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Our Continuing Mission

ACTS 1:6-11

Introduction

1. As you have taken part in our worship today, have you taken a moment to fully consider what our Lord is doing here in our small community and in millions of communities like ours around the world?
2. When Luke writes, at the beginning of his book which we call Acts, he pens these words:

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“The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up to heaven” (Acts 1:1-2a).

- a. He is speaking about the gospel which bears his name.
- a. This was his first account.
- b. In that gospel, he takes us from the announcement of Jesus’ birth to His ascension back to His throne in heaven.
- c. He tells us “about all that Jesus began to do and teach” (Acts 1:1).
3. Now, here in Acts, Luke’s second account (volume) he tells us about all that Jesus continued to do and to teach after His ascension.
4. All of this will be carried out through His apostles whose sermons and the authenticating ‘signs and wonders’ (Acts 4:30; 5:12; 14:3; 15:12) which Luke faithfully recorded for us.
5. If you have read through the book of Acts, there is one thing which you have no doubt noticed — it has no proper ending.

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- a. Luke’s last words are these:

“And he [Paul] stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.” (Acts 28:30-31, NASB95)

- b. Why is this the case?
 - c. I submit to you it is because God’s Holy Spirit continues to write new chapters every day as the border of our Lord’s kingdom is still spreading throughout the world in which we live.
6. Jesus is still alive and He is still active. He is not the one who *was*; he is the one who *is*.
7. We here today, who are a part of the church of our Lord have a continuing mission which has been assigned to us.
- a. We are to preach the gospel to all creation.
 - b. We are to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
 - c. We are to teach them to observe all that the apostles were commanded.
7. Today, as we look at the last words which our Lord spoke to His apostles before His ascension and the words which His angels spoke to them as He was ascending, I want us to see what Jesus intended for His kingdom.

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I. It All Begins With The Nature Of The Kingdom Of God

A. IT IS SPIRITUAL IN CHARACTER

“So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6, NASB95)

- 1. Typically, whenever you and I hear the word “kingdom,” we think of a territory which can be located on a map.
 - a. As of this year (2025), there are 43 sovereign states in the world with a monarch as head of state.

- b. Some of the ones with which we are most familiar are the United Kingdom (King Charles III), Kingdom of Denmark (King Frederik X), Jordan (King Abdullah II), Spain (King Felipe VI), Saudi Arabia (King Salman)
- 2. The kingdom of God, however, is not a territory which we can mark on a map.
- 3. The kingdom of God is His rule and reign in the hearts and lives of His people by the Holy Spirit.
- 4. It is spread, not by soldiers with weapons of destruction, but by faithful followers (disciples) proclaiming a gospel of peace.
 - a. You and I have been privileged to see it grow this year here in Waverly.
 - b. Those of us who were a part of this year's Leatherwood Bible Camp also witnessed the Lord's additions to His kingdom.
- 5. People aren't moving from one country to another and applying for citizenship.
- 6. No, they are dying to an old sinful life through their baptism into Christ and rising out of the waters of that baptism to walk in a new life, a life "being led by the Spirit of God" (Romans 8:14).

Slide 5**B. IT IS INTERNATIONAL IN ITS MEMBERSHIP**

- 1. When the apostles asked Jesus "is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel" (v. 6) they were thinking about the national independence which Israel had enjoyed during the days of David and Solomon.
- 2. Jesus expanded their scope, He broadened their horizons.
- 3. Earlier, the apostles' ambitions had been fixed on political power (i.e., who would sit on His right and his left when Jesus came into His kingdom).
- 4. Jesus assured them that the Holy Spirit would clothe them with heavenly power to be His witnesses.
- 4. They would begin in Jerusalem, preaching about all that He had said and

done, just as the prophets of old had foretold.

“For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Isaiah 2:3, cf. Micah 4:2)

5. From there they would spread the gospel message into the surrounding regions of Judea and Samaria.
6. Ultimately, they would travel to “the ends of the earth” (v. 8), preaching the good news to the Gentile nations.
7. Here, in Acts 1:8, Luke provides us with a kind of ‘Table of Contents’ for the rest of the book:
 - a. In chapters 2-7, we find the growth of our Lord’s kingdom in Jerusalem.
 - b. Chapters 8-12 describe its spread into all Judea and Samaria.
 - c. In chapters 13-28 we see the message of the kingdom being carried to “the ends of the earth” with Paul’s three missionary journeys and his final journey to Rome.
8. Today, you and I are a part of an international community which knows no barriers in regards to race, nation, rank, or sex.
9. When our Father’s kingdom is consummated in the end, it will consist of “a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language, which no one could number” (Revelation 7:9, HCSB).

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C. IT IS GRADUAL IN ITS GROWTH

He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”” (Acts 1:7–8, NASB95)

1. The apostles’ question included a specific reference to time: “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” (v. 6).

2. This was the expectation of many during Jesus public ministry — no doubt because of certain statements He made concerning the nearness of the kingdom.
 - a. “the kingdom of God has come near” (Luke 10:11).
 - b. “the kingdom of God is in your midst” (Luke 17:21).
3. In his gospel, Luke records a parable which, as he explains, the people “thought the kingdom of God was going to appear right away” (Luke 19:11, HCSB).
4. The apostles perhaps wondered if now that Jesus had risen from the dead, He would immediately do what they thought He was going to do prior to his death — reestablish the sovereignty of the nation of Israel, as in the days of David and Solomon.
5. Jesus said two things in response:
 - a. First, He told them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority” (v. 7).
 - 1) God, the Father, has fixed the times by His own authority.
 - 2) Earlier, during His ministry, Jesus had confessed that He did not know the day nor the hour of His return (Mark 13:32).
 - 3) Jesus told them, “It is nor for you to know.”
 - 4) Long ago, Moses told the Israelites, “The secret things belong to the Lord our God” (Deuteronomy 29:29), thus, it isn’t for us to pry into.
 - b. Second, He told them what they needed to know — “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses” (v. 8).
 - 1) As a result of this power, they were to be His witnesses.
 - 2) They were to start in Jerusalem and expand ever outward until they had reached the whole earth.
 - 3) You and I have a responsibility here today to carry on what the

apostles began:

- a) We are to tell others about the salvation which Jesus gained for us with His first coming.
 - b) We are also to encourage them to obey the gospel and prepare for His second coming.
- 4) We must continue doing this until He returns.

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II. Jesus' Ascension Also Teaches Us Something

“And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.” (Acts 1:9–10, NASB95)

A. He Will Come Again

“This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11, NASB95)

1. As Jesus was ascending out of their sight the apostles were “gazing intently into the sky.”
2. No doubt, we have all done the same thing.
 - a. When a loved one or a close friend leaves, and we don’t know when we will see them again, we stand and watch as they drive down the road until we just can’t see them any more.
 - b. Why? Their presence in our lives means so much and we long to have them with us.
 - c. We don’t want them to leave.
3. Peter, Andrew, James and John, Matthew, Bartholomew and the rest of the apostles longed to have Jesus with them. They did not want to let him go.
4. The angels assured them that He would return.

5. Those of us here today know that our Lord's second coming will not be as private as His ascension was.
6. The apostle Paul described His return with these words, "the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God" (1 Thessalonians 4:16, NASB95).
7. In his second letter to the saints in Thessalonica, Paul wrote that "the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire" (2 Thessalonians 1:7).
8. Jesus told His disciples that His return would be "like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other" (Luke 17:24, NIV84).
9. In Revelation 1:7, the apostle John wrote that "every eye will see Him."

Slide 8**B. Until He Comes, We Have A Mission To Fulfill**

"They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky?"
(Acts 1:11a, NASB95)

1. Through these words, the angels were telling the apostles it was time to get on with their mission — that of being witnesses for their Lord.
2. They were to be witnesses, not stargazers.
3. They were to look outwards in compassion, not upwards in nostalgia.
4. The same is true for each of us who bear our Lord's name here today.
5. We are not to spend our time obsessing about who is in heaven and who isn't or when is He going to return.
6. No, we are to be about our God-given mission.
7. What the angels were saying to the apostles on that day so long ago is this:

"You have seen Him go. You will see Him come. Between this day and that something else is to happen. The Spirit will come, and you must go — into the world for Christ."

8. It is true, as the apostle Paul wrote, “our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20).
9. Now, while we eagerly await His return, we have a mission to fulfill.

Conclusion

1. There is a hymn which we sometimes sing. It is a fitting conclusion to our lesson this morning:

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O spread the tidings 'round, wherever man is found,
Wherever human hearts and human woes abound;
Let every Christian tongue proclaim the joyful sound:
Our Lord is Lord of lords.

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Chorus
Of lords, He is the Lord!
Divine, the living Word!
His name, the sweetest heard;
His will redemption brings;
O spread the tidings 'round, wherever man is found,
The Lord is King of kings.

2. Let us continue to “spread the tidings round” until our Lord returns.
3. May God bless us in our efforts and bring seeking souls into His kingdom.
4. Today, if you have not yet turned from the sin in your life and turned to Jesus Christ, come to Jesus and let Him save you.
5. Confess Him as your Lord and Savior and be baptized into His death so that you may rise again to a new life.