Acts Chapter 1 Verse 8

* This **power** is spoken of in Joel Chapter 2, *“The Promise of the Father!”* And we also see Jesus refer to this ***coming power*** in John Chapter 7 verses 37 – 39. **I love this passage!** Why? Because ***the work and the power of the Holy Spirit looks and tastes like love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control!*** I think we forget that!
* Jesus said, *“Rivers of LIVING water!”* Water that brings life, attracts life, and sustains life! Think about it. To drink water it has to be a *few things.* It has to be ***pure.*** Non-toxic! That’s I suppose most important! It also has taste good! Ever taste water that is just *metallic* or tastes like *sulfur?* **I’d rather go thirsty!** It has to look *pretty clear*…murky, muddy water…who wants that? And its source has to be ***admirable***. What if instead of bottled water at the store there was just a dirty trough with a quarter slot and paper cups!? ***Ain’t happening!*** Get me some Mountain Dew! **HA!**
* Well just like that man, to be *real* witnesses to the *real* Jesus we gotta be ***non-toxic.*** We gotta be ***sweet!*** ***Good tasting!***  We have to not only know about Jesus but man we who desire to do what the church is supposed to do…***introduce people to Jesus and make disciples***…then man we gotta **look like Him** and our *persona, our countenance, our love, our gentleness, our kindness, our goodness*…ought to be at the level of **admirable!** ***I think we forget that in all we know and all we’ve learned…***
* But here’s the thing…only thing **I** can flow is *acidic* water…*murky, muddy, clear-less water at best*…it’s the work of God *with* me, *in* me and *upon* me that brings about the testimony and witness of Jesus Christ! Just like Jesus said in John Chapter 7!
* I need it all man! Everything available to me because of what Jesus did for me…**I NEED IT ALL!** So many settle…WHY? What do I mean? After Jesus was resurrected, that evening the disciples were together and John Chapter 20 Verse 19 says they were assembled ***behind locked doors*** because they were **afraid** of the Jews…Jesus, who was dead and yet now lives again, just like He said He would, is back! The greatest sorrow of their lives has been relieved, abated, removed!!!
* Jesus is infallibly everything He said He is…the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Savior of the world, the All Mighty and **they know it!** Death has been **overcome!** The grave has been **overwhelmed**…they know and believe all of these things, and yet they aren’t in the streets proclaiming the good news. They aren’t holding a *pot luck party* filled with **joy, celebration and bagels!** No *Filafel Bell* catering! And then Jesus shows up…
* Look at John Chapter 20 Verses 19 – 22. *“Peace, peace,”* twice. Why? ***They weren’t at peace!*** They were *fearful and shaken* and then Jesus commissions them into the Gospel. He breathed on them, and said to them, *“Receive the Holy Spirit.”* At that moment, the beginning of the communion of God and man through Jesus Christ. Jesus launches the New Covenant with the new ministry of the Holy Spirit in that He ***indwells and abides within*** man.
* So they jumped up filled with *joy and capacity and dynamism and efficacy* and they ran out into the streets and let that light shine! That’s actually **not** what happened…if you continue reading in John then you find the disciples after 8 days of *doing the same thing, doing the same thing*…they were again inside John Chapter 20 verse 26 tells us…and the doors again were shut and locked.
* Jesus came to them again and you’d think He would have said, *“Power and joy and passion be with you,”* but again He says, *“Peace, peace be with you.”* **Still scared**…fast forward to John Chapter 21 and you’d think we’d find the disciples proclaiming the good news of Jesus and establishing faith but we find them ***frustrated and fishing***…what’s going on here…they have faith, they are saved, they believe, they are hanging out with Jesus…but in all that, they find themselves ***powerless…***
* Then Acts Chapter 1…Jesus says in this first chapter, to kick off (*football season pun intended*) the establishing of the Body of Christ, the Body of Faith, the church upon the earth…, He says to them, *“You guys have everything you need…stories, experiences, first-hand knowledge, faith, infallible proof…but what you need is now the* ***power*** *to do something about it!”* Enter the third ministry of the Holy Spirit, *“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and then you shall be witnesses to Me…”*
* I like this because this is more than just being a witness of Jesus but it’s also being a witness ***to*** Him…it’s ministry ***to*** Him, it’s loving Him, it’s drawing closest to Him, it’s surging closer to Him…***full immersion into the covering and shelter and over-flow-filling of the very Spirit of God Himself!*** So how do we get *there*, how do we get *that!?* The main thing, the most difficult thing, the most rare thing…a **willing** heart! Romans 5:5 says that God is ready to do the pouring…the question is, are you *wanting, willing and ready* to get drenched!?
* Some of y’all, me included, at times are **out of position**…Proverbs 1:23 says, *“Turn at my correction and surely I will* ***pour out My Spirit on you****…but I called and you refused…and My counsel is forsaken.”* This is interesting…the Holy Spirit is poured out on those in position and that position I believe can be found in the examples Jesus gave us in His earthly ministry of things ***being poured…***
* Matthew 26:7, a woman comes and pours out costly fragrant oil on the head of Jesus…Jesus said that she did that for His burial…***are you ready to reckon yourself dead to the things of the world?*** John Chapter 2, Jesus drove out the money changers from the temple and John told us that He poured out the money…***are the things of this world your priority?*** The good Samaritan in Luke Chapter 10 bandaged the wounds of the weak, pouring on them oil and wine…***is your heart, do you WANT to serve God and serve those around you?*** John Chapter 13, Jesus humbles Himself and pours water into a basin and kneels to His disciples, washing their feet…***is that what you want?*** Is the Holy Spirit truly ruling in there? Do you trust God or do you trust you? Are you in position?
* If not, *your choice* today…do you want to *believe in* God or do you want to ***live for Him?*** This word in Acts Chapter 1, *“witnesses,”* it’s the word, *“martys,”* are you ready to lay everything down and elevate your relationship with God through Jesus to the highest peak interest of your heart? That moment, I believe, is when you are ***in position***…trusting in Him, trusting His word…and as you step into position…***God’s Spirit is poured out upon you and you become something else***…you become power! And now wherever you are, you are a witness ***of*** Him, you are ***with*** Him, and you are a witness ***to*** Him!

Acts Chapter 1 Verses 9 – 11

* What an awesome promise! **He’s coming back**…in the same manner as He went…*bodily form*, simply descending from heaven to the earth! Now, on the Mount of Olives there is a church called *The Church of Ascension* and there is a footprint there that they say is where Jesus took off from! But Luke 24 tells us that they traveled with Jesus ***past*** the Mount of Olives…folks, if you don’t read the Word you become *vulnerable to being fooled by man…*

Acts Chapter 1 Verses 12 -14

* It’s *beautiful.* It’s *sweet.* It’s *comfy and cozy*…the disciples were just together, together and at peace with each other, all fitting into one Honda (***one Accord***), spending time in prayer…it’s beautiful, it’s sweet, it’s comfy cozy, but it’s **not** *exploding with power, dynamism and passion.* They’re still locked away in an upper room. Soon, things change.
* And, this is the ***last mention of Mary***, the mother of Jesus. There is not one more mention of her, no further mention of her **at all** throughout the entire *Book of the Acts of the Holy Spirit* through the early church. No mention of her in any of the remaining books of the New Testament. **Shocking** isn’t it!? No mention of her death, any miraculous ascension into heaven, nothing…**silence.**

Acts Chapter 1 Verses 15 – 22

* The church was already born…it was born in John Chapter 20…but it’s just not yet *optimally effective*…*filled with power*…the Day of Pentecost hasn’t yet come…and we’ll talk more about that next week…but the church is getting off the ground…how do we know. ***Who’s speaking?*** **Peter**…he is so found out…he has such a story of regret but here he is…standing, speaking, moving forward and the people love him, God loves him…**has restored him**…*welcome to the real work of the church…*
* And he proposes…***let’s do something!*** **HA!** I like that…everyone hanging out, hiding away, praying all day…Peter’s like, *I don’t know what to do but man I want to do something!* And so he proposes Judas Iscariot be replaced in accordance with Psalm 109 and his qualifications include someone who has been around a long while…since the beginning. One who could bear witness first hand to the facts of Jesus’ ministry, teachings, death and resurrection…

Acts Chapter 1 Verses 23 – 24

* Notice, this is the first prayer ***to*** Jesus…

Acts Chapter 1 Verses 25 – 26

* Essentially, they *threw dice*…Peter chalked out a circle and put on his green sun visor and chanted *“seven come eleven!”* **HA!** What are they doing? Folks get so *tripped up* over this. They’re casting lots…***what they know***…***what they’re used to doing***…Aaron cast lots for goats in Leviticus 16, the children of Israel cast lots to divide the Promised Land in Joshua 18, King Saul cast lots in 1 Samuel 14, the priest cast lots in Nehemiah 10, and even Proverbs 18:18 prescribes casting lots as a way to end a quarrel…, *“Casting lots causes contentions to cease, and keeps the mighty apart.”* ***This is what they knew, what they had always done***…but here’s the thing and this is exactly precisely specifically particularly true of God today relevant to you…***He wants to do a new thing…***
* God didn’t tell them to do this…there’s no instruction from God to throw dice…*folks get all bent out of shape*…***the replacement was always Paul***…they choose Matthias and we hear **nothing** of or from him ever…but look man, they return to their old ways…when God has a new plan…***just like He has for you!***