

You Will Be Witnesses (Part 1)

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[0:00] Before we get to the message itself, let me again let you know that throughout this month, our emphasis, my emphasis here from the pulpit is going to be missions.

! And October is going to be missions month, is missions month. And last Sunday I shared with you what the Great Commission is. And our theme, of course, is go.

You see that on these banners and I guess up here on the screen right now. That's our theme. Go.

And in order for us to obey the Great Commission, we must go.

Now, of course, you might remember from last Sunday that the command is to make disciples. Do you remember that? That's the command in the Great Commission.

It's the only imperative verb in the Commission as given by Jesus and recorded in Matthew 28. But in order to obey that command, we must go.

[1:12] We must go. And we must go in all directions. Or I might say it this way, in an ever widening circle. And that brings us to Acts chapter 1, verse 8, which will be our focus this morning and for the next several Sundays.

Where the Bible commands us to go to Jerusalem to be witnesses of Jesus in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the world.

And so you see very clearly in that commission that we have a command to go in ever widening circles. And I maintain, as your pastor, that we're not fully obedient to the Great Commission if we're not involved in going, to some extent or another, to each of those circles, the widening circles of the Great Commission.

So that means we need to go here, but also ultimately to the world. Now, for the next four Sundays, I'm going to spend a little time, before preaching, speaking a little bit about the widening circles.

And we're going to begin this morning with our Jerusalem. Our Jerusalem. That's where we're to go first. Now, that would include Bartlesville.

[2:43] And I would add to that, do we, because our communities are so close together. And so we're to be involved in going to our Jerusalem.

Bartlesville. I'm very thankful to our Acts 1-8 missions team. For the last, I don't know, umpteen months, they have put together a strategy, kind of a framework for a strategy.

Not necessarily fleshing out all of the various categories or aspects of our strategy. We'll be doing that here in the next year and on beyond.

But putting together a strategy for missions. And that would include our Bartlesville. And what will that include? Number one, it includes GROW.

Now, some of you are involved in GROW. G-R-O-W. And by the way, the G-R-O-W stands for God Rewards Our Work. And our GROW ministry is a visitation ministry.

[3:50] And it involves going to visit those who have visited our church. visiting prospects through our WANA and Sunday School ministries.

And other prospects that we might encounter, might be provided. And GROW is our outreach ministry.

It's a ministry that includes sharing the gospel with people one-on-one as the opportunity avails itself. It involves encouraging and a lot of other things that we would be doing.

It also involves encouraging even some of our membership that maybe have become, for one reason or another, inactive in our church. Now, if you're not a part of GROW, then I would ask you to seriously pray about committing yourself to this ministry.

And if you do, then I'm only asking, your church is only asking from you, a commitment for one Tuesday a month. Either you'll be a part of the G team or R team or O team or W team.

[4:58] And just one Tuesday a month to go out and visit those that need to be brought into our church. Those who need to hear the good news. Those who need to be encouraged.

And so forth. I will add to this also that our initial emphasis for the next month or two, however long it takes, will be to do some door-to-door, what we would call opinion polls and surveys.

Some of you have been involved in those in the past. And we're just going to systematically go street by street, starting with these streets right out here in our own neighborhood, and go door-to-door and ask them some questions about how we might meet their needs, what church they might be affiliated with, and several very non-intrusive questions.

And that will help us not only get to know the people that are here in our neighborhood, but also discover some things about their spiritual condition.

And some of these people, obviously, are going to be already linked to churches. And some of them are going to be born-again believers. Some are not. And we're going to develop a kind of prospect file, so to speak, so that we can go out and make further contact with some of these who do not know Jesus, so that we can share the gospel with them and make disciples, just like the commission has commanded us.

[6:32] So if you're part of Grow now, then I ask you to stay committed to it. If you're not, then I would ask you to commit to it. Just one Tuesday out of the month, and we're going to systematically go door-by-door and reach people for Christ.

That's Grow. A second thing that goes with our Bartlesville, our Jerusalem, would be, if you'd get to that next slide there, dear brother, our community connection.

And that involves some things that we do outside our church. Sunfest. Where we might have a presence there as Highland Park Baptist Church.

Maybe a booth. Maybe something where we would hand out bottles of water or information about our church. Something like that, so that the people who participate in Sunfest would also have an exposure to our church and what we believe and our desire to minister to them.

That would also include a similar thing with Indian Summer, the county fair, and then in kind of a general way. By the way, you know, on Sunday mornings, probably taking place right now, the soccer fields are full of people.

[7:54] Playing soccer, families are gathered there. And not just on Sunday morning, but a lot of other times during the week. And the idea is to commit to just being present there and walking around and handing out bottles of water.

That will be a real key thing to do in the summertime especially, of course, when those events are taking place. And there will be other opportunities for us to do that.

Just handing out a bottle of water. And on that bottle of water will be some information about our church. Maybe even a short outline of the gospel. And these are community connections that many of you, hopefully all of you, in some aspect or another, will commit a little bit of your time to be a part of.

A third thing in our Bartlesville will include our Fall Family Festival. That's coming up, isn't it? And I assure you that Yvonne, who is kind of heading up all of that, needs your help in preparation.

So we'll be talking more about that. But we need all of your help for putting together the candy. And if you've ever participated, been present during the Fall Family Festival, you know that there are a lot of kids here with their families.

[9:19] And this year, we want to take an even further step in making connection with the people who come to our Fall Festival, a connection with the gospel.

Not only visually, as a part of our decorations for the Fall Family Festival, for also things we get in people's hands, and also some very deliberate ways to follow up on those who attend our Fall Family Festival who do not have any church home.

And many of them are not believers. And that provides for us a connection with those so that we can go and bring Jesus to them. The next thing in our Jerusalem, our Bartlesville, of course, is our Hispanic ministry, which we have not started yet.

And some of you are wondering, when are we? I want you to know that our Hispanic ministry team has been working. And we have thus far, this is something really to make a matter of prayer, thus far come against obstacle after obstacle.

We have interviewed a prospective Hispanic pastor. And in the course of our interview time with him, it became very apparent that he was not the right man for our church and for our community.

[10:38] And so God has brought us back to step one, square one. And we're about to visit with another prospective Bible teacher, possibly a pastor, who would help us start with a Bible study for Hispanics in our community that would evolve and lead to, in God's timing, to a Hispanic church.

And then also the desire to, once again, start up the ESL ministry, which is a tremendous way to connect with Hispanics, and not just Hispanics, but other groups from foreign countries, connect with them and connect the gospel with them.

Also, next, our Bartlesville, our Jerusalem, involves partnership for growth. Now, what is that? Well, I named it that because what we need to do here in our community is to partner with a church, a struggling church, a church located on the western side of our community, where evangelism is very key, very important, where there is a huge harvest of people, many of them lower income. And the churches that are on that side of our community, many of them, really most of them are struggling. It became apparent to me that we're pretty quick to partner with a church in some foreign country and help them with their ministry and support them with their ministry.

Pretty quick even to do such a thing with a church in some other state in our nation that needs support. And we might partnership not only in prayer, but also in some other things that we might do.

[12:37] Easy for us to make that kind of connection and then forget all about the churches that are right here in our own community that need help, need support.

Maybe they're struggling with issues of evangelism. Maybe they just don't have enough people in their church to get out into their communities and to make contact, make contact, connection with the people there and lost people there.

But we want to connect with a church on the west side of our community to help them with and do some evangelism projects with them, some backyard vacation Bible schools, to even help them with some facility improvements and such.

And you might be thinking, some of you, and it's natural for us to think so because we're Southern Baptists and we're thinking, how's that going to help our church grow? See, that's not the primary thing we need to be concerned about.

We're concerned about the growth of the kingdom. And we need to be kingdom-minded. And what we want to do is to help a church in that community within Bartlesville, Dewey area, and help them reach the people there for the growth of their church.

[14:00] Because if their church grows, the kingdom grows. And we need to be a part of that. And so we need to be much in prayer about that as we go a step further and discover just which church God wants us to link with and help them in their ministry so that they can be a vibrant, growing church, as God wills.

That's partnership for growth, or I might even say partnership for the kingdom. And then also, in our Bartlesville, we want to continue an ongoing relationship with the Salvation Army.

Salvation Army here in our community does a lot to help fulfill and meet the physical and material needs, as well as spiritual needs, of people here who are in need and continue to be needy people. And we have done some things over the years, and we'll continue that and look for other opportunities where we can link with the Salvation Army to help them with a very vital ministry.

This is our Bartlesville. Now, I'm not included in this kind of list of things the many other things that we're already doing in our church, because I would maintain that even our Sunday school is a part of going, or should be.

[15:25] And we do need to focus on our small group Bible study that we call Sunday school and seek to make it more of a going thing so that it can be a growing thing and not just simply closed within itself.

And many other ministries that we have, our WANA ministry and our discipleship ministries with children and youth and even our Wednesday night program of prayer and Bible study and many other things.

All of these things that we're doing now and other things that we need to do and this is part of our strategy all come together to make a complete package, if I might use that term, a complete package for our obedience to the Great Commission where Jesus said, you shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem.

And this is our Jerusalem. Next week we'll see Judea talk about some things and share with you some strategies for reaching our Judea, which includes our state and Samaria, which would include

our nation.

We've got some exciting things to share with you about that and then also our world and some connections that we hope to make to the world so that we're not just going here, even though this is our primary responsibility right here, Bartlesville.

[17:00] And most of our resources and our time and effort should be devoted here. But not just going here, but going to our state and going to our nation and some of us as we're able to actually physically go to select points in our world so that we are truly obeying the commission in all aspects in its ever-widening circle.

Amen and amen. Now this morning, as I mentioned a moment ago, we're going to be, or I'm going to start a series of messages out of Acts chapter 1 entitled, You Shall Be Witnesses.

And that comes right from the text itself. And I'll go ahead and give you kind of an advertisement or a heads up next Sunday. Again, our focus is going to be Judea.

But Brother Paul Kuntz is going to be here, our director of missions. And Brother Paul is going to share a word from God's Word. He's going to preach and his emphasis is going to be missions. And then we'll get back to Acts chapter 1 and verse 8 on the final two Sundays of this month. And really, milk, if I could use that expression, milk all we can get out of this verse.

[18:28] Or maybe it would be better to put it this way, mine all of the gold, all of the riches from this particular example of the Great Commission.

Acts chapter 1 and verse 8. So let me read the text, really starting with verse 6. Verse 7. Therefore, when they had come together, they asked him, saying, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?

And he said to them, It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in his own authority, but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.

Now, of course, verse 8 is the most familiar portion of the text, but I assure you before we're done this month, we're going to be looking and again, mining great truth and riches from all of those verses.

The focus this morning is going to be verse 8. And again, under this heading, You shall be witnesses unto me.

[19:50] Several years ago, the church that I was pastoring took part in an association-wide series of meetings that was called a Sunday School Revival.

Some of you have been around long enough in Southern Baptist life, you might remember those from time to time. We'll have Sunday School Revivals. Maybe it's a good thing that we should resurrect that and have those again.

But the man who led this series of meetings was a man by the name of Leon Kilbrief. You may not know him. He was, at the time, I think Leon has gone on to be with Jesus, but he was known as Mr. Sunday School.

And he made a statement during one of those meetings that has stuck with me and I might even say has haunted me as a pastor.

And he said this, The church that is not actively reaching the lost with the gospel is a church that is out of God's will.

[20:54] Now, I don't know what you make of that. I don't know if you agree with that statement. I do. And we should. Does it bother you? Well, that statement, it does me.

And it should bother us. And in a sense, should haunt us. Because if this statement is true, and I believe it to be true, then it stands as an indictment to any church that is not actively taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to their community and indeed to their world.

Because again, the Great Commission includes the world. And when I say that the Great Commission includes the world, it is not for us to think that, well, there are those who take care of the world part and will take care of our part.

No, we are to be in some measure or another involved in taking the gospel to the entire world. And if we're not doing that, then according to Leon Kilbruth, and I think he's right, because I think it's according to Scripture, we're not in God's will.

We're out of God's will. And you know, when it comes to evangelism and an emphasis in evangelism, or really any emphasis at all in the church, we typically refer to it as a program.

[22:25] You know. And so, some of you might be thinking, well, here comes the pastor. He's introducing a new program for us once again. You know. And programs kind of come and go and in order for us to, we think, to keep some kind of vitality in what we're doing in the church, we've got to come up with new programs and another new program and a new program to replace the old program and so that we kind of have a fresh new emphasis once again.

And we kind of think we add life to that. So, everything that we do in a Baptist church we seem to do through some program. Isn't that right? I think so.

Almost everything, though. And it may be just a matter of semantics, but I want to say to you that evangelism is not a program. It should never be thought of as a program.

Great Commission work is not a program. It is a process. It's a process in our lives. Individually. As we live at our lives individually, as individual believers.

It's a process when it comes to corporately. We think of the church corporately. It's a process. It's a process by which everything in our arsenal, we think of it on a church level, where everything in our arsenal as a church comes to bear on obedience to the Great Commission.

[23:56] It's a process. And when it does, God blesses. He does. Every time. God blesses. And in effect, He says, there's a church down there that is doing what I have told them to do.

What I have commanded them to do. And I'm pleased with that. And I will bless them. And I will make them fruitful. So then, let's look at Acts chapter 1.

And this morning specifically verse 8. And let's see what Jesus says to our church concerning the Great Commission. We'll just cover one point this morning with a few sub-points.

And then we'll take each one over the next several Sundays. Number one. Rely upon the source of Great Commission work.

Now, say that again. Here's number one. The first thing I glean from Acts chapter 1 verse 8. Rely upon the source of our Great Commission work.

[25:08] And the source is not something that we can just simply come up with on our own. The source is not some financial thing or resource thing.

The source is something else entirely. And Jesus tells us what it is. He said there in verse 8, look at it again. But you shall receive what?

Power. It's pretty clear, isn't it? You shall receive power. When? When the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

This is what Jesus said. And then He said, you shall be witnesses to Me. But the focus here, the key in our understanding of Great Commission work, the key step toward becoming not only Great Commission Christians, but also collectively a Great Commission church, is to rely upon the source of Great Commission work, and it is the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now, the word power, and I'm sure you've heard this before because it's kind of a favorite point for preachers to make. The word power in the text comes from the Greek word *dunamis*.

[26:29] *Dunamis*, and as a matter of fact, we get our word dynamite from this Greek word. And I want to caution you, don't make too much of a connection between the word dynamite and the Greek word *dunamis*.

The word dynamite, of course, conveys the idea of destruction, doesn't it? That's not what we're about. We're not given some power to destroy things. The power given to us by the Holy Spirit is not a destructive power.

We also, by the way, get our word dynamic from this word *dunamis*, and I think that's more like it. Not a destructive power. Not even an explosive power.

I've heard preachers make that kind of connection. The Holy Spirit gives us an explosive power, you know, in ministry and so forth. It's not that. Rather, it is a dynamic, or how about if I use this word, effectual power of God.

That is the key to Great Commission work. You see, the Holy Spirit, with all of His dynamic power, lives in the life of every born-again believer.

[27:40] Everyone here, names the name of Christ, you've been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, born again, you are a born-again Bible-believing Christian, I guarantee you, according to Scripture, residing within you is the very person of God through the Holy Spirit, living inside of you.

Every true believer has the power of God, then, because every true believer has the living God abiding, indwelling your life.

It's the Holy Spirit. Isn't that right? That's what the Bible tells. Now, see, here's the point. I'm not waiting or hoping to have access to that power, the power of God.

I'm not hoping for that someday, that maybe I'll get that someday. I have it right now. Now, it may not be operating, it may not be realized, it may not be active as it ought to be, and that's another subject, and we'll get to that in just a minute, but the truth of the matter is, residing in you is the power of God.

You've got it right now. And, by the way, I have all there is to have of it right now. Do you understand that about the presence of God in your life?

[28 : 56] And His power? I have all of that power right now, God in I have to have. God didn't come in part.

He didn't just give you a leg or a hand or part of Him. It's all of Him residing in you. I want you to notice something here in Acts chapter 1 verse 8 that I think is important for us to note.

Jesus said to his disciples, you shall. Do you see that word? It may not be shall, it may be will in your translation, but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

Now, if you're not careful, you'll make a mistake here. It's barely perceptible, but you still will. You could. The word shall and the word when are words that point to the future, right?

Now, follow me here. Don't make any assumptions or conclusions yet. I might be making a different point than you think. But let's just agree, the word shall and when are pointing to the future.

[30 : 16] And they are that way because this is the way Jesus spoke the commission. These were the words he used. Because Jesus, you see, said these words to his disciples when?

Just before his ascension. But more importantly, before Pentecost. He said them before Pentecost. Before the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Upon them to indwell them. You see, this represented a promise of something that would take place for them in the near future.

They didn't know how near, but it was going to be very near. Something for them for the future.

Listen. Listen. Listen. We live on this side of Pentecost.

We live on this side. The Holy Spirit has come. Has come. We're not waiting for that to happen. Some subsequent event after we got saved.

[31 : 23] We got him right then. The moment we were saved. And so we're not waiting for the promise. And this is a promise, dear people, that Jesus inserts in the commission.

We're not waiting for the promise. We have it right now. We have the Holy Spirit now living in us. Abiding in us. Indwelling us. Right now. Right this very moment.

The Bible says in Romans 8 and 9. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit. If indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.

That is, if indeed you really are saved. And how do we know he's talking about being saved here? It's because he goes on to say. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ. The Holy Spirit. He is not his.

That is, you don't belong to God. That is, you're not saved. But if you're a born again believer. You have indwelling in you. The Holy Spirit of God. And with the Holy Spirit.

[32 : 23] You have his promise. The promise of his power. Now I do need to mention something else here. This is important. It is not until we yield all to the control of the Holy Spirit.

That his power is realized. Or released in a sense. In our lives. Now he's there. All of him. And with him.

His power. And specifically. Power. For evangelism. Power. To speak the truth. The gospel of Jesus Christ.

He's there. All his power is there. But we don't realize it. And it is not released. Necessarily. Until we have. Done what.

Paul tells us in Ephesians chapter 5 verse 18. That famous passage. Do you remember it? It's a key verse. For believers. He said.

[33 : 25] Be not. Drunk with wine. In which is dissipation. That's the New King James Version. Or. Debauchery. By the way.

It's the word. Asotia. It means unsavedness. So do not be drunk with wine. In unsavedness. But. And here's the key. Be filled. With. The Holy Spirit. Be filled with him. Now some have taken that passage. And have misinterpreted it.

To say that this is something that comes later. That we're to be filled with something. You can get saved. And then later you get filled with him. Now that's not the idea. Not being filled in the sense that we.

Seek. More of him. Not at all. Because we have all of him there is to have. And so what does it mean? Well the word filled. Comes from a very key word.

[34 : 19] In the New Testament. And it is the word. Pleroo. In the Greek. And it means. To fill. To the top. So there is no room. For anything else.

Now what does that mean? How does that apply here? Well it. It completes. And complements. The analogy Paul is using. In this very famous verse. You talk about being drunk with wine.

Don't be drunk with wine. And then he talks about being filled with the Spirit. And it's an illustration. And so he's saying. Like the drunkard. Who is filled with wine. And therefore. Yielding completely to the control.

Of that substance in him. We are filled with the Holy Spirit. And yielding. Then our lives. To the complete control. Of the Holy Spirit. And so it's not.

Then the idea. Is not to get more. Of the Holy Spirit. Is for the Holy Spirit. To get more of us. And it's a daily thing. And it is then. That is when we yield.

[35 : 18] To the. The control. The lordship. Of God. In our lives. To the person of the Holy Spirit. It is then. That we become dynamic. The dynamis.

That is effectual. Great Commission Christians. And collectively. Then. Great Commission churches. And that's what we want to be. So.

What does this power do. In the life. Of the believer. The believer. Who yields. To the control. Of the Holy Spirit. What does. He do. At least. Three things.

Number one. He produces. Change. He produces. Change. The kind of change.

That we need. In order to be. Great Commission Christians. You see. When. You were saved. You know. Just use. Those terms.

[36 : 14] When you were saved. You became. A new creation. May not have felt anything. At the time. And it's not something. Necessarily. Very perceptible.

In a visual way. Or. Emotional way. Necessarily. Though. I think. Some of those things. Do come into play. But when you were saved. You became a new creation.

Something brand new. You were. In a spiritual sense. And by the way. In a very real sense. Is recreated. By God. When you became a Christian.

Or to use. The terms that Jesus used. With Nicodemus. You were born again. Birth. From above. Born again. And that's what the Bible says. Doesn't it?

In 2nd Corinthians. Chapter 5. And verse 17. The Bible says. Therefore. If anyone is in Christ. That is. You're saved. In Christ. He is a. What? New creature.

[37 : 11] Or new creation. That's what we are. We're new creations. Old things have passed away. Behold. All things have become new. That's what Paul said.

And so. In a very real sense. The Holy Spirit. Comes in. And changes us. Now. The word change. Is not something. We necessarily like. There's everything.

In our fleshliness. That resists it. It's just almost human nature. We don't want change. But the Holy Spirit. Changes us. He does. Now. He makes us brand new. Some of that is perceptible.

And as we. Continue to live. And grow. In our faith. It becomes. I think. And should become. Even more. Perceptible. And observable. A whole lot of it.

Is not. Perceptible. Something on the inside. Something in the secret places. Of the life. And God is working. On us. In that way. But don't let anybody.

[38 : 10] Ever deceive you. It is. At the very moment. Of conversion. At the moment. Of the new birth. That we get. All of the Holy Spirit. There is to get. Not some.

There's no more. And. And it's all. And when there's all. It's enough. Isn't it? More than enough. But again. Hold on. That does not mean. That the Holy Spirit. Has all there is to get.

Of you. Or me. In fact. I think. If we. Would be honest. It is a sad reality. To admit. That the Holy Spirit. Has a whole lot less.

Of most of us. Than he deserves. And. There's where our struggle is. He has less. Of what he deserves. Because he deserves it all.

All of it. Every bit of it. And sadly. The typical believer. Today. Is more yielded. To self-interests. Than to life.

[39:06] The life-changing control. Of God. In. His or her life. By way of the Holy Spirit. Self-interest.

He says. Because. You see. It is not. Until we yield. All. To the control. Of the Holy Spirit. That we are able. Then. To live. For the Lord.

And serve the Lord. With this. Dooness. This. Dynamic. Effectual. Power. Of God. And that is. Never more. Evident. Than in this.

Context. Of the area. Of. Evangelism. Great commission. Work. Think. For example. About. The apostle. Peter. On the day.

Of Pentecost. Do you remember. Acts chapter 2. Peter. That fisherman. He stood. Before. Thousands.

[40:03] Of people. That day. And he preached. Jesus. He preached. The gospel. The good news. Of Jesus Christ. And he preached. It to a hostile.

Crowd. I mean. Overtly. Hostile. And not only that. He pointed. His finger. In their faces. And he said. You. You. Crucify.

The Lord. Of glory. Peter. Was courageous. That day. You can't read. Acts chapter 2. And not get that. For Peter. This. Bold man.

Courageous. Full. Of. Power. And. See. He was a changed man. Radically changed.

Because. You see. Before the Holy Spirit. Came. And filled Peter. And Peter. And Peter. Yielded to. The. Spirit of God. In his life. Peter. Was a bit. Of a coward. I mean.

[40:58] He really was. But when the power. Of the Holy Spirit. Came upon him. He became. A mighty. Preacher. Of the gospel. That's what happens. We become.

Bold. In our faith. As we. Yield. To the. Indwelling. Power. Of the Holy Spirit. He produces. Change. The change.

That we need. If we're going. To be. Great. Commission. Christians. And. That's not. Optional. For us. And.

If we're not. Great. Commission. Christians. We're disobedient. But. The indwelling. Spirit of God. As we. Yield. All. To him. Becomes.

The power. Our power. To be bold. Witnesses. For Jesus. Christ. So. Change. Change.

[41:53] Second. He produces. Courage. Courage. I've already said a little bit about this. Because these. Kind of. Come together here.

Don't they? Change. Leads to courage. Let me go back to. The apostle Peter. He had. Of course. The courage. As I mentioned a moment ago. To take.

Take. You know. Take on thousands. Of hostile. People. Hostile people. There. On the day. Of Pentecost. And he did not shrink back from it. He was very bold.

But do you remember Peter. The night. Before Jesus. Was crucified. You remember that Peter. Bible. Has. Shows. Him.

Warming his hands. By the enemy's fire. On that night. And some of the Jews. That were there. Backed. Peter. Into a corner. About.

[42:47] Concerning. His relationship. With Jesus. And they questioned him. About that. And Peter. Of course. Showed them. How tough he was. He denied. Even knowing Jesus.

And cursed them out. Read. Read. The accounts. He did. He cursed. At them. Oh. Peter. Had no courage. On that night. Peter.

Had no holy boldness. That. That. That kind of character. That we. Often associate with Peter. He. He didn't have it. He didn't have any boldness. He. Had no.

Unashamed. Commitment. To Jesus Christ. Whatsoever. Until. The day of Pentecost. Until the spirit came. Upon him.

To indwell him. See. Before Pentecost. Peter was full of Peter. After Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost.

[43:42] And after. Peter. Peter. Was empty. Peter. And he was full of God. And that's the principle. The dynamic. Power. Of God.

Operates. Freely. And effectually. When. We are. Empty. Of self. And full. Of the Holy Spirit. That is.

Again. In the sense of. Fully. Under his control. What about the other apostles? We don't want to give. Peter all the credit. For being bold.

Or. A coward. What about the other apostles? Well the Bible tells us. About two separate occasions. When. They were. Together. On a boat. Out in the sea. In the midst of a storm. You remember those accounts. And on both occasions. The disciples showed. What they were full of. They were full of themselves. The Bible says. They were afraid.

[44 : 38] They were afraid. And. Listen. You might remember. That on one of those occasions. Jesus Christ. Himself. Was in the boat. With them. And they were afraid.

And he said. Why are you afraid? And then he said. You have no faith. Not just a weak faith. You have no faith. And later on. When they were traveling.

With Jesus. And. On this journey. That would prove to be. Jesus. Last journey. To Jerusalem. Before he would go to the cross. And the disciples.

Again. Showed off. Their great courage. They said to Jesus. Jesus. Don't go down there. To Jerusalem. Don't go. They're going to kill you.

Down there. Don't go. How brave. They were. Of course. The Bible says. Jesus. Set his face. To go to Jerusalem. What a contrast.

[45 : 31] Between. The disciples. And Jesus. Jesus. And a little bit later. Very soon after that. When Jesus was. Hanging upon the cross. And he was crucified. All of his.

Brave. Disciples. Except John. Had abandoned him. They. Scattered. The Bible says. And even. After.

The resurrection. Just. After. The resurrection. Of Jesus Christ. After. They. All. Saw. Him. And. They. Had. A conversation.

With him. The living. Jesus. Raised. From the dead. And. Even. Ate. Bread. With him. Where. Do we. Find. The brave. Disciples. Of Jesus.

After that. Well. The Bible. Says. They were. Hiding. Behind. Locked. Doors. Afraid. For their. Lives. They.

[46 : 23] Had. No. Courage. No. Power. They. Had. Very. Little. Faith. But. After the day of Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit came upon them and filled them.

Things changed dramatically. In their lives. And within a few short years after Pentecost. Every single one of Jesus disciples except for John.

Died a martyr's death. And they did so. Because of their uncompromising. Bold. Courage. Courage. For the Lord. They were filled with the Spirit. They had yielded all to the control of the Holy Spirit. All fear was gone. Fear had been changed into courage.

Cowardice. Had been transformed into boldness. And all of it because they yielded their lives. Their all to the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

[47 : 23] Here's the question for us. On which side of Pentecost are we choosing to live?

The disciples were waiting for that day when the Holy Spirit would come. In fact, Jesus said, Terry, until you are inhabited and doed with power from on high.

He was speaking of Pentecost. Pentecost has come. God. God. And every believer, every born-again believer since, is inhabited, indwelled by the very Spirit of God with all of His power.

So, on which side of Pentecost are you choosing to live? Rely upon the source of Great Commission work, which is the power of the Holy Spirit.

Producing in us change, courage, and one more. Number three. Compassion. Compassion. Compassion.

[48 : 38] When it comes to being an effective Great Commission Christian, it takes more than change. It takes more than courage. It takes a genuine love for people.

And this is where many of us fall short. You know, honestly, it's pretty easy to witness to some people. People who are, you know, courteous.

They're not argumentative. They seem to have an open ear. They're very, very kindly listening to you. Easy to witness to people like that.

And God sometimes allows us to have those very special divine appointments where we can share the gospel with someone who's ready.

Ready. Not because we've made them that way, but because God has brought them to that place. And they're ready. They're open. They are receptive.

[49 : 46] Easy to witness to people like that. And those who seem to have very little to repent of in life, at least from our perspective. You know, they're not these overt, terrible, terrible sinners.

And those who, you know, with whom we feel comfortable. You know, maybe people who are just like us.

Same kind of life and lifestyle and so forth. And it's kind of easy to witness to people like that. What about that guy who is an alcoholic?

And beats his wife and abuses his children. Wrecking his life. What about that guy? Easy to witness to him?

Not really. What about those people who bathe seldom? And where old and dirty clothing come from the, quote, other side of the tracks?

[50 : 55] Is it easy to witness to them? What about those people who use four-letter words for punctuation when they talk? Even to preachers.

There was a day when that kind of man or woman would kind of hold the tongue, you know, when in the presence of a preacher. But that day is long gone now, by the way.

People used to say, pardon my French. That kind of thing. Is it easy to witness to people like that?

Or better yet, how about those people who are hostile toward Christianity?

I mean, overtly. And they do not believe the Bible. Not any of it. And they will challenge you on what you believe.

And people who do not like religious people. Specifically Christians. And they think Christians are fools. And they don't mind telling you so.

[51 : 59] Is it easy to witness to people like that? Let's go even deeper. How about those who have chosen a homosexual lifestyle?

And to many of us, a lifestyle that is very repulsive. Is it easy to witness to people like that? What about those people who have no biblical knowledge at all?

You don't even know where to begin with them. I mean, none. No Christian foundation. That kind of person used to be very rare in our world, our country.

Not anymore. We even have kids coming to our WANA ministry who have no point of reference for biblical truth whatsoever.

Is it easy to witness people like that? And people who, instead of any Christian foundation or even any belief system that might be similar, Instead of that, they have a belief system that is so counter-culture.

[53 : 16] And therefore, so anti-Christian. So out there. That we don't even know what to do with them. We were exposed to people like that in Colorado this last week.

Living in the Colorado Springs area. Those involved in witchcraft.

Homosexuality. New age. Things that we don't even understand. So, so counter-culture.

Even though our culture has become more anti-Christian. I'm talking about going way out there into some things. And some belief systems.

That we are very uncomfortable with. How do we reach those people? Is it easy to share the gospel with people like that? It's not easy.

[54 : 25] And our natural response is to just simply write them off as unreachable. Unreachable. Or unsavable. Though we perish to thought.

But we kind of think, well, they've chosen that. And it's too bad. God forgive us for our non-compassionate hearts.

For all people. And so how can we have the kind of compassion that, for example, blind Fanny Crosby wrote about in that great hymn, Rescue the Perishing.

Remember the words of the chorus? Rescue the perishing. Care for the dying. Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave.

Weep o'er the erring one. Lift up the fallen. Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.

[55 : 30] There's only one way to have that kind of compassion. Only one way. You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

And you shall be witnesses to me. That is the source of great commission work.

The power. The dynamic power. The divine power of the Holy Spirit. Operating in us as we yield to Him. Doing what?

Changing us. Giving us courage. And filling our hearts with compassion. A number of years ago, Amy Carmichael, and I don't know if you're familiar with that name, Missionary to India, had a dream.

A very vivid dream, she said. And she wrote it all down, and I want to read it to you. She said, and this was in her dream, I stood on the grassy slope near which was a steep precipice.

[56:44] I peered over it. It appeared to have no bottom. And from this bottomless precipice billowed up huge black clouds which shrouded the whole outer area in darkness.

Back I drew, dizzy at its depths. And then I saw forms of people headed down that grassy slope for that deep chasm.

I saw a mother with a child holding her hand, walking slowly for that cliff. She was right on the edge when I saw that she was blind.

She lifted her foot to take the next step. It trod air, and suddenly they were gone. And oh, what a cry as they went over.

Then I saw huge groups of people walking toward the edge. They too were blind. Every single one of them were blind. And over they went. Some shrieking, others going over quietly.

[57:45] Then I saw an innumerable number headed for the cliff. Uncountable masses headed for that bottomless chasm.

Families walking together. Young couples were there. By the thousands they came. And I wondered, why doesn't somebody warn them? My own feet seemed to be cemented to the ground. Then I noticed sentries stationed along the edge. But the interval between the sentries was so wide. Wide gaps unguarded. And over these gaps they continued to fall.

So few people were being stopped by the sentries. And the green grass seemed blood red to me.

And the gulf yawned like the mouth of hell. And I saw a group of people under a shade tree.

It was a picture of peace and composure. Their backs were all toward the cliff. It appeared to me they were making daisy chains.

[58:50] They called what they were doing church work. Now and then when the screams of one going over the cliff was heard, some of them would seem uncomfortable.

They regarded it as a rather vulgar noise. Some even arose to assist the sentries. But others were of little encouragement to them. You must not leave our church work, they would say.

And others, the others, would usually sit down and continue their daisy chain. There was another group busy trying to recruit sentries. But they found so few who wanted to go.

The crowds continued to pass by me. In the darkness of the abyss, a teenager fell over. His hand desperately holding on to a tuft of grass.

He clung convulsively, but the grass gave way. And with an awful shriek, he was gone. His hand still clutching the tuft of grass as he went down.

[59:50] And the group under the tree sang a hymn and listened to a sermon. But through the hymn came another sound. Like the pain of a million broken hearts rung out in one full drop, one sob.

And the horror of darkness was upon me. For I knew what it was. It was the cry of blood on our hand.

Let's rescue the parishion. The cry of blood on our hand. Thank you.