

**Sunday September 21, 2020**

**Sermon: The Power Behind The Mission**

**Text: Acts 1:1-9 and Acts 2:1-47**

### **Sermon Summary**

This message looks at the Power Behind The Mission of the Church being the Holy Spirit! Four points are discussed: Who is the Holy Spirit, why we need the Holy Spirit, what the Holy Spirit does, and what the Holy Spirit will not do. While there are many things the Holy Spirit does in our lives, only three things are focused on as they pertain to the mission! He enables us with the gifts we need to proclaim the gospel, informs our proclamation of the gospel and brings the conviction to the people who hear the gospel. The message ends with an example of how the New Testament Church was empowered by The Holy Spirit to advance the mission of the church in spite of persecution.

### **Full Sermon Notes**

“Spirit of the living God, Spirit of the living God We only want to hear Your voice, we're hanging on every word” We as the church and we as individuals desperately need to hear the voice of The Lord's Holy Spirit if we are to successfully carry out the mission we have been given to make disciples! We need to sense His presence if we are to have confidence in our mission, and we need His strength if we are to have hope of completing our mission! Let's pray and ask The Holy Spirit to help us understand how He is the power behind our mission! Pray!

### **Introduction:**

Today we're going to talk about the power behind the mission of the church which we discover in the Book of Acts!

The book of Acts was written by a man named Luke. The same Luke who wrote the gospel of Luke. He was not one of the twelve disciples, but a gentile physician who was a traveling companion of Paul on his missionary journeys. Back in their day, writers would classify their works as volumes so Luke is considered volume 1 and Acts is volume 2. Volume one, Luke's gospel was written to help gentile readers, non-Jewish, understand the good news about Jesus! He specifically wrote to one of his good friends. Listen...

Luke 1:1 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us,

Luke 1:2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.

Luke 1:3 Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,

Luke 1:4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Wow, what a friend. Luke wrote an entire book so that his friend could understand the good news of Jesus and that book has touched countless lives down through the years. Thank God for a guy like Luke! And even though Luke was a gentile, he thought it very important to show the ties between Jesus and the Jewish prophecies of the Messiah. "Things that have been fulfilled."

Most scholars believe Luke got his information from Mark's gospel, through conversations with people who had been with Jesus, and from another person who had not been an actual companion of Jesus, but knew a lot about Jesus, Paul the Apostle. Luke was inspired to write and record some things not found in the other gospels and record some things from a different perspective. Same truth, different angle! Luke knew it was important for people, both Gentiles and Jews, to understand that God had been working throughout history to redeem humankind from the fall! And why was God working so hard to do this? He wanted to be present with us like He had been with Adam and Eve before the fall, walking and fellowshiping with them!

Luke was deeply concerned with making this connection for Gentiles and Jews. He knew the gospel, the good news of Jesus would be unleashed in a powerful way and the mission of the church would advance if the people could see God's desire to be present with them. So even though Luke was probably not an eyewitness to the events surrounding Jesus' life, he did an awesome job of retelling them in volume one of his two volume work! But Luke "was" an eyewitness to many of the events surrounding the unleashing of the gospel in the New Testament church and in Paul's travels! Thus volume two! Luke realized he had witnessed a spectacular, supernatural event that was going to change the world! For that reason and with the inspiration of God, Luke writes this second volume to his friend Theophilus, The Book of Acts. If the Holy Spirit is the power behind our mission we must know the answer to this question...

### **Who is The Holy Spirit?**

Acts 1:1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach  
Acts 1:2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

Acts 1:3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them

Acts 1:3 over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

Jesus' presence after His death and resurrection would serve to give the followers of Christ a boldness and courage that even in the face of death and threat of persecution would not stop them from unleashing the truth of the Gospel, the good news...

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

If you've ever wondered if there's any way to prove the resurrection of Jesus, here is one of the most convincing proofs! Many of the very people who claimed to see Jesus after the resurrection were persecuted, imprisoned and even martyred for their faith. And while you would be justified to mention that many people of different religions have been willing to die for their faith, I think you would agree with me that people who are willing to die for their beliefs do so because of their deep conviction that what they believe is true. Here's the unique position the early followers of Jesus were in: Their belief that Jesus resurrected from the grave was not a belief based on something they had been taught, but based on something they had witnessed. If Jesus had not resurrected and the disciples had simply stolen His body and hid it away, then they would have been dying for something they knew to be a lie! People have died for lies before, but they thought they were following the truth. It would be an insane person who would die for something they knew to be a lie! The sheer number of early followers of Jesus who were martyred for their faith is one of the most convincing proofs of the resurrection of Jesus. As one historian put it:

"They didn't willfully lie about this. Liars make poor martyrs. Second, the disciples didn't just believe Jesus rose from the dead, but they knew for a fact whether or not he did. They were on the scene and able to ascertain for sure that he had been resurrected. So it was for the truth of the resurrection that they were willing to die..." Dr. Michael Licona as quoted in...

Strobel, Lee. NIV, Case for the Resurrection, eBook . Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Luke continues...

Acts 1:4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

Acts 1:5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

The power behind the mission of the church is the Holy Spirit of God! Do you remember what John the Baptist had said about Jesus and The Holy Spirit?

Matthew 3:11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

If we're going to talk about the Holy Spirit being the power behind the mission, we must first understand who The Holy Spirit is! Let me begin by letting you know that The Holy Spirit is not a thing! He's not a magical potion! He's not an impersonal force! He's not a substance to be used in some sort of formula for success! He is not a magic genie who can be turned on and off at your whim. The Holy Spirit, He is The Spirit of The Living God! He is The Spirit of Jesus The

Messiah! The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of The Holy Trinity! In fact Jesus had explained this to His disciples when He made a promise to them...

John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—

John 14:17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

John 14:18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

John 14:19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.

John 14:20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

Jesus said, "I am in you!" There could be no stronger indication that The Holy Spirit is The Spirit of Jesus Himself, and not just some inanimate force. Of course we know the concept of The Holy Trinity, God The Father, God The Son, and God The Holy Spirit, three yet one! We'll never fully understand this truth on this side of heaven, but we must know this: The Holy Spirit, He is The Spirit of God The Father and Jesus The Son!

This is evident in the words of Jesus... "I will come to you!" The Holy Spirit, He is The Spirit of Jesus! That's why I don't talk about the Holy Spirit using the word it! He is the very Spirit of Christ and He is how Jesus can live in your heart and my heart at the same time. Kids, I'm I saying Jesus really lives in your actual physical heart that pumps blood? No, it's not like Jesus is walking around in your blood vessels! But He does live in our spiritual heart by way of His Holy Spirit! He lives in that part of us that thinks, feels, loves, believes, trusts and makes decisions! His Holy Spirit allows the presence of God to be a part of our everyday lives! Knowing who the Holy Spirit is vital to our mission, but if the Holy Spirit is the power behind our mission, we must also ask this question...

### **Why Do We Need The Holy Spirit?**

There are many reasons we need The Holy Spirit in our lives, but for starters, we need Him to clarify for us our mission, our purpose as followers of Christ. Luke continues his story...

Acts 1:6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Acts 1:7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

Acts 1:8 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."

So Jesus emphasizes again the disciples mission, the mission of the church, the mission of the body of Christ, your mission, my mission: "You will be my witnesses!" But even after everything

the disciples had seen and heard, they were still stuck in their limited understanding of what their mission was. They were followers of Jesus and were astonished and amazed at seeing Jesus resurrected from the grave, and yet they were having such a hard time getting their eyes off the world's priorities and mission. Like the teachers of the law and the religious leaders of their day the disciples were still looking for the Messiah to be their political Savior, their physical earthly king. They wanted to see Israel returned to her former glory, when they were a world power and respected and feared by other nations. They wanted the power and prestige that had come along with that! They were looking for worldly blessings from God!

Jesus wanted them to know and understand that God's Kingdom was so much more than simply being powerful in the things and ways of the world. The disciples were still under the impression that the only way to change the world was to be in control, to be in charge, to be the rulers, to be the political power brokers. They needed to understand that the Kingdom of God was different, very different! You may wonder what the Kingdom of God is. The Kingdom of God is anywhere in which God rules. But here's the kicker: While God is all powerful in every way, He only sets up His Kingdom rule where He is invited to rule and you might be surprised where He most desires to rule: In the hearts and minds of people like you and me! Remember, He won't kick the door down! He knocks, and if you are willing to open the door He will come in and fellowship with you! We have to decide whether or not we will allow Him to be Lord of our lives. And the mission of the disciples was to take that message, that offer, to the world. Jesus said...

Acts 1:8 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 1:9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

Jesus had to leave in order for the disciples to step up their game! Jesus had to leave so He could send His Holy Spirit to live within the hearts of all believers everywhere! Remember Jesus had said this...

John 16:7 But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

Now the disciples were probably thinking, "how in the world could it be good for you to go away? We need You Jesus! You're our teacher! We've left everything to follow You and now You're talking about going away? What would we do without You? How could we make it without You? We don't understand!!! Hey kids, have you ever asked your parents for help on something and they told you to figure it out on your own? They may have said, "after you've worked on it for a while then we will help you!" That may not make sense at first, but later on you realize how it helped you to learn by trying first. Jesus was not saying He was going to leave the disciples without any help, but that His presence would be with them through His Holy Spirit and they were going to have to trust that promise!

By the way, this was going to be even better than Jesus' physical presence! And you might be wondering how in the world could that be better? Well, when Jesus was in a physical body, He was confined to that body and could only be in one place at one time. By ascending back to heaven, He could send His Holy Spirit to be with each one of the disciples even when they were not together as a group! The Holy Spirit would be able to be with each one of them 24/7 no matter where they were. So what's the problem, right? Well, when Jesus was with them, they could see Him with their physical eyes. He was tangible. In other words, they could reach out and touch Him and know He was there. With the Holy Spirit, they would have to have faith and trust that Jesus was still with them, even though they couldn't see Him. Now, isn't that one of the difficulties for us? We would like to see with our physical eyes too, but we have to trust that God is always with us by way of His Holy Spirit because...

We need the Holy Spirit to be our strength and power!  
We need the Holy Spirit to be our wisdom and truth!  
We need the Holy Spirit to be our joy and peace!  
We need the Holy Spirit to be our comforter and our counselor!  
We need the Holy Spirit to be our director and guide!  
We need the Holy Spirit to be our intercessor and our inspiration!

I think Paul summed up this idea pretty well in Romans 8...

Romans 8:26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

Romans 8:27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

So we've looked at Who the Holy Spirit is, and Why we need The Holy Spirit. Besides praying for us we must ask ourselves, if the Holy Spirit is the power behind our mission...

## **What Does The Holy Spirit Do?**

### **1. He enables us by gifting us!**

Acts 2:1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

Acts 2:2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Acts 2:3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

Acts 2:4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

Acts 2:6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.

Acts 2:7 Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans?”

Acts 2:8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?

Acts 2:9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

Acts 2:10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome

Acts 2:11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!”

Acts 2:12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

Acts 2:13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

Here’s an amazing truth we see in this passage: The Holy Spirit will give you whatever gift or tool you may need in order to accomplish the mission. Remember it’s a co-mission. It’s the mission of Jesus to seek and to save that which is lost, but now that Jesus has ascended to heaven, He has transferred the mission to us! We are His ambassadors! But He promised to never leave us and told the disciples He would be with them on their mission by way of The Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit usually uses the talents and gifts you naturally have, but in a critical mission situation He may give you a gift you’ve never had before and may never have again. In this situation, people had gathered from all over the world to celebrate the festival of the Pentecost. It was mission critical that they hear the good news of Jesus so The Holy Spirit enabled His witnesses to speak in the tongues of those people’s native languages even though they had not been to language school! Why? These folks would soon be going home and God desperately wanted them to hear the good news, before they left. So the Holy Spirit gifts us with what we need to proclaim the good news, but additionally...

## **2. He informs our proclamation!**

Jesus had previously told His disciples ...

Matthew 10:19 But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say,

Matthew 10:20 for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Peter was anointed by the Spirit, when he proclaimed the following message to the very people who had crucified Jesus. The very people Peter had been so afraid of that he denied knowing Jesus three times. But something had changed since the night of Jesus’ arrest! Peter had been filled with The Holy Spirit!

Acts 2:14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd:

“Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.

Acts 2:15 These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning!

Acts 2:16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

Acts 2:17 “ ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

Acts 2:18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

Acts 2:21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’

Acts 2:22 “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

Acts 2:23 This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Acts 2:24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

What a message! The Holy Spirit had informed Peter’s proclamation and it had a powerful impact on those who heard the message. The impact came because The Holy Spirit...

### **3. He brings the conviction!**

Sometimes we think we have to bring the conviction, but that’s not our job! Our job is to bring the message, to be a witness, to take the message to those who are lost in their sin, but it is the job of The Holy Spirit to bring the conviction! Kids, conviction of The Holy Spirit is when He lets you know you’ve done something wrong or bad and tries to get you to stop doing those bad things. He brings conviction, not condemnation. In other words, He doesn’t try to make you feel like you’re no good, or that you are not loved by God, or that you’re so bad you could never be forgiven, that’s condemnation and comes from our enemy the old Devel. The Holy Spirit brings conviction to draw you away from bad things because bad things will hurt you and The Holy Spirit doesn’t want you to get burned by sin! This is exactly what happened when Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost!

Acts 2:32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

Acts 2:33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

Acts 2:34 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, “ ‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand

Acts 2:35 until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.” ’

Acts 2:36 “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

Acts 2:37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Because Peter had been obedient to the mission by proclaiming the message of Jesus, the Holy Spirit did His part and brought the conviction! Now the people were ready for the rest of the

message! The soil of their hearts had been softened and tilled up by the Holy Spirit! To answer their question, “Brothers, what shall we do?”...

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

Acts 2:40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”

Acts 2:41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

And here’s what happened with that newly formed New Testament Church, filled with new believers who had accepted Jesus and had been filled with The Holy Spirit...

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 2:43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

Acts 2:44 All the believers were together and had everything in common.

Acts 2:45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

Acts 2:46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

Acts 2:47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Now I will close out our message on the Holy Spirit by letting you know some of...

### **What The Holy Spirit will not do!**

The Holy Spirit will not give you everything you want in life! (Like I said earlier, He’s not a magic genie in a bottle to grant you your wildest wishes!)

The Holy Spirit will not give you power to wield over others in a controlling kind of way!

The Holy Spirit will not give you a free pass from all difficulties!

The Holy Spirit will not always always make you feel emotionally high!

However, The Holy Spirit will not let you down or disappoint you if you will allow Him to fill you on a daily basis! What does that mean? You may have heard me say this before, but being filled with The Holy Spirit is not us getting more Spirit, but The Spirit getting more of us! In other words, we receive The Holy Spirit when we ask Jesus into our hearts to be our Savior. Being filled with the Holy Spirit happens when we allow The Holy Spirit to bring the Lordship of Jesus into every area of our lives: our thought life, our entertainment life, our work life, into our relationships, our goals in life and our mission in life! And when that happens, power to live life

in victory regardless of circumstances takes place! And all of this happens because The Holy Spirit brings God's presence and power into our lives in a very real and meaningful way even though we can't see Him with our physical eyes like the disciples saw Jesus!

It is by faith we know He is with us and you must understand this: If you go by feelings, Satan will beat you up with that! He will cause you to live in defeat because when you're feeling it you'll think things are all good and when you're not feeling it you will question whether or not God is even with you! Walking by feelings instead of walking by faith in the promises of God is a very dangerous thing! Don't get me wrong, I love it when I'm on the mountain top and really feeling it! I'm one of those people that feelings mean a lot to me. I'm somewhat of an emotional person. I've learned to keep the emotions in check, especially when I was a fireman and even now as a chaplain, but I'll never be able to completely get rid of my emotional side, but I've learned I must let The Holy Spirit control my emotions. So ironically, The Holy Spirit, rather than always bringing good feelings to you, needs to be the One who helps you control emotions, all of them. The negative ones like anger, fear, worry, doubt, discouragement, despair, and depression, but we also need the Holy Spirit to temper our dependence on good feelings like happiness, acceptance, accomplishment, success, exhilaration, excitement, and even contentment.

Don't get me wrong: The Holy Spirit will use feelings in your life at times. He may bring the joy of the Lord to you even in bad situations, because the joy of the Lord is not based on circumstances but on the promises of God and those hold true no matter the situation. The Holy Spirit may bring a sense of excitement to you concerning your mission in life. He may bring a great sense of God's presence to you in times of worship, or while you are on mission reaching out to someone with the Gospel. He at times may thrill your heart with a passage of Scripture as He helps you realize that God is speaking to you personally. At other times He may bring conviction to you about how certain behaviors or actions affect your mission as a witness for the Lord. He may at times burden your heart with the things that burden the heart of God in order to move you, and motivate you to take action to meet a need! And The Holy Spirit will get you through the tough times of your mission! I'll close with this example that happened to the disciples...

Acts 5:27 The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest.

Acts 5:28 "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood."

Acts 5:29 Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings!

Down in verse 40 we read this...

Acts 5:40.... They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

Acts 5:41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

Acts 5:42 Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

The Holy Spirit was the power of the mission back then and He is still the power behind the mission of the Church! Let's pray!!