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## An Expanding Witness

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### Text:

Then they gathered around Him and asked Him, "Lord, are You at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. But 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."  
Acts 1: 6-8

### The Hook:                    Why, When GOD Saved You, Did HE Leave You Here on Earth?

Acts 1: 6-8 says that they shall receive power from the Holy Spirit and shall be witnesses

Luke 24: 48-49 says, "And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Both these scriptures coincide with Zechariah 4: 6 which says "So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the Lord of hosts."

Luke the physician wrote a 2 volume work, the Gospel According to Luke and Acts of the Apostles, and you notice that the end of the Gospel of Luke overlaps with the beginning of Acts.

Both of these works remind us that power from The Holy Spirit is essential for an expanding witness for Christ. In both these texts Jesus is sending the Apostles out from Jerusalem, in ever expanding circles, to all the ends of the earth until all the nations are evangelized. This means HE sent them to tell the Good News of Jesus Christ throughout the entire world!

Jesus is not talking about an occasional "Word of Witness" in our same comfortable circle of culture or friends. No! HE's talking about ever-expanding efforts to penetrate more and more of Satan's strongholds of unbelief!!!

The power to witness, of course, comes from none other than The Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit is ESSENTIAL for an expanding witness to the power of Christ!

So here's a very unique question I put to each and every one of you this morning. Maybe you've never been asked this question before! Maybe you've never thought about this before: Have you ever wondered why, When GOD saved you, He left you here on the earth?

If GOD had wanted to, HE could have taken you directly to Heaven the moment you trusted in Christ, HIS Son!

William Arnott, a Scottish pastor in the last century, put the matter this way: To every true Christian these two things may be said, "You have need of Christ and Christ has need of you."

What a beautiful thought! Then he adds this thought: "The simple fact that a Christian is on earth and NOT in Heaven is proof that there is something here for him to do; and if he is not doing it, the neglect shows that he is not yet a Christian or that he/she is a Christian who grieves Christ!"

Well, let's put it another way. What is it that GOD left you here on earth to do?

What can you do here on earth that you can't do in Heaven? Let's explore this a bit.

You can have the joy of The Lord here on earth, just as you will in Heaven.

You can sing praises to GOD here on earth ("*The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!" Revelations 4:8*), just as you will in Heaven.

You can pray on earth, just as you will in heaven! "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honour and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created." Rev.4: 11

"And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Rev. 6: 10

"saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" Rev. 5: 12

**Jesus Himself prays for us.** "Who is He who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." Romans 8: 34

"You can fellowship with believers here on earth, just as you will in Heaven, but when you think about it, there is only one thing you can do on earth that you will never do in Heaven! So, what can you do here and now on earth that you can't do in heaven? You can witness to the power and glory of Christ and lead a lost soul to salvation here on earth! You can't do that in Heaven!!!! "Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." Luke 15:10

So, if you're going to share the good, great news of the glorious gospel, you've got to do it while you're here on the earth!!! This will never happen in Heaven!!!

We were left here on earth so that we might be HIS witnesses as it says in Acts 1:8!!!

In Heaven there will be no witnesses, because in Heaven, seeing is believing!!! In Heaven everyone will be redeemed by the blood of The Lamb!!!!

Also, think about it now, Christ does not send angels to share the gospel. Believe it or not, HE uses ordinary people like us to share, proclaim, preach and tell HIS good and wonderful truth!! "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!" Romans 10: 14 & 15

We, now get this, every single one of us, are GOD's witnesses! We are HIS evidence to convince an unbelieving world!! We are, in fact, HIS epistles (letters) of Grace." Ephesians 2:8,

We are HIS workmanship. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2: 10

We are HIS testament to a dying world. "You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;" 2 Corinthians 3:2

We are His dynamic scroll of grace. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, **9** not of works, lest anyone should boast." Ephesians 2: 8 & 9

We are sent out to the whole earth. Acts 1:8

Acts 1: 8 emphasizes 2 things we need to know.

1. **The Holy Spirit empowers disciples.** ""The Spirit of the Lord God *is* upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound;" **Isaiah 61:1**

2. **Spirit-filled disciples witness about Jesus around the world. They do not talk about sports or the weather or any other thing. They talk about Jesus Christ The Lord and all HIS benefits.**

**We need this power, the power of The Holy Spirit today. Without it, our witness for Jesus Christ will lack deep conviction, self-denying courage, convincing wisdom, and converting effectiveness.**

The Book:

A Witness Tells What He Knows.

When The Holy Spirit falls on you in power, your witness to Jesus Christ comes with deep conviction.

This is our greatest need today. In 1 Thessalonians 1:5 the Apostle Paul says, "For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake."

**When GOD clothes HIS witnesses in that power from on high, the effect is a deep certainty about the reality of, and a firm confidence and conviction to live this life and do HIS work!**

**My friends, Acts 4: 31 tells us,** "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness." **Acts 4: 31**

**Yes,** "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began," **2 Timothy 1: 7 - 9**

**They had a convincing wisdom and spoke irresistible words.** "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke." **Acts 6: 8**

So, what about us today? Are we satisfied with our spiritual level of power? Are we satisfied with the strength of our current witness for Christ?

Pray, seek the Lord, and ask for opportunities!

The greatest thing anyone or any church can do is pray!! Let's get on our knees and ask The Lord of All to help us win this lost world for Christ!!!

Jesus longs for this world, and we should too!!!!

Jesus "saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise to God."

Luke 18: 41 - 44

"just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him. In love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." Ephesians 1: 4 -14

"With my soul I have desired You in the night, Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early; For when Your judgments *are* in the earth, The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Let grace be shown to the wicked, *Yet* he will not learn righteousness; In the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, And will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord, *when* Your hand is lifted up, they will not see. But they will see and be ashamed For *their* envy of people; Yes, the fire of Your enemies shall devour them. Lord, You will establish peace for us, For You have also done all our works in us. O Lord our God, masters besides You have had dominion over us; *But* by You only we make mention of Your name. *They are* dead, they will not live; *They are* deceased, they will not rise. Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, And made all their memory to perish. 15 You have increased the nation, O Lord, You have increased the nation; You are glorified; You have expanded all the borders of the land. Lord, in trouble they have visited You, They poured out a prayer *when* Your chastening *was* upon them. As a woman with child Is in pain and cries out in her pangs, *When* she draws near the time of her delivery, So have we been in Your sight, O Lord. We have been with child, we have been in pain; We have, as it were, brought forth wind; We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen. Your dead shall live; *together with* my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew *is like* the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead." Isaiah 26: 9 - 19

It's incredible! Dr. W.A. Criswell stated that an amazing development occurred in Christian History. For hundreds and hundreds of years scholars have argued and debated over whether or not we have any obligation to preach the Gospel to the world. Can you believe it?!! It's amazing what can happen when people deny and pervert scripture!!!

So, when some English people came up to the Duke of Wellington and asked him, "Do you think it is obligatory that we preach the gospel to the heathen? He replied, "What are your marching orders? What did Jesus say?"

"The mandate of our Lord is explicit! There is nothing in The Word more plain than our assignment to evangelize, disciple, and win to Christ all, Yes all, the peoples of the world!!!! In fact there is no excuse written in the book!!! NONE!!!! NOT EVEN ONE!!!!

It has nothing to do with how hard it is, or the tremendous sacrifices to be made, or the fierce and terrible opposition we face, or the persecution that awaits!!!! It is an incredible, holy mandate that we go and evangelize all the peoples of the earth!!!! We are undoubtedly to tell what we know!!!!

Why! Why all this urgency?? Why the urgency of the Great Commission given by Christ Himself?? The answer from the blessed Bible is plainly stated, the world of humanity is LOST without Jesus Christ. "He who has The Son has life; he who does not have The Son of GOD, does not have life." 1 John 5:12

We face eternal doom unless we are saved in HIM!!!

It is difficult to forget that it was Jesus who spoke most, and most passionately about the lost and their estate. "And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." Luke 16: 23

No matter how you want to do it; theologically, philosophically, economically, or any other way you want to say it, men and women are LOST without GOD!! It is our awesome responsibility to show them Jesus!!!!

Ever since Cain asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?" "Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where *is* Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. *Am* I my brother's keeper?" Genesis 4: 9

Ever since Ezekiel wrote, "Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord God, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'" Ezekiel 33:11

We are to be witnesses! It's really not an option! I know this, I cannot escape it, and neither can all of you, every single one of you in this church! Anyone who is a part of the family of GOD is mandated to witness to the goodness and mercy of GOD!!!

If you lined up all the LOST people, that line would reach around the world 30 times! And that line is growing longer every day, at least 20 miles longer every single day!!!! We are facing a world that does not know GOD!, and that is more and more intolerant of Christ every day!!

But, Jesus, Lord of the Harvest said, "But 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." (Acts 1: 8)

Did you notice that, we are to be witnesses to the "ends", the uttermost parts, every corner of the earth!!!

Jesus Himself gave this as our very first order! This is HIS mandate for outreach!!!

The Took:

Acts 1: 8 says you shall be witnesses beginning in Jerusalem and then to all the rest of the earth.

Please understand, the light that shines the farthest is the light that shines the brightest at home. If we are not interested in the lost here at home, you won't be interested in the lost out there.

We need to win the lost people in our Jerusalem, our own Jerusalem of Georgina, or wherever you happen to live!!!!

Here is an incredible fact! That little band of eleven Apostles of Christ plus Matthias, twelve men, infiltrated that entire Greco-Roman Empire with the great message of redemption! They spread the Word of Christ far and wide without the benefit of any resources or tools except The Holy Spirit!!

That little band of preachers began the modern missionary movement with the power and persuasion that GOD was with them!!! Believing, and telling others, that GOD was good!!!

This is all about our commitment to our LORD!!! It is not a financial issue, it is a heart issue!!

This is a powerful seeking The LORD issue!!! It is a purposeful, prayerful, down on our knees issue!!!!

We must pray, pray, PRAY, and pray some more! We need to pray to see people won for Christ!!

We need to pray for others to seek HIS face!! We need to pray to be the shining light of Christ in the world around us EVERY day, every hour, every moment!

If I had a cure for cancer, here's what I would do. I would share that knowledge with my family! I would call my neighbours with the information, and I would proclaim far and wide that I had the cure!

Actually, I know something just as great, even greater, in fact! I know a name, a glorious name, the name of a most wonderful person! I know someone who offers eternal life ("For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." John 3: 16 & 17) so you will no longer be lost!! I know someone who offers grace and mercy to whoever wants it!!! "For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."" Romans 10: 13

You and I both know Jesus Christ our Lord is the giver of life, abundant life!!!

"Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you." Isaiah 60: 1

Remember, a witness tells what he or she knows! You know Christ!!

We are called to be witnesses!!!

Go and tell others! Share the glorious news of Jesus!!!!!!