

**Title: The Commission and Command of JESUS**

The story is told of “the man who lived with his wife on the old family farm for years, barely scratching out a living. All the while, beneath the barren, dusty, almost worthless land was a rich supply of oil. While digging a water well, the farmer discovered this. Thus, he and his wife enjoyed a life of rich blessings. The farmer said, ‘And to think, we lived here all these years without knowing how rich we were!’

Many Christians are like that farmer.

They go through their days, barely hanging on to their spiritual lives,

Living in their own weak ways;

While beneath the surface,

The power of God is ready to break free in their lives.”

**HOW DO WE APPROPRIATE THIS POWER?**

Let me tell you

Those that dig into the riches of God’s WORD  
That receive it  
understand it  
and live by it

They know

just how high and  
How wide  
And how deep  
And how vast

The love of God and the power of God IS

Do you want that

Don’t be satisfied with sitting on the sidelines

Or hanging out on the outside

It's time to dig into the treasure of the word of God and see just what he has for you

PRAYER

We are going digging this morning

As we begin series from the book of Acts

I believe it to be one of the most important and relevant books of the Bible for the church today

**Someone described its importance this way...**

While Genesis contains the answers to man's question, "Where did I come from?",

Acts provides US with information about where our future lies.

It is In Jesus Christ

Let's begin by reading

TEXT

Acts 1:1-3

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach [2] until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. [3] After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

**NOW I NEED TO SET FORTH SOME BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE BOOK**

**1. It was written by Luke**

## **2. Who was Luke**

Colossians 4:14 tell us he was a physician

## **3. Apparently he became a convert while at Troas**

And according to Acts 16:10

He joined Paul and Silas and Timothy on the second missionary journey

It's Speculation but.....

He may have joined the missionary team as a kind of staff doctor.

## **4. But he became so much more than a doctor.**

He traveled with Paul for years

He even went with Paul to Rome.

2 Tim. 4:11

Only Luke is with me. Bring Mark with you when you come, for he will be helpful to me.

## **5. He was also more than a doctor in that he was taking notes**

About the works and words of Jesus

And the progress of the church.

God moved him to write a two-volume work that makes up more of the New Testament than what any other New Testament writer wrote,

Including the apostle Paul

He wrote the Gospel according to Luke,  
and the Acts of the Apostles.

## **6. What was his purpose in writing them?**

Apparently he wrote these texts to an audience of one.

He wanted to help a man named Theophilus see the truth about what Jesus did and taught

and how the church spread throughout the Roman world.

It may help to see this first-hand. In Luke 1:3-4 he writes:

Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, [4] so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Then in Acts 1:1 Luke refers back to the Gospel and says:

Acts 1:1

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach

## **7. Who is Theophilus ?**

He is probably some kind of Roman official

In Luke 1 he calls Theophilus by the title "**most excellent**"

Luke uses this title two other times and both in reference to Roman officials

Felix (Acts 23:26)  
and Festus (Acts 26:25).

## **8. While Luke's intended audience may have been Theophilus the Roman official**

I believe that God's intended audience was you and I right here this morning

Incidentally, Theophilus means **FRIEND OF GOD**

## **9. It is certain that Theophilus had some knowledge of Jesus and the church,**

but His knowledge was not clear and definite and complete.

Luke's aim was to give him a faithful account of what Jesus **DID** and **SAID**

and

to display before him the progress of Jesus through the church in the world.

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**LET'S LOOK AT VERSE 1**

Acts 1:1 says

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus **began** to do and to teach

**10. THE FIRST VERSE REVEALS THE CENTRAL MESSAGE OF ACTS**

A key word for understanding the CENTRAL MESSAGE of Acts is the word "**BEGAN.**"

Luke says, "In my former book –

In other words in the Gospel

-- I dealt with all that Jesus **BEGAN** to do and to teach UNTIL HIS ASCENSION

The Gospel of Luke ends with the ascension

Luke 24:51-53

While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. [52] Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. [53] And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

Many people look at the gospels

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

and confuse them with the gospel – the good news

The incarnation  
 The Death  
 The Burial  
 The Resurrection  
 And The ascension of Jesus

Are not the end of what Jesus came to do

They are Just the beginning

The Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

Are the BEGINNING of the teaching ministry of Jesus.

They are the BEGINNING of the deeds of Jesus.

Now I don't want to minimize the saving work of Jesus on the cross  
 Nor His resurrection.  
 His sacrifice for sins,

**BUT I DO WANT TO STRESS WHAT LUKE SAYS HERE –**

That what Jesus did on the earth  
 And what he said on the earth  
 Was only the beginning of his doings and teachings...

**THE GOOD NEWS IS -- HE IS NOT FINISHED.**

He is not done with his work  
 and with his teaching.  
 He is not dead  
 and he is not absent.  
 He is alive  
 and he is present.  
 He is doing  
 and he is teaching.

The incarnation of the Son of God into human flesh,  
 the once-for-all sacrifice of himself for sin on the cross,

the mighty resurrection and Ascension to the Father's right hand  
is just the BEGINNING of what Jesus came to do and to teach.

**AND THE REST OF WHAT HE CAME TO DO,  
HE DOES NOW IN THIS AGE**

This is absolutely crucial

- For understanding the purpose of the Book of Acts
- And who we are as a church
- And what this age is all about.

The book of Acts is not just the Acts of the Apostles,

It is the acts of the risen,  
Living,  
enthroned Jesus.

**WHO SAID**

He said in Matthew 16, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

11. One of the main Characters in Acts is Paul

Paul's life and ministry demonstrates the living Lord at work in the church

Romans 15:18-19

I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done-- [19] by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.

Whatever Paul accomplished for the kingdom,  
it was Jesus.

He is alive, and  
he is building his church.

That is what the book of Acts is about.

And that is why it is so relevant for us today.

Jesus is still alive.

He will always be alive!

He is still speaking and working.

He is building his church,

Wherever people come under the authority of his name  
And receive his forgiveness for sins  
And trust his power.

There he is in the midst of them

Now having established some ground work, and having given you the main  
purpose of the book....

**11. I want to share a quick message that arises form the context of our  
passage**

The next couple of verses tell us **what Jesus has given us**

**So that we can interact with him**

**Be his fellow worker**

**And fellow speakers in building his church**

There are three things mentioned in verses 2 and 3 and a fourth thing mentioned in verses 4-5, namely the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

I am going to save The BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT UNTIL NEXT WEEK

And FOCUS on the first three things Jesus gave us so that we could be his instruments

### **1. FIRST, HE GAVE A COMMISSION OR A COMMAND.**

Acts 1:2

until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving **instructions** through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

The original language means “*given a charge*”

#### **Illustration:**

My dad always used to charge me to take out the trash

It was not a Maybe

It was not a Possibility

It was a Command

### **THE MESSAGE HERE IS CLEAR**

To be the instrument of Jesus

as he works and speaks in the world,

You need a command, or commission OR AN AUTHORIZATION

A commission authenticated by the Holy Spirit.

That is what the apostles received

And that is what is passed on to us

That commission is repeated several times in scripture but is most familiar to us As Jesus Words

Matthew 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

What Luke refers to is a something a little different

It is recorded In John 20:21-22

It was after the resurrection.

Jesus said to them John 20:21-22

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." [22] And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

Doesn't that sound like a situation which Luke might be describing

### **The giving of the commandment through the Holy Spirit?**

It was through the ministry of the Holy Spirit that he spoke,

and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit that they received, the commission.

### **So to be the instrument of Jesus today one needs a commission**

That's the point of verse 2.

## **2. THE SECOND THING THEY NEEDED FROM JESUS WAS VERIFICATION**

Verification that he is alive and triumphant over death.

Acts 1:3

After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

You can't be an authentic instrument in the hands of a living Christ, **if you do not think he is alive.**

- Until the apostles were persuaded that Jesus had broken the power of death and that he was alive with indestructible life,
- and therefore could never be defeated
- and that his cause was unstoppable –

until then, **the apostles were ready to go back to FISHING for a living.**

But for FORTY DAYS Jesus appeared to them again and again.

And Luke 24 tell us the sorts of things he said and did:

Luke 24:39-40

Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

[40] When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.

Luke 24:42-43

They gave him a piece of broiled fish, [43] and he took it and ate it in their presence.

So when 40 days of APPEARANCES and CONVERSATIONS and MEALS were past,

**THE APOSTLES WERE BEYOND DOUBT.**

They had a commission

They had many convincing proofs that Jesus was alive

**THEY WERE READY FOR THEIR MINISTRY.**

But they needed something more.

The last thing mentioned in verse 3

### **3. IS THAT THEY NEEDED INSTRUCTION.**

at the end of verse 3:

Acts 1:3

“... He appeared to them over a period of forty days and **SPOKE ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.** “

The apostles had been slow to understand and believe during the ministry of Jesus

They needed a crash course in What the promises of the Old Testament really all about

Luke 24:25-27

He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! [26] Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" [27] And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Luke 24:45

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He taught them In what sense the kingdom came

He taught them How the kingdom would show itself in the life and ministry of the church?

Now, we are not apostles.

They were unique in the history.

They had unique face to face contact with the living LORD

Acts 10:41

He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

They had unique inspiration and authority as the foundation of the church

Ephes. 2:20

built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

But that doesn't mean we don't need much of what they had.

We do –

especially if we are going to be instruments in HIS hands

AS he continues to work and build the church...

**WE NEED A GREAT COMMISSION**

**WE NEED A VERIFICATION THAT JESUS IS ALIVE**

And **WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE KINGDOM OF GOD** and how it came, and how it is now coming, and how it will come.

And finally we need the Baptism in the Holy Ghost

Which I will display to you next Sunday Morning

My prayer is that in this series of messages on the book of Acts

Jesus himself will speak and act and give us just what we need to be the instruments of his power in the world.

AMEN.