Jesus through grace, by faith. Invite the Holy Spirit to lead your thoughts, decisions, attitudes, and actions every second of every day.

COMMENTARY

| ACTS 1:4-14

1:4 The Father's promise refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit, which would soon come (chap. 2).

1:5 John's baptism was a symbolic washing to purify and to indicate repentance of sin. Jesus' baptism of believers would be of greater impact and involved the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

1:6-7 Restoration of the kingdom of Israel was something for which all first-century Jews longed. It was commonly believed that Messiah, son of David and heir to his throne, would accomplish this restoration. Jesus deflected the disciples' misguided question and repeated His command that they were to be His witnesses near and far (cp. Mt 28:19).

1:8 The major focus of the book of Acts is stated in this verse. Jesus said believers would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them, empowering them to be His witnesses in Jerusalem first and then spreading to the ends of the earth. Note three things about how this unfolds. First, the empowering presence is to be the Holy Spirit, not Jesus Himself. Jesus prepared His disciples for the transition when the Holy Spirit would come to be a constant presence in His bodily absence. Second, the growth of the church would come about through the witness of the disciples. From the beginning, the church is depicted as a community that actively witnesses to their faith in Jesus Christ. Third, the result of this witness will be measurable, geographical growth. This growth will begin in Jerusalem and then spread through ever-widening concentric circles to other Jewish areas (e.g., Judea), to areas on the edges of Judaism (e.g., Samaria), and eventually to "the ends of the earth," which may refer to the known world of that time, likely coextensive with the reach of the Roman Empire. As new lands and peoples were discovered in coming centuries, the church understood that it must keep expanding its witness to reach the newfound "ends of the earth."

1:9-11 Luke briefly told about Jesus' ascension in his Gospel (Lk 24:51), and now he provides a somewhat fuller account. A cloud took Him out recalls the presence of God depicted as a cloud elsewhere (e.g., Ex 13:21-22). Thus Jesus was received by the Father in fulfillment of His words in Jn 7:33-34. Jesus' final instructions and ascension to heaven provide overlap and transition between Luke's Gospel and the book of Acts. The ascension took place on the Mount of Olives

outside Jerusalem (Ac 1:12). Jesus' return will be in the same way as He departed—bodily and visibly.

1:13 Luke 6:14-16 provides the same list of disciples. The lists in Mark and Matthew are similar, except for differences in the names of two disciples between Luke-Acts and Mark and Matthew. Several disciples had alternative names (Simon/Peter, Matthew/Levi; cp. v. 23), possibly accounting for differences between the lists. Simon the Zealot of Luke-Acts is probably Simon the Cananean, and Judas the son of James in Luke-Acts may be Thaddaeus.