

ACTS SERIES ONE
THE ACTS GO ON AND ON
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ACTS 1:1-11
S-1631

This morning we take note of the last words of Jesus.

Last words are significant:

- SLIDE #: "I told you I was sick."

A man died, and the attorney said to his wife, "He did not leave a will. So we need to know the last words he ever said to you."

She said, "I don't want to tell you."

He said, "Look, he did not leave a will. We need to know the last words he ever said to you."

She said, "I don't want to tell you. It was something between the two of us."

He said, "May I beg you one more time?"

She said, "Okay, I'll tell you. The last thing he ever said to me was,

- SLIDE #: "You don't scare me. You couldn't hit the broad side of a barn with that old gun."

True story of the Titanic: not a made up for movie one.

- SLIDE #: In 1912 John Harper boarded the Titanic with his 6-year-old daughter. After the ship struck an iceberg, he got her into a lifeboat and ran through the ship yelling, "Women, children, and unsaved into the lifeboats!" Survivors report that he witnessed to anyone who would listen— even after he had jumped into the water and was clinging to a piece of wreckage.

Harper's final moments were recounted four years later at a meeting in Hamilton, Ontario, by a man who said: "I am a survivor of the Titanic. When I was drifting alone on a spar that awful night, the waves brought Mr. Harper of Glasgow, also on a piece of wreck, near me.

- SLIDE #: "Man," he said, "are you saved?" "No," I said, "I am not." He replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

The waves bore him away, but, strange to say, brought him back a little later, and he said,

- SLIDE #: "Are you saved now?" "No," I said, "I cannot honestly say that I am." He said again, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," and shortly after he went down; and there, alone in the night, and with two miles of water under me, I believed. I am John Harper's last convert.

Only six people were picked out the water by lifeboats; the other 1,522, including Harper, drowned.

This is better than a fictitious love story that never happened—but they did not do this movie.

Would you like to know what Jesus' very last words were on earth?

His final words are recorded in the Book of Acts.

- SLIDE #: Acts 1:8: "*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*"

Is the power on you? Would you like to have that Power? Raise hands.

- SLIDE #: Today, Glenn and I begin a series in the Book of The Acts Of The Apostles.

OVERHEAD: But that name is a misnomer. Title comes from 2nd century A.D. But, only four apostles are mentioned: Peter, Paul, James, and John. It is really the Acts of Peter (1-12) and Paul (13-28).

But what I want you to see is that Acts is unfinished with Paul living in a rented house in Rome. It almost sounds as if you could turn the next page and begin another new adventure!
READ ACTS 28:30-31.

●SLIDE #: *Acts continues today: It is the Acts of Jesus through His followers.*

●SLIDE #: DIAGRAM of Jesus' earthly ministry; ministry in Acts; continued ministry.
In a very real sense Acts is not the acts of Christians but the continuing acts of Jesus. In the Gospels He did it in His own physical body, but in the Book of Acts he is doing it through the bodies of men and woman who are indwelt by His life.

●SLIDE #: ACTS 1:1-2: *In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.*

What was the Former Book? The gospel of Luke.
READ LUKE 1:1-4.

Who is the Author?

D. Luke. Physician. Gentile Christian who met Paul when Paul came into Greece on his second journey. He joins the story in ACTS 16:8-10 when the story changes from "They" to "We."

Who is Theophilus?

Luke 1:3: "Most excellent Theophilus" is a Roman title of rank and honor.

Theophilus means "Loved by God," or "God lover." Could be generic address to all who love God.

●SLIDE #: 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.*

The disciples were inclined to doubt He had risen. So the Lord made no less than ten appearances during the forty days to prove that He is resurrected and alive—once seen by over 500 people.

Luke mentions three categories of proof that He has risen."

●SLIDE #: 1. We saw Him.

From this word for "appear" we get our word "ophthalmia", which means literally, "eyeball"
These disciples "eyeballed" Jesus for forty days.

2. He spoke to us.

"We even remember His subject matter." He talked about the Kingdom of God. "We saw Him, and heard Him – two experiences that confirmed to us that this was no fantasy."

3. He ate with us.

They actually saw the food disappear. It is terribly hard to get a hallucination to eat! So Luke says, "This is the proof; He ate with us, so we know He is alive."

They were not séances with a shadowy figure billowing about making sounds. He returned in the same body and allowed them to examine it in broad daylight.

Imagine the headlines of the Jerusalem newspaper in the days of the disciples.

●SLIDE #: Jesus arrested!

●SLIDE #: Jesus found innocent!

●SLIDE #: Jesus crucified anyway!

- SLIDE #: Jesus rises from the grave!
- SLIDE #: Jesus appears to the disciples!
- SLIDE #: Jesus disappears!
- SLIDE #: Jesus appears again!
- SLIDE #: Jesus disappears again!
- SLIDE #: Jesus re-appears!
- SLIDE #: Jesus disappears once more! ...and on and on for the 40 days that followed His resurrection.

Now, let me show you what is going on here. He is transitioning them to believe and experience that He is right there with them—whether He is there or not.

Jesus did not go to some distant planet in space. It is wrong to think of heaven as if it were several billion light-years away. Instead, Jesus simply stepped into a different dimension of existence – the spiritual kingdom which surrounds us on every side, invisibly. He is not far away.

- SLIDE #: Bicycles teaching the kids to ride.
Only difference is that Jesus never stops running beside. We need help riding and balancing for the rest of our lives.

- SLIDE #: ACTS 1:4-5: *On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."*

Technically in Greek this is: "Stick around in Jerusalem." Wait until you get the promised gift—baptized with the Spirit. The power. Wait?

Why? "Because you'll make a mess of everything if you do this on your own."

Somewhere along the line you will learn something deeply significant regarding the Christian life.

When you first begin to follow Christ you are likely to say,

- BUILD SLIDE #: A: The Christian life is Easy.
- BUILD SLIDE #: B: Soon you will realize that it is not that way at all. The Christian life is hard.
- BUILD SLIDE #: C: One day you will finally understand: It is impossible.

Some of you are cruising in the power of the Spirit.

Some of you don't seem to have it. Would like to have it?

OVERHEAD: Baptized with the Holy Spirit:

Baptidzo: dip or immerse.

The word "baptism" is taken from the dye industry. It is a word which describes the act of placing clothing into a vat of dye. it means "to place or to immerse."

John the Baptist began to herald His coming. But He didn't make the announcement people might have expected. He didn't say... "The Messiah is coming!"

Instead he said, "A Baptizer is coming!" He put it this way:

LUKE 3:16: "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.

- SLIDE #: He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

During his earthly ministry, He never baptized a soul. The Holy Spirit was careful to put into the record (John 4:2) that the Lord Himself didn't baptize with water.

He would baptize with the Spirit and Fire. This is the promise of Acts One.

Once invite Jesus into your life: Baptized with the Spirit. Two things happen simultaneously:

- SLIDE #: 1. Christ places Himself by His Spirit in us.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6:19:

He becomes a temple or dwelling place for God in the Spirit.

- SLIDE #: Christ places (baptizes, immerses) His new Follower into the church, the body of Christ.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:13: For by one Spirit have we ALL been baptized into one body..."

Some of you need to come out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of light. Give you an opportunity to do this today.

- SLIDE #: ACTS 1:6-7: *So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority."*

What are the disciples thinking? "Power: It must be time for the kingdom!"

They are going to get Power— but not the kind they think. Not political power that crushes and conforms people: they are going to receive a supernatural power that is "out of this world". —and once they tasted real spiritual power they never asked for political power again.

- SLIDE #: ACTS 1:8: *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

- SLIDE #: Map of ancient world: Jerusalem two years (Acts 1-7: Judea and Samaria 7 more years (Acts 8-12):

- SLIDE #: Ends of the earth, still going on (Acts 13 to today)

Want that Power?

We will tend to want to know how to get hold of power and use it for ourselves. Help me get through life: "How can I get hold of this power and use it.

The Power is not some "it" to get hold of and use. The Power is a Person.

The question is: "How can He get hold of me and use me?"

The Power is to enable us to live out the life of Jesus and do His works on earth.

Witness: Not hard. Only hard if you make something hard out of it—and try to do it on your own. It will flow out of the Spirit's life flowing through you.

Barber STORY: Man, are you ready to die.

It is an attitude thing.

The power will begin to give us a heart like Jesus. As we see people from God's perspective the sharing of the Christ of our lives flows naturally.

While speaking in London, D. L. Moody was approached by a British companion wanting to know Moody's secret of success in leading people to Christ.

Moody invited the man to look out the hotel window and asked, "What do you see?"

The man looked down at the square and saw streets crowded with people.

Moody suggested that he look again.

This time he mentioned seeing people—men, women and children.

Moody asked him to look a third time, and the man became frustrated at not seeing what Moody wanted him to see.

Finally, Moody came to look out the window and with watery eyes, said, "I see people going to Hell without Jesus. Until you see people like that, you will not lead them to Christ."

What do you see in the restaurant? In the doctor's waiting room? In your extended family?

- SLIDE #: ACTS 1:9-11: After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

This disappearance is different. His former disappearances were instantaneous, whereas this one is gradual. They watch it happen. Now they know it is the last time they'll see Him.

One must always have the ascension in mind if he is to understand the true nature of Christ's church on Earth.

READ AND EXPLAIN JOHN 16:5-7.

Good to go: only be in one place at one time. Can't be in Jerusalem and helping disciples on sea at the same time. Now Jesus can be with all of us all the time.

God wants an Image of Himself to be visible at all times on earth.

OVERHEAD: Image of God on earth: Adam, Fall, Seth Jesus, Cross, Resurrection for 40 days, Ascension—Pentecost to indwell all believers

The book of Acts is not finished. It goes on in us today. We are to live out the book of Acts today.

With the cross behind Him, the Lord could roll up His sleeves and wade into the bigger task of raising the church on the foundation He had laid. His greater ministry lay beyond the cross. Building His church couldn't be done while He was in the flesh. Now we operate all over the world in human flesh, while He operates in the Spirit. He is having a great time.

Some of you are waiting for that power. How can I release that Power into my life?

During Superbowl XXXVII, FedEx ran a commercial that spoofed the movie *Castaway*, in which Tom Hanks played a FedEx worker whose company plane went down, stranding him on a desert island for years. Looking like the bedraggled Hanks in the movie, the FedEx employee in the commercial goes up to the door of a suburban home, package in hand.

When the lady comes to the door, he explains that he survived five years on a deserted island, and during that whole time he kept this package in order to deliver it to her. She says, "Thank you." But he is curious about what is in the package: "If I may ask, what was in that package?"

She opens it and shows him the contents, saying, "Oh, nothing really. Just a radio-satellite telephone, a global positioning device, a compass, a water purifier, and some seeds."

Some of you have the package of the Holy Spirit in you—but it is like it is unopened. You going to have to choose to open the package.

I am going to invite you in a minute to open the package.

●SLIDE #: I bring two glasses of water and two packets of Alka-Seltzer. I drop a packet of Alka-Seltzer, with the wrapper on, into one glass. Then I plop an unsealed packet into the second glass, and watch it fill with fizz.

Both glasses have the Alka-Seltzer, just as all Christians have the Holy Spirit. But notice how you can have the Holy Spirit and not his filling. Our goal is to live in such a way as to unwrap the packaging around the presence and power of the Holy Spirit within us.

Pop and Fizz and full of life—other seems dead and lifeless.

Two things make up the package wrapping around the Holy Spirit.

●SLIDE #: Sin and Self

Sin messes up the relationship. Hinders His life and grieves Him deeply.
Self in charge quenches his ability to move powerfully and freely.

●SLIDE #: A wise teenager described happiness as a butterfly, which, when pursued, is always just beyond your grasp, but which, if you sit down quietly, may alight upon you. And it's like that with the Spirit of God. He is not seized. He is received.

Sit and let him come, Imagine Him inside waiting to get out. What keeps him in?

Sin? Are holding on to some sin? Let it go. Need help? That is his business. He can pour in the power.

Self? Lack of surrender? What means more to you than He does? Golf clubs in shed for three months.