

How easily distracted and dismayed we can be and become, how quickly allured by something of this earth and of ourselves, rather than see God's greater and fuller picture of all things. But, you see, this is where we come to the almighty Strength behind this powerful and promising call of Jesus in Acts 1:8. The verse begins with the words, "*But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you.*" The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity, and He as God is sent from the Father and the Son to open our minds and hearts to the Word and to open the Word to our minds and hearts. When He blesses us in the hearing and receiving of the Word, and when He accompanies and blesses us in the testimony of His Word, then great things, miraculous events as great as and greater than God's works in creation and providence, do take place. God the Holy Spirit is able to awaken and renew dead sinners, and to transform hopeless case sinners. He can make the deaf hear, and the blind see, and the lame walk, spiritually speaking as well as physically speaking.

The call and claim of Jesus to His disciples and for His church, "*ye shall be witnesses unto Me*", is powerful and promising because of the rock solid basis of it and the almighty strength behind it. Without the supernatural almighty Holy Spirit there would have been no Christ-focused, Bible-based, sinner inviting, convicting, converting, comforting preaching by any of the disciples of Jesus, and without the Holy Spirit there would have been no conversions on that first Pentecost with many added to the Christian Church. But with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as given by the Father and the Son to apply the salvation work accomplished in the hearts of sinners, there is an almighty strength behind this call. It is so wonderful that the Holy Spirit too is God Himself, equally divine with the Father and the Son. This means no sinner's case is too difficult for Him to crack, no heart too hard for Him to soften, no mind too closed for Him to open, no person too calloused for Him to convict, and convert. Do you know the power of the gospel considering its solid basis with the crucified risen Saviour, Jesus Christ, and the almighty Strength behind it, with the Holy Spirit given to apply it? Don't live without knowing the power of the Christian gospel. Jesus calls all to come unto Him and be saved. Listen again next week to hear more of this gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

Radio Ministry of the **FREE REFORMED CHURCHES** of North America

Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalms 60:4)



JESUS' POWERFUL AND ENCOURAGING WORD [1]

Do you know Jesus' last spoken word before He ascended into heaven 40 days after His resurrection from the dead? We find it in Acts 1:8 where Jesus says to His disciples from the Mount of Olives, "*But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*" Consider with me this powerful promising last word from Jesus before He returned to His Father in heaven. Notice the solid basis for His last word, the almighty strength behind it, the gracious plan with it, and the sure fruit upon it.

"*But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*" Jesus is making quite a claim here. He is saying to His disciples, "I have quite the task for you. I am giving you a great calling to accomplish.....I want you to go with my gospel message to all people, starting here in Jerusalem but then going from there till you reach all the globe! Why does Luke, the inspired author of Acts, give us this final word and call of Jesus before His ascension? Would it not be that Luke, led by the Holy Spirit, would have us see and know what lives in the heart of the risen, exalted Saviour? Having accomplished salvation for sinners through His death and resurrection, now as risen and triumphant Saviour, Jesus aimed to call sinners near and far, from every tribe and tongue and nation, and to find in Him, as proclaimed in His Word, free and full salvation from all sin and evil for this life and the life to come. Acts 1:8 is Jesus' call to gospel missions and reaching out to the neighbour and to the whole wide world with the message of the Saviour Jesus Christ.

But what a statement, really, that the whole world needs to hear the gospel message. Is the gospel message so special then? And if so, what makes it so special that everyone needs to hear it and be called to believe in Jesus? Well, with this we consider our first point, the solid basis for Jesus' powerful promising last word. In the verses before our text, telling of Jesus' resurrection from the dead and how "*also he shewed [presented] Himself alive after His passion [sufferings and death] by many infallible proofs*", you have the solid basis for Jesus' mission focus for His people. Just think of this, Jesus the crucified One Who suffered and died for sin in the place of

sinner, as Substitute for sinners, He Who was lifeless and dead in the tomb, He also rose again from the dead! This is not simply an astonishing miracle beyond words, but it so proclaims also God the Father's full approval and total acceptance of all Jesus' saving work on behalf of sinners. Jesus' resurrection from the dead is God's pronouncement to the world, 'I accept Jesus as fully qualified and totally reliable Saviour of sinners, and whoever turns from sin and believes on Him, trusting and following after Christ as their Saviour and Lord, any and all such shall be saved.' His later ascension into heaven was God's still further confirmation of Jesus as THE Saviour of sinners.

Dear friends, you can question whether any religion is of any use at all, but if, as in the Christian faith you have Jesus as Saviour rising from the dead, that really means something so grand and unique! Jesus' resurrection proclaims, there is salvation from sin through Him! There is victory over Satan with Him! There is deliverance from death with Him! There is escape from hell with Him! There is forgiveness of sins through Him! There is everlasting righteousness before God for us with Him and through Him! There is adoption into the family of God with Him! There is a loving restored relationship with God through Jesus the Saviour! There is entrance into eternal glory through Him! There is, instead of the hopeless misery of sin, abundant and everlasting life in and through Jesus Christ, the Saviour! All this and more, Jesus' resurrection proclaims, and Luke begins the book of Acts telling us about the many infallible proofs of His resurrection, and we are given quite a number of eyewitness testimonies of Jesus' indisputable undeniable, factual, actual resurrection from the dead. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, it is true, the Christian religion too is just one more human crutch and hoax in attempting to cope with life. But if, indeed, as is the case, He did arise from the dead, then you have with the Christian gospel astonishing, astounding, dynamite gospel truth that all the world needs to hear and know and understand and believe.....for who doesn't have to deal with sin, who doesn't face death, and an endless eternity, and who will not have to give an account one day before the one only true God?

The solid basis for Jesus' call to testify of Him to one and all is the fact that Jesus arose from the dead, for that fact alone makes absolutely true all the Bible says about Him. In and with the Christian gospel, and the whole message of the whole Bible, we are not given nor asked to go to others with an untrue, impotent, manmade, inefficient, irrelevant, untimely, unnecessary, unkind, and unhelpful gospel message, but rather, with Jesus Christ as the Risen Redeemer, we have an all-powerful gospel message, good news that is supernatural and timely, true and necessary, and that is most kind and urgent. We have better news than any cure for cancer or for AIDS or any serious disease. We have better news than any sure remedy from crime, or any prescription for living to a ripe old age, because we have with

Jesus, the risen Saviour, the message of a 100 percent guarantee and 100 per cent success rate on the way of victory over death, and about complete escape from sin's guilt and bondage and punishment, and we can tell about God in Christ Jesus being the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our tribulations in a way that you can be filled with jubilation in hard times, yes, even also in the face of death!

How the fact of Jesus' resurrection, and the many infallible proofs the Bible also gives for that fact, should so give us strong confidence concerning the gospel message, and the call also to pass it on. Do you see the sure basis of Jesus' powerful promising call in the fact of His resurrection from the dead? Is the fact of Jesus' resurrection from the dead something more or less dead to you, it says so little for you, could it be? "Oh God, give us a wake up call through even this word, that we get with it, that we realize it, and that we know the power of this gospel, and for ourselves just love this truth so much and glory in it, time and again - Jesus' resurrection from the dead!" No more needs to be said when you know and believe and depend on and relish this gospel fact, and then, of course, you should go out as His witnesses here and to all the world, for Jesus is clearly then the one and only Saviour of sinners and one Whom all people need.

Jesus' powerful promising call makes sense in view of its solid basis with His resurrection from the dead, and this call makes so much sense in view of the almighty power behind it. What does Jesus say in verse 8, our main text? "*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*" Jesus said this to His disciples, people like Peter, James and John, Thomas, Matthew, and Andrew. These men were but simple men, and how weak and unreliable they were in themselves, and how slow to really understand and grasp Jesus' gospel purposes and His kingdom plans. In verse 6 we find the last word of the disciples spoken to Jesus before He ascended, and what do these slow to learn disciples ask? "*Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*" Their question showed their lack of understanding concerning Jesus and what all He was really and ultimately about, and they were apparently still looking for Him to establish some earthly Jewish kingdom....and my point now is, and didn't Luke intend this too with including this foolish question from these disciples, were *these* men now to tell the news to all the world, and could there be any fruit on that to be expected at all?

And it's true, isn't it, if you look at people, even at the most devout and zealous and strong Christian whom you may know, can you really expect much at all from him or her, in and of themselves? How wrong the most upright believer still can be! How weak even the strongest child of God really is! How dull and slow to understand the most spiritually mature with God!