**Spirit-Empowered Witnesses**

**The Word**

Read together Acts 1:1-11

**The Big Idea**

The disciples were hoping to settle into a restored Israel and a life of comfort and peace, but Jesus was calling them into a sent life of walking in the Spirit to be his witnesses to the world.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Compare Jesus’ words to his disciples in Acts 1:4-8 with his words to his disciples in Matthew 28:18-20. What are the similarities and what are the differences? How do his words in Matthew 28 enhance or add to our understanding of the call in Acts 1?

2. On Sunday the statement was made: “We naturally testify to/and share things we’re excited about with others.” Do you agree? Is there a correspondence in your own life between your excitement for the gospel and your sharing it with others?

3. Is there any area of your life right now where you’re really trying to get things settled and “dialed in” in a way you might need to let go of for the sake of God’s kingdom?

4. Where specifically do feel “sent” in this season of your life? Is there a specific context (e.g. your neighborhood, work, a particular ministry, etc.) or a specific person you feel sent to?

**Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction to Acts

 A. Written by Luke (companion on Paul’s missionary journeys) as part 2 of Luke-Acts.

B. Continues the story of Jesus. He “began to do and teach” things in his earthly ministry. Now he continues his work through his disciples.

 C. Written to Theophilus: possibly a wealthy gospel patron

II. Theme verse of Acts: 1:8

 A. The Who: witnesses

1. This is a legal/courtroom term for someone with first-hand experience and knowledge of something. The disciples had witnessed from the beginning Jesus’ ministry, and it was important to find a 12th disciple who was likewise a witness (v. 21-22)

 2. Jesus still requires witnesses. But how can we witness if we weren’t there?

a. We point people to their testimony contained in the Scriptures, and we immerse ourselves in the Scriptures so we know the stories and truths inside and out.

b. We are witnesses to God’s work in our own lives, such that we can say, “I’ve tasted and seen” of God’s love, truth, healing, etc.

B. The How: through the power of the Holy Spirit

1. The Spirit is the real actor in Acts. He’s always out in front and the disciples are playing catch up.

2. The Holy Spirit’s power takes two forms in Acts

a. Power IN his disciples: he brings conviction, clarity, courage, and boldness (e.g. see Peter in ch. 2)

b. Power THROUGH his disciples to others: he opens doors of opportunity and opens doors in people’s hearts and minds that were previously shut

3. Hence the command to wait until they receive the Holy Spirit (v. 4-5)

C. The Where: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of earth

1. This is the geographical outline of the book (ch. 1-7, 8-12, 13-28)

2. It begins chapter 1 with Jesus preaching about the kingdom in Jerusalem (v. 3) and ends with Paul preaching about the kingdom in Rome (28:30-31)

III. A SETTLED people or a SENT people?

A. Their Question (v. 6)

1. They are looking for the earthly restoration of Israel foretold in the prophets (e.g. Isaiah 2:2, Amos 9:13-15). It’s a nationalistic vision of peace and world supremacy

2. They are hoping to be at the center of this new kingdom since they are Jesus’ closest friends.

3. They desire to be a SETTLED people

B. Jesus’ answer (v. 7)

1. Jesus doesn’t deny a future restoration, but for the time being he’s calling them not to be a SETTLED people but a SENT people.

C. It’s so easy to relate to their question

1. We want to live settled lives. We want to dial in the various aspects of our lives (home, work, health, finance, friends, hobbies) hoping to find security and satisfaction in those all being settled in the ways we want.

2. We often want a settled church. We want to dial in our services and programs so that all is running smoothly.

 B. But Jesus calls us to be a SENT people

1. Not that we are called to move to another place but rather to live as a sent one wherever we are (neighborhood, work, community, family)

2. This involves being open to the Spirit, being available in moments to go where he leads, to have an availability to do what he wants, to have conversations he’s opening doors to.

IV. What do you think those early disciples would say to us today?

A. They’d probably say, “The settled life is an illusion. You can never dial it in. It will constantly slip through your fingers.”

B. They’d probably say, “The sent life is a remarkable life. It’s certainly unpredictable, but you will find great meaning in being part of God’s kingdom and an adventure far beyond your small comforts and securities.”