

Acts 1:4-8

This morning we begin our summer missions series that I am extremely excited about preaching: Risk, getting the gospel to the riskiest places. This morning, and next week, we are going to introduce this series by giving a 20,000 feet flyover of Acts 1:8. We are going to answer 6 questions: who, what, when, where, how, and why. We will then spend the remainder of our series fleshing those six questions out one by one in detail.

READ/Pray

There are 6 questions I want to answer concerning this text. Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How. This morning we will see the first 3.

I. Who?

The answer to who is You. *You shall receive power*

1. Christ has not reserved this commission for
 - a. Preachers / Evangelists
 - b. Missionaries / An elite group of believers
 - c. This is a privilege for all of his followers.

2. Jesus has made it clear, if we are His followers then this is for us.
 - a. Matt 28:19-20 *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*
 - b. Mark 16:15 *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*
 - c. Luke 24:46-47 *Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*
 - d. John 20:21 *Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you*
 - e. And here in Acts 1:8

3. You can't brush this off or pass this off. You can't excuse yourself
 - a. Not only do we have the commands of Christ from above
 - b. We have been called from all around: The vision of the man from Macedonia
 - c. We have been called from below.
 - d. We are compelled from within: woe is me if I preach not the gospel.
 - e. Jim Elliot shared the clarity of the call when he wrote, "*Consider the call from the Throne above, "Go ye," and from round about, "Come over and help us," and even the call from the damned souls below, Send Lazarus to my brothers, that they come not to this place."* Impelled, then, by these voices, I dare not stay home while *Quichuas* perish. So what if the well-fed church in the homeland needs stirring? They have the Scriptures, Moses, and the Prophets, and a whole lot more. Their condemnation is written on their bank books and in the dust on their Bible covers. American believers have sold their lives to the service of Mammon, and God has His rightful way of dealing with those who succumb to the spirit of Laodicea."

4. We have reduced missions to a calling.
 - a. It is not a calling. It is a command!
 - b. We have reduced missions to a program over here in the church,
 - c. Missions is not a program in the church. It is the program of the church

II. What?

The answer to what is Witness. *You will be my witnesses.*

1. A witness is one who has a personal experience with, knowledge of, and relationship with Christ.
 - a. This raises a serious question.
 1. Are we witnesses—one who has personal knowledge of something.
 2. Or are we advocates—one that supports or promotes the interests of another.
 - b. Advocates don't change the world! Only witnesses change the world.
 - c. Acts 4:13 *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus*
2. A witness is one who is willing to lay down their lives and their all for Christ and His Great Commission
 - a. I think it is important to note as well, that the greek word translated witness here, and throughout the new testament is the word "martyres" from the greek root "martos."
 - b. The word literally, and originally meant witness, an eye witness or ear witness.
 - c. The word however, as you can probably tell, has been borrowed by the English Language "martyr" and means to die for one's faith.
 - d. This was because the witnesses "martyres" of the NT so often were put to death for their witness that the word martyres became synonymous with one who dies for their faith.
3. A witness is one who has such personal experience with, knowledge of, and relationship with Christ that they are willing to lay down their lives and their all for Christ and His Great Commission.

III. When?

The answer to when is the Holy Spirit.

1. We are the product of our culture and as a product of our culture, we have been ingrained with the American spirit.
 - a. As the American dream goes, we can do anything we set our minds to accomplish.
 - b. I fear that we in the 21st century American church are so capable, so skilled, so resourced, and so diligent that we never really need God.
2. We need the power of the Holy Spirit whether we recognize it or not.

Now, let's think about this.

1. **This power comes from (with / through) the Holy Spirit**

- a. You WILL, not may, but WILL receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.
 1. He does not say you will receive salvation, church membership, etc.
 2. He says you will receive power.
- b. This is an emphatic statement that Jesus makes...there are no if's ands or buts.
- c. If the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you have power. Where is your power?
- d. Have we ever really experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives or is He just someone that we talk about?

2. This power was not present in their lives.

- a. Jesus said, you WILL receive power.
- b. This means that they did not already have this power.
 1. They had walked with Jesus for 3 years!
 2. They had seen Him crucified, buried, resurrected and working miracles!
 3. They had left everything to follow Him
 4. He had even breathed on them and said, receive the Spirit, yet they did not have this power.
- c. Some of us have known God, followed God, and believe, but do not have power and we don't even recognize it.
- d. We can carry on most of our activities smoothly, efficiently, even (by all indications) successfully, never realizing that the Holy Spirit of God is virtually absent.
- d. Maybe before there is any hope of us receiving this power, we must admit that we don't have it...that we need it.

3. This power was essential to the mission.

- a. This power was so essential to the mission that Jesus told them not to do ANYTHING until they received it
 1. Luke 24:49 *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.*
 2. Acts 1:4-5 *And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*
- b. We wouldn't have lasted 5 minutes!
 1. There is a Gospel to proclaim!
 2. There is a world to reach!
 3. We must get busy!
 4. But Jesus said, wait.
- c. I wonder how many people went to hell as they waited.
- d. Yes, we must work, we must plan, we must organize, and create
 1. But we do it all while we fast, while we pray, and while we constantly confess our need for the provision of God.
 2. We do it all in light of Jesus promise that, *apart from me you can do nothing.*

4. This power is needed by us today.

- a. This power, this presence of the Holy Spirit, is something that we should be pursuing and pleading for.
 1. Eph 5:18 *And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit*
 2. This is not a one dose and your done kind of deal. We need more.
 - a. Do you want to know the Father more and experience him in greater ways?
 - b. Do you want to know Jesus more and experience him in greater ways? YES
 - c. What about the Holy Spirit? Oh, I already have him.
 3. Acts 4:31 *And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.*
- b. Where is this power of the Holy Spirit that we read about in Acts?
- c. With this power, Peter preaches 1 sermon and 3000 are saved at Pentecost.
 1. Today we preach 3000 sermons and rejoice if 1 is saved.

2. With this power...
 - a. Acts 16:20 *And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city"*
 - b. Acts 17:6 *And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also"*

We say we want to experience the power of the Holy Spirit, but we often forget that the Spirit's power is given for the purpose of being his witnesses.

Conclusion:

If we are going to take the RISK of fulfilling the Great Commission by getting the gospel to riskiest places we must understand Acts 1:8.

1. We must know the answer to these questions.
 - a. Who? You
 - b. What? Witnesses
 - c. When? When the Holy Spirit comes upon you.
2. We must not only know the answers to these questions, but we must understand their application to our lives...and we must respond.