

THE RESILIENT CHURCH

Acts 1:4-14; 2:1-4



SYNOPSIS

Acts 1 is a hinge between the past and the present, between the Old Testament and the global expansion of the Church. The book of Acts is often called the Acts of the Apostles, but perhaps it is more properly called the Acts of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus's death and resurrection inaugurated a long-awaited new Kingdom on earth. Yet his first command to his disciples was "wait" to receive the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was essentially communicating, "You can't do anything until you receive power from on high." (paraphrase of Acts 1:8)

The disciples prayed to actively seek the promised power of the Holy Spirit. Elisha eagerly watched for and desired the anointing required to inherit the fullness of his promised ministry. Jesus started his ministry with 40 days of fasting and prayer. At the end of that time, he "returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4:14). Why do we think we can do anything at all without Holy Spirit power?

As with modern electronics, the Christian life only works when powered by the Holy Spirit, who works in answer to prayer. May we become a praying church and, thus, a church made powerful by the Holy Spirit.



OUTLINE

1

WAIT

Jesus was the Messiah and Savior promised throughout the Old Testament. His resurrection promised the Kingdom restoration that Israel had awaited for millennia. Yet Jesus's immediate post-resurrection command was "wait". Jesus clearly commissioned his disciples, yet he knew they needed to be equipped with Holy Spirit power first.

2

POWER

Jesus implies that the key to transforming lives and communities depends entirely on Holy Spirit power, which is acquired through prayer. "If you are a stranger to prayer, you are a stranger to the greatest source of power known to human beings," said evangelist Billy Sunday. Jesus emerged from his 40-day fast and temptation "in the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4:14). Why do we settle for powerless Christian lives? Jesus's resurrection isn't the end of the story. God pours his power onto us for ministry. Don't do anything without that power.

3

ACTIVE ACQUISITION

Jesus's ascension contains echoes of Elijah's ascension. (2 Kings 2:1-14) Elisha's request for a "double portion" of Elijah's spirit was the request to be treated as an oldest son, to inherit the fullness of Elijah's prophetic ministry. Though Elijah had already identified Elisha as his successor (1 Kings 19:19), Elisha actively sought the filling of the Spirit that was in his mentor. The same principle is seen in the way the disciples devoted themselves to prayer after Jesus promised the filling of the Spirit (Acts 1:14). Spiritual power must be actively acquired, not passively received.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

When has God told you to wait when you wanted to go?

2

Have you ever wanted to do something so bad you decided to do it without the Holy Spirit? What was the result?

3

What does God's power in our lives look like?

4

What is the difference between actively acquiring God's power and trying to passively receive it?

5

What do you try to do without the Holy Spirit and prayer? Where do you need to implement a full stop in your life and pray?



BIG IDEA

The Christian life only works when powered by the Holy Spirit. Spiritual power must be actively acquired, not passively received. That power is acquired through prayer.

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