

(Message #4 of **The Church: A Divine Design**)

The Mission of the Church

Acts 1:4-8

As of late my heart has been consumed with a desire for the advancement of the church. I preached in our last study on the **Message of the Church** and our obligation to present Jesus to a lost and dying world. There is absolutely no reason for the church of the living God to settle for average and become complacent with little or no growth.

Tonight we are back in [Acts chp.1](#), still dealing with the ministry of the church. I believe in the church. I believe in the power we have through Christ our Lord. I am confident in the church's ability to change the world. We have nothing to fear or be dismayed about.

There is nothing that we can't do or overcome in regard to our ministry, with the Lord's help. We may be small in number, but we can do great things for the Lord. I want the world to know through the lives of this congregation that Jesus lives! Tonight I want to preach on: [The Mission of the Church](#). I trust these verses will challenge and encourage each of us to continue in the work we've been called to do.

I. The Relevance of our Mission (4-5) – As we look at these verses today, keep in mind the nature of what we are engaged in. We are here for the work of God. There is nothing more important than what is taking place right here today. We are dealing with eternal issues of the soul. The church is on the frontlines of a great spiritual conflict.

- The message of Christ and the need to take it to the world is just as relevant today as it was in the days of the early church. In that day there were far more unbelievers than there were believers. You would have to admit that we live in such a day. What else is more important in the lives of people than their relationship with Christ? Let's take a moment and see how Jesus viewed the relevance of their mission. Notice:

A. The Congregation (4a) – Jesus had assembled Himself with the congregation of believers. Many believe that this is where the more than 500 that Paul spoke of were gathered. Jesus was about to ascend and He had brought those who followed Him together so that He might send them forth to spread the gospel.

- I was reminded of the relevance of the church. Jesus saw the need for them to assemble together and the need remains today. If we are to achieve the mission that we've been commissioned with, the church must stand and work together. Often in the following chapters we find references to their singleness of mind and bond of unity. They had a common goal and worked together to achieve that goal.

- If there has ever been a time in our generation where the church needs to stand together and unite for the cause of Christ it is now! Each of us can make a significant

contribution to the cause of Christ, but we must be in our place, accounted for, and ready to serve. Support the church with your presence and the world with your absence. Commit to being a part of each and every aspect of church work that is being done. If we are visiting, worshipping, or working, be found in your place. The mission we are called to do involves the body of Christ.

B. The Instruction (4b) – Keep in mind that these are the last words that Jesus spoke to believers prior to His ascension. No doubt He discussed those things of utmost importance. In His final words Jesus commissions the church to share the gospel with the world. It is here that we find the very heart of our Savior. He had given His life for the souls of men and the gospel needed to be shared with those who had never heard or believed.

- Jesus had accomplished His work on earth and now it was time for the believers to carry on the work He began. The call to take the gospel to the world remains today. The need for a gospel witness is just as relevant in 2011 as it was at Pentecost. We are still in the day of grace. The merciful offer of salvation is still extended. The Rapture has not happened; souls still hang in the balance.

- We are the body of Christ. We are to take the gospel trumpet and sound it near and far! If you noticed in the text, this wasn't a request; this was a **command**, "a charge, or an order." Jesus wasn't asking them to consider His words; He gave a solemn order to obey! We are being willfully disobedient when we refuse to share the gospel. We have the solution to men's needs if we would only take it to them! Souls are literally dying to hear the gospel and who will answer the call?

C. The Expectation (4c-5) – No doubt they wondered how they would accomplish such an enormous task. They had crucified the Lord for His claim to be the Messiah. Christians weren't exactly welcomed on the streets of Jerusalem. Jesus never said it would be easy, but He did promise help for every need. They were to wait in Jerusalem to receive the Holy Ghost in power. It was then that they would receive the strength they needed.

- Jesus wanted them to put their doubts and fears to rest and look for the power of God. "Don't focus on the high priests, the Sanhedrin, or the Pharisees; look to Me for what you need." Jesus had promised to send the Comforter after His ascension. Help would soon be found and it would exceed any of their expectations.

- We are called to an enormous work. The church is not welcomed as it once was. We face a world that is less tolerant and receptive to us. In our times of difficulty just wait upon the Lord. We are indwelt with the same power and we can see the same results.

- I believe that much of our hindrances come from a lack of faith. We serve an extraordinary God whom we try and limit to ordinary things. I grow tired of hearing the small, rural congregation doubt their ability because of a lack of numbers. Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world. If God be for us, who can be against us? God has not changed His mind concerning His work. We must get busy and expect God to move mountains!

I. The Relevance of our Mission (4-5)

II. The Reality of our Mission (6-8) – Little did these early believers know what the near future would bring. Had they known what God was about to accomplish for and through them they would've never doubted. We share some of the same concerns in our day, but the reality of our work is no different. There are some certainties that we can rely upon. Consider:

A. The Scope of our Work is Unknown (6-7) – These were difficult times for the Christian. Their lives were dominated either by Roman soldiers or their own countrymen who had betrayed the homeland for the gain of Roman acceptance. These were hopeful that Jesus would establish His kingdom and remove them from the oppression. Their minds couldn't comprehend the need for anything else but liberation.

- Jesus wanted them to focus on the eternal issues at hand. It was not their concern when He would establish the Kingdom. He simply wanted them to be obedient and live by faith. They were unaware, but they would soon be taking the gospel to the Gentiles.
- I realized that these were engaged in a work that they didn't fully understand. They didn't know all that would come to pass, but they followed the Lord in faith. You may never live to see the fruit of your labor, but we must continue for the Lord. The cause is too great and the need to desperate to demand tangible results to continue on. Even when we can't see that we've accomplished anything, we must press on. Heaven alone will reveal what we have accomplished for Christ!

B. The Strength for our Work is Unlimited (8a) – What a promise Jesus gave, the promise of power from on high. This was soon realized as the Holy Ghost fell upon them. There was nothing that they would face that the Spirit couldn't supply the need. He gave boldness to stand, wisdom to speak, and strength to carry on.

- I am aware of the climate of our day. It is a difficult task to stand for the Lord. We are engaged in a warfare unlike we've ever known. Hell is raging and many have fallen by the wayside. In the heat of the battle, look to the Lord for strength. There is not a need that He cannot supply. There is not a trial that we will face that He can't bring us through. There is not a mountain that we must climb that He will not carry us over.
- Look deep within for the strength to endure. God will never let us fail if we are committed to His work, in His way. When the world says you can't, God says I can. He is an ever present help in times of need!

C. The Substance of our Work is Undeniable – The early church turned the world upside down for the cause of Christ. The gospel spread like wildfire and souls were saved. Let's take just a moment to look at some powerful verses in the following chapters in Acts. Turn to [2: 4-5; 14; 41; 47 – 4: 4; 13; 31 – 5:14; 42](#). I was greatly challenged and encouraged as I pondered

what the early church accomplished for the glory of God. It was clearly undeniable that God was in the midst. We can have that too!

I. The Relevance of our Mission (4-5)

II. The Reality of our Mission (6-8)

III. The Responsibility of our Mission (8b) – We have learned that the gospel message is relevant for our day and the realities of our mission. Lastly I want us to consider the responsibilities involved.

A. It is a Personal Mission – Jesus said, **Ye shall be witnesses unto me.** He was speaking to all who followed Him. The mission of the gospel involves all who follow Christ. If you are saved, you are responsible to be a witness for the Lord. There isn't a one of us here who can't let our light shine in some way.

- The church is failing in taking the gospel to the world in large part because individual Christians never realize their responsibility to share Christ with the world. There are no excuses that will stand when we meet the Lord in judgment. It troubles me that we have the good news, but often never share it with those who need it. Be a witness for the Lord.

B. It is a Particular Mission – We are all called to be witnesses for Christ. This is a mission that only the redeemed can fulfill. How can we expect those who have no light within to reveal His light? I pray that we as a local body of believers will lay hold on the work we have been called to do.

- We are not here to meet the social needs of our community. We are here to present the Lord and be a witness for Him. Many churches today are trying to offer everything that the world does in hopes of bringing in a few visitors. We ought to have a good outreach, but most often these are not really effective in any area. They may draw a crowd and provide good entertainment, but there is no evangelism involved. Our concern is for men's souls. I want everything we support and promote to involve the gospel of Christ. The church's focus must be to lift up the name of Jesus! If we are not sharing the gospel then we are not fulfilling our calling.

C. It is a Profound Mission – Jesus laid out some stringent guidelines with high expectations. He reveals in this verse whom the church is responsible for. Who is the church? We are the church. You are the church. So Jesus is saying that we as individual believers are responsible for the areas He spoke of. We are responsible for our **Jerusalem**, our **Judea**, our **Samaria**, and even the **uttermost parts of the earth.**

- You might argue that this is an impossible task, but Jesus would never have commissioned us to a task we couldn't accomplish through His power. This is a grave responsibility, but it has fallen upon us.
- The word **witnesses** comes from the Greek word *martures* and also gives us the word *martyr*. We are to be witnesses unto the end. As long as we have breath in our bodies, we are to share the gospel with this lost world.

We could turn the world upside down if we would determine in our hearts to fulfill the mission of the church. We have been silent and satisfied for too long. What will it take for the church to step out in faith and do as we've been commanded?

Has the Lord spoken to you to stand for Him? Are you willing to be used of God and stand in the gap to proclaim the gospel?