Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Resources for Finishing Our Lord's Unfinished Work, Part 1
Scripture: Acts 1:1-11
Code: 1700

Acts 1:111

This morning we have the wonderful privilege of beginning a new series. And it's always with a great anticipation that we do that. We're going to begin a study of the book of Acts this morning and I'm excited about it because there are many, many things that we're going to learn in the book of Acts. We're going to learn tremendous principles that the Lord used to begin the church, some of which are still operating today, some of which are not. We're going to see some ministries that are exciting in terms of what happened in miraculous ways. We're going to see how God works through men by His Spirit. We're going to see the pattern for the church, what our Lord intended it should be and what it was in its purest form. We're going to be learning some marvelous things. We're going to see God's pattern for missionary effort, God's pattern for the control and the government of the church, God's pattern for building the church, for evangelizing the world. All of these things unfold to us in the book of Acts. And so it becomes a very strategic book. It is the chief source of facts concerning the birth of the church and gives to us the strong character of the first century church.

Now the author of the book of Acts, as we shall see in a moment in some more detail, is Luke...Luke is the author of Acts. And Luke was closely associated with the Apostles from about the time of Jesus' death, around 30 A.D., to about 60 or 63 A.D. where evidently he penned this book. And in those intervening 30plus years, as Luke travelled in the companionship of the Apostles, he penned what was going on. And the story of the book of Acts is the beginning of the church at Jerusalem and its explosion until it reaches the capital of the world, one of those uttermost parts of the earth, the city of Rome. And in a thirty year period, under the tremendous power of the Spirit of God, the church exploded around that area of the world and reached the capital of the world in the form of the Apostle Paul in his arrival in the city of Rome. And in those 30 years, Luke presents to us how it was that the Spirit of God superintended controlled and empowered the expansion of the church.

Now, there are many reasons that Luke wanted to write this and we could, perhaps, pull out as many reasons as there are truths in the book. It's important because it gives us the pattern of the church. It's important because it shows us the pattern of world evangelism. It's important because there are principles of discipleship. It's important for a multiplicity of reasons. But in Luke's own mind, as he is writing, he is directing this book to a particular Roman high official whose name we shall see in a moment. And in writing to this man, he is evidentlyas one of his purposesattempting to commend Christianity to the Roman world. The Romans had a rather exclusive view of religion, you worship the

emperor. And they had some other gods that were involved, but emperor worship was the key thing. They were somewhat tolerant although their tolerance ran a little thin and they became great persecutors of Christianity. And in this particular book, Luke directs the attention of the Romans from time to time to the character of Christians, that is that they are not bad citizens but rather they are very loyal and they are very law abiding. He also directs the Romans' attention to the fact that many other Roman officials have treated the Christians with great care and have even given good testimonies about Christians. So it has kind of as a background thought the commending of Christianity to the Roman world, lest the Romans be threatened that all of these people were rebels who were going to overthrow the pax Romana or the Roman peace.

For example, in Acts 13 he even talks about the fact that Sergius Paulus who was at that time the Roman governor of Cypress became a Christian. And so at that point certainly a Roman was tolerant of Christianity. Chapter 16 verse 35, chapter 18 verse 12, chapter 19 verse 31 indicate the Roman attitude toward Christianity was positive at that time. And so this book sort of sets down for all time the fact that Romans should treat Christianity with great care because Christians were accepted by the early Romans.

But not only that, there's also a great emphasis on the fact that the Christians were good citizens. The secretary of Ephesus, for example, in chapter 19 gives the Christians a good testimony. Even in chapter 25 and verse 25, Festus, when discussing the issues with Paul made the statement that Paul perhaps might have even been released. And certainly gave no signs of being worthy of any crime. And so Luke then commends Christianity in the sense of its place in the Roman world.

Not only that, Luke evidently commends Christianity in its place in relation to the Jew because you see there was this kind of latent problem with the newborn church as it was to unfold and that is that the Jews would think that it belonged primarily to them and the Gentiles were secondclass citizens. Particularly might this have happened in view of what happened when the church began at Jerusalem as the Spirit of God came in cloven tongues of fire and came upon them, they were baptized in the Holy Spirit, they began to speak in different languages. Now then this gave them a certain exclusive kind of feeling and that's why when Peter came to the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, he was so shocked when he announced to the Jerusalem council, "Guys, you'll never believe it, the same thing happened to the Gentiles that happened to us, can you believe that?" In other words, the point is that God wanted them to make sure the Gentiles and the Jews were on an equal basis in the church.

So, the book of Acts then commends Christianity to the Jew in the sense that it's a universal thing and there's no variation. It talks about, for example, Philip preaching to Gentiles. It talks about Peter and his ministry with Cornelius. It talks about the Christian Gentile...the Christians who went to the Gentiles at Antioch. It talks about Paul in Asia Minor. All this Gentile ministry and the climax in Acts 15 at the Jerusalem Council when they decided there that Jews and Gentiles were indeed equal in the church.

But both of those are in a great measure secondary. For the main purpose of Acts is stated as such in Acts 1 verse 8. And if you'll look at that for a moment you'll see the main character summarized very clearly. Verse 8, "But ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you," and here's really the purpose, "ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, in all Judea and in Samaria and in the utter most part of the earth." Now there you have the outline of the book of Acts. The book of Acts begins when the Spirit came. They received power. Immediately they became...what?...witnesses declaring the wonderful works of God. They began where? In Jerusalem. Then the book of Acts moves and they went to Judea. Then they went to Samaria, finally they went to the world. They wound up in the capital city of Rome and that's exactly the outline of the book of Acts given in the eighth verse. It begins right there and it sweeps clear through to the end of the book.

The purpose then of the book as Luke states it there is to show the story of the spread of Christianity empowered and energized by the Holy Spirit throughout the world.

Now I can illustrate this to you and I want to take a moment to do it because I think this will help you to get the flow a little bit. It's somewhat academic but hang on for a minute, I want you to see this. The book of Acts falls into various kinds of outlines. You can outline it in many ways and everybody always has trouble outlining the book of Acts because it's tough to outline the work of the Spirit...always. So whenever you try to outline the book of Acts you have a problem. If you're outlining Romans, you're dealing with Paul's logical mind. If you're outlining Acts, you're dealing with the flow of the sweep of the Spirit which can't always be boxed into little categories.

But there are six kind of panels that find their way through the book of Acts. And all of them show us the flow of the church as it moves. Let me show you what I mean. In...beginning in chapter 1 verse 1, and running through chapter 6 verse 7, the first panel appears. And this little section tells us about the church at Jerusalem where it all began. It tells us about the preaching of Peter at Pentecost and the birth of the Jerusalem church. And it finishes us with this statement in Acts 6 verse 7, "And the Word of God increased and the number of the disciples...watch this word...multiplied in Jerusalem greatly and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." Now there's the summary of the first six chapters up till verse 7. It's all summarized right there. This is the birth of the Jerusalem church as it began to grow and as it began to multiply.

Then beginning in chapter 6 verse 8, running through chapter 9 verse 1 we find the next little section in the book of Acts and this shows how Christianity which began at Jerusalem began to spread throughout Judea which was a province in which Jerusalem was the city. It began to spread throughout Judea, in that second little section Stephen preached and died a martyr's death. Then it began to move into Samaria and that's all covered through chapter 9 verse 31 and summarized in verse 31 which says, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria and were edified and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit were...and here's

this word again...multiplied." So there you have the second movement of the church as it begins to grow toward fulfilling the commission that Jesus gave in Acts 1:8.

Then beginning in chapter 9 verse 32 and going to chapter 12 verse 24, we find the next movement of the church which involved the conversion of the Apostle Paul and at that point the church begins to explode. The Gentiles are reached in the city of Antioch where they're first called Christians. Cornelius is saved through the ministry of Peter. And the summary of that period is in verse 24 and again it says, "But the Word of God grew...and there's that word again...and multiplied." The whole thing is the multiplication of Christianity as it moves out.

Then we come to the fourth section beginning in verse 25 of 12 and running to verse 5 of chapter 16, 16:5 and that section deals with the church born in Asia Minor and the preaching tour of Galatia by the Apostle Paul. And it ends with this summary, verse 5, "And so were the churches established in the faith...and here comes the same idea...and increased in number daily."

Then that brings us to the fifth section which begins in 16:6 and runs through chapter 19 verse 20. And in this section, Paul moves out again even further and moves to the great Gentile cities of Ephesus and Corinth and extends the ministry further to the ends of the world. And the comment is in verse 20 of chapter 19, "And mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed." And here it is again, multiplying and extending.

Then beginning in 19:21 clear till the end of the book we find Paul's final ministry, his arrival at Rome where he is imprisoned but still preaches the gospel and the book closes with these words: here's Paul preaching the Kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him. And there it closes. And so the book of Acts covers a period of 30 years in which the church of Jesus Christ was born and exploded around the known world and reached the capital of the world, the city of Rome. And thus does the book end with Paul in Rome in prison awaiting his execution. And that's where Luke stops because he has accomplished his purpose. He has shown the miraculous spread of Christianity to the capital city of the world in just over 30 years, a religion that began with a little handful of weak men and a leader who was nailed to a cross in 30 years has conquered the known world.

Now I might add, going back to the first chapter and still talking about introduction, that verse 8 says it will all happen under the power of the Holy Spirit. Now this book is entitled "The Acts of the Apostles," it could better be titled "The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles." Because it is the record of how the Spirit of God was instrumental in all of this that was going on in the spread of the church. Behind everything is the power of the Holy Spirit, the dynamic of the Holy Spirit. And Acts is a practical book in the sense that it gives us patterns for Christian testimony, for missionary work, evangelism, building of the church, etc., etc. But it is also a theology book in the sense that it details for us the flow of the work in the person of God and how He operates. And so as we go through this

book, we're going to find ourselves not only learning practical principles but we're going to find ourselves kind of running off on theological tangents. As we see the Spirit of God do something, we'll then have to branch out and define that ministry of the Spirit.

So our study in Acts will be practical and it will also be theological. The Holy Spirit dominates the book of Acts. Sixty times in the book of Acts, it talks of the Spirit, 40 times of the Holy Spirit. And everything in here revolves around the Spirit. If you put it all together you find that God's pattern for everything in the church is the energy of the Spirit, always. The Holy Spirit...the Holy Spirit regenerates, baptizes, fills and sanctifies the members. The Holy Spirit chooses and appoints the ministers. The Holy Spirit precides over the councils of the church. The Holy Spirit directs and controls everything the church ever does. And so it is really the Acts of the Holy Spirit. And whereas in the gospels, and particularly in John where we have been studying, Christ is revealed in the flesh. In Acts, Christ is revealed by the ministry of the Spirit. And you'll remember that Jesus made that statement, He said, "When I go away, I'll send the Holy Spirit and He shall testify...what?...of Me." And so the book of Acts, though majoring on the Holy Spirit, is a living testimony to the power of Jesus Christ for the Spirit always points to Christ. And so as we study the book of Acts we do not want to get preoccupied with the Spirit or else He has not accomplished His ministry, we want to get preoccupied with what the Spirit tells us about Jesus Christ.

Now included in our introduction I'd like to introduce you to verse 1 and 2 to get us rolling. Verse 1, "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments unto the Apostles whom He had chosen." Now this introduces us to the book and it's a very brief introduction. And it tells us who wrote Acts. It tells us that Luke wrote it. You say, "I didn't see Luke's name there." You're right. But what you did see there was the statement, "the former treatise have I made, O Theophilus." Now if you go back to the beginning of Luke and look at chapter 1 verse 3, Paul addresses...or Luke addresses this gospel to Theophilus. He says, "To write unto thee in order the most excellent...or most excellent Theophilus that thou mightest know the certainty of those things where in thou has been instructed."

Luke wrote Luke, the gospel of Luke, to Theophilus. And we know that. Now here in chapter 1 of Acts verse 1, he says, "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus," so we know it's the same writer. It's interesting that Luke is not mentioned a great deal in the New Testament, he appears three times in Colossians 4:14, in the little book of Philemon verse 24 and in 1 Timothy 4...er, 2 Timothy 4:11. And in each case he is just seen moving about, moving about with the Apostles. Now we can put a little bit together about Luke, not a lot but we know a little bit.

Number one, we know he was a doctor. Now we know he was a doctor not only because of the statements but when we read the book of Luke, we find that he gets himself into situations that reveal he's a doctor. His choice of words is medical, in certain cases. And particularly interesting in the case

of a woman who had an issue of blood, the other gospel writers say as she had suffered many things at the hands of many physicians. Luke, however, carefully omits that phrase, see, which gives us a little insight into how Luke viewed his profession. And so we believe that Luke was a doctor. And we don't know much else about him other than that and that he was one of a godly sort who followed and was a close helper and close friend and companion of Paul, even involved in his final imprisonment with him. And he was a Gentile. And then likely the only Gentile writer of the New Testament.

Now he says "the former treatise," and that's an interesting Greek phrase because it really means the first part of two historical narratives...the first part of two historical narratives. In other words, the idea that this is volume 2 of something and that, of course, pushes it right back to Luke where we remember that the gospel is volume 1. If you want another title for Acts you can call it "Luke, volume 2" because Luke began, first of all, by instructing us concerning the person of Jesus Christ and what He did in His life. And then he carries the flow of the thing right on, what Jesus did when He went back to heaven and sent the Spirit to finish His work. This is just volume 2.

Now picking just a moment some thoughts from the name Theophilus, which is a combination of two words meaning "beloved of God, or friend of God, or lover of God." Theophilus, we know little or nothing about except historically. In the second century his name appears and is some indication in the second century sources that he was an influential wealthy official in Antioch. There's also some indication that Luke was originally from Antioch and therefore Luke had a knowledge of this man and perhaps because he was a wellknown physician had some connection with Theophilus. Undoubtedly, Theophilus had become a believer and consequently Luke had addressed these particular volumes to Theophilus to give him information as he states in Luke concerning Jesus Christ that he might well understand the things which he had been instructed. So evidently he had come to Christ and now he needed detail and perhaps Theophilus was a man who demanded detail. Also the fact that he commends Christianity to the Romans would be in back of his mind as he writes to a Roman like Theophilus.

Now we may also assume from Luke chapter 1 where he calls him "excellent Theophilus" that he was a highranking Roman official, for the term "excellent" also appears in connection with Festus and Felix who were governors. So it is very likely that this man Theophilus was a very highranking Roman official who had come to Christ and it is this one to whom Luke pens this twovolume set on the work of Jesus Christ, His work on earth and His work through His church, volume 2. And you'll notice that this is indicated very simply in verse 1. It says this, "I'm writing to you about all that Jesus..what's the next word?...began...began to do and to teach."

In other words, I only got it started. Jesus on earth in his gospel, in the gospel accounts only began to do the work. You say, "I thought the work of Jesus Christ was a finished work." You're right. The work of redemption is finished. The work of evangelization and teaching of the Word of God was not finished, He only began to do that. Don't ever forget for a moment that the idea of Jesus' work is not a

finished work, Jesus said in John 17:4 when He prayed to the Father, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." And He also said on the cross, "Tetelestai", it is finished. When it came to redemption, it was done. When it came to evangelization, it was only begun. And so I have entitled this particular beginning of the book of Acts, "Jesus gives the resources for the finishing of His unfinished work." Plans for finishing His unfinished work. And so we must distinguish between the finished work of Christ and that which He only just began. And if you want to know what He only just began, it's what He can do and what He teaches.

You say, "You mean Jesus is still active doing things in this world?" Oh, of course. He not only teaches through His vessels but He works through us, doesn't He? His redemptive work is done. His doing and teaching work is just rolling at this point in Acts. And it's been going on now from our perspective for nearly two thousand years. And it's exciting to be a part of it. And so, Luke lets us know that it's the beginning of His unfinished work that Jesus did and that we are to carry on.

Now in order for us to understand this opening passage, we will break it down a little bit and we'll consider it in two parts. We'll never get through all of this section this morning by any means. But we will consider down through verse 11 as one unit because it's really a basic unit to the germane to our understanding. We must take it as a unit. And it breaks down into six parts and I want you to see these. You have an outline there that can accommodate you there in your understanding of it. Before we look at the specific, let me just remind you of this. Now keep in mind that as we begin Acts 1, Jesus knows He is making a great transition. He began to do it all. He began to teach it all. You see, you don't read anything about the Apostles teaching up to this point...very little, very minimal involvement in that. The best they could do was herald the Kingdom in Matthew 10, that's about it. They really weren't equipped to teach. And they really weren't able to do very much. They were restricted in their own inabilities, apart from being, you know, hand to hand with Jesus. And so Jesus had up to this point done it. But now He must shift and He must put it all on the rest who are left while He leaves to go back to the Father. So it's a great transitional passage. He's got to dump the whole load on these eleven who are flimsy from a human standpoint, to put it mildly, who are not out of the world's greatest or mightiest. But it's going to be their job and so He's got to equip them.

Now if that's true, and we know that He's equipping them and He's about to leave and this is the last thing He will ever say to them on earth, then we know that what He says is important, do we not? These are critical words. These are extremely important things that Jesus does here in order to get them ready for a job that is far beyond the imagination of a human being to even conceive that he could do. And so this is important stuff.

At the same time let me say this. It is very simple, it is basic. For some of you that have been a Christian for a long time, none of this will be new. It will sound like same song second verse. Because this is...this is the beginning, friends. Do you know what Jesus had to work with when He did this? He had to work with people who didn't know that much about anything, so it's basic baby food...baby

food. For you that are new Christians, it's going to be rich. For the rest of us who have moved along, I trust it's going to be convicting for us to realize that we haven't really been doing what we should have been doing from the very beginning. But nevertheless very basic.

Now Jesus does six things that we'll consider this week and next Lord's day. First of all, He taught them. And that's the proper message. If they're going to carry on His work, they've got to have the right message, obvious, basic, simple. He doesn't say to them, "Go out into the world and teach all men" and then not tell them what to teach...proper message. Secondly, He appeared to them which is proper manifestation. They've got to know that He's for real. Thirdly, He empowers them which is the proper might. They can't do the job on their own, they've got to have the right power. Fourthly, He refused them. That is, He didn't tell them something because that was the proper mystery. There were some things they didn't need to know. Fifthly, He commissioned them, that is the proper mission. He told them what they were to do when they went. And fifthly, He promised them, that was the proper motive. He told them why to do it. Here you have as basic a passage as we will ever study. This is just down...this is baby food for a Christian. But I believe God's going to teach us some things we should have learned long ago and if we've learned them, He'll remind us because that's what Peter said, you remember, he said, "I want to put you in remembrance of the things I've already told you, and I'll keep on doing it until I die and then I'll write it down so that even when I'm dead you'll have to read it."

All right, first of all, then, we begin with the proper message. If you're going to carry the message of Jesus Christ, you've got to know what it is. That's pretty obvious. And so in verses 1 and 2, as we've already seen introduced to us, we'll pick up the thought there of the proper message. And may I say at this moment that to effectively carry on Christ's work, we've got to begin with the facts, right? I mean, we've got to know what our message is, proper information, just that simple. You can't go out and sell a product if you don't know what it is. And if we're going to declare Jesus Christ, we've got to have the facts, we've got to have the foundation of communicating what it is that we're going to communicate.

All right, look at verse 1. It says at the end of verse 1 that Jesus began both to do and teach, and then in verse 2 it says He did it right up until the time He was taken away and He taught by the Holy Spirit commandments unto the Apostles whom He had chosen. Jesus then gave them the proper message. He instructed them with the facts. He faithfully communicated to them by deed and word, you notice He began to do it and to teach it and He gave them the proper message. No one is ready, no one is equipped for any kind of continuing work of Christ without the right message. This is why we believe in training. This is why it's not as simple as saying, "Well, I'm a Christian why can't I just run out and serve Jesus Christ. I'm ready, I'll just go right out there and get out into the world and really let them have it." And what you know may be expended in ten hours, you know. That may be it. And even that ten hours will be repetitious.

I've had young people come to me time and time again and say, "You know, I rushed into something, I got into a ministry and I realized after two or three occasions of this particular ministry I had said everything I knew." There must be a real understanding of content. There must be the proper preparing of the mind with absolute facts and knowledge before any kind of a ministry can be effective. People ask often, you know, "Why do you go to college for four years and then go to graduate school for three or four years and then all of these things you have to study and write papers and go through all of this and all of this and all of this?" The point is obvious, so that you might know the message. How ill equipped I would be. If I think of myself at the point when I gave my life to Jesus Christ to be a minister, if I never got any training past that, that would have been...that would have been the greatest tragedy possible because I would have been ill equipped to do anything. And all of the years that I spent, every one of them was precious and valuable in preparing me to know the Word so that I could teach it.

And so, Jesus says you must know the facts. And this, of course, this is our hue and cry at Grace Church. I mean, when you get on this, you're on my hobby horse. I mean, this is where it's at, folks. The knowledge of the Word of God is what it's all about. There is no substitute for that at all. And I've said many times, you know what Hosea said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." The greatest problem in the church today, first of all, is ignorance of the Word of God. And it comes up so many times. Kids come in and they say, "I've seen Christianity," I talked to a kid this week, "I've seen Christianity, man, I've seen people, they tell me all about Christianity and then I go to them and ask them a question about the Bible to solve a problem and they say I don't know, go ask the preacher. They've been going to church 20 years and don't know A1 about the Bible." I mean, that doesn't sit very well. What about your parent...you're parents now. You have children, they say to you, "Dad, what about this verse, do you understand?" "Oh, uh, hmmm, go ask, you know, somebody." And wait a minute, you've been going to church all your life, what have you been learning? It's very difficult for people to cope with ignorance among Christians...very difficult. Also, very difficult for God to cope with it. Paul says, "Study to show thyself approved unto whom? God." God has trouble tolerating ignorance spiritually.

It's amazing. There was 112 question test given by Time magazine which was interesting. It was given to people who were supposed to be church oriented people who really knew the facts. Some of the answers that I pulled out of the test were very interesting. Here are some of them.

Sodom and Gomorrah were lovers. Jezebel was Ahab's jackassthat's the only one they got right. Eve was created from an apple. Jesus was baptized by Moses, etc. Now that's just a few. There were many of them. Absolutely shock you. And that's why in Hebrews chapter 5 the Holy Spirit says, "What's wrong with you, whereas you ought to be teachers, you have need that somebody teach you again the principles." And you know, church...people get wrapped into a church thing and they come, they say, "Well, I go to church." And they come with their mouth rightly formed for the bottle to be

inserted every week, see. And they go out, fskfskfskfskfsk, see, you know. And that's it. That's it. And all during the week there is no concentrated effort, there is no studied approach to learning the Word of God. They are illequipped to do the job. Therefore all the rest of the ingredients are meaningless because they don't know the facts, they can't communicate. We must have the proper message, we must know the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must know what the Word of God teaches. And if anything that I gained out of this message, it's a hotter commitment to that very truth to teach the Word of God. The facts are the beginning of everything.

You say, "Well, yeah, but I know one thing, you can learn all the facts in the world and if...and if it's not part of your life, it doesn't mean anything." And you are absolutely right and that's exactly what it means in verse 1 when it says Jesus began both to what? To do and to teach. And you notice which comes first? That's right, you can teach when you're doing it. It's tough to teach when you're working toward getting to the place where you can do it. First, it's a part of your life. Then you can really teach it. And so what kind of knowledge is He talking about? Not head knowledge but living knowledge.

You can compare with that the Pharisees who claimed to be teachers of Israel and they were the ones that knew the law and they were the ones that knew all the information and they could spew it out and so forth and so on. And Jesus said in Matthew 23, and they didn't like this definition of themselves, nevertheless it's classic, Jesus says in verse 2, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat," in other words, they're in the tradition of Moses, "so whatever they say you observe, that observe and do." They're giving you Moses' straight stuff. "But," He says, "do not after their works, for they say and do not," you see.

Now that's just the kind of vapid empty insipid teaching that goes on in many places. But of Jesus it said He began what? To do and to teach. Now when we're talking about the proper message, we're not talking about the fact only in your brain, we're talking about the facts in your brain and the pattern in your life. You can teach out of the living crucible of your own experience. When the Word of God has become a part of your living, then you've got something to teach...principles applied to life.

And there's a dearth of powerful preaching today and there's a dearth of powerful content in teaching and there's a dearth in walking in obedience because number one, Christians first of all are ignorant and number two, many of them who know the truth haven't learned how to put it to use in their lives. This is what I call spiritual knowledge. Spiritual knowledge is the knowledge that works in your spiritual life. And if the Word hasn't gotten any power to transform your life, you can't expect it in your mouth to transform anybody else's life or for them to believe it could. And this is such a tragic thing. You see so many ministers that stand up to preach the Word and they preach it and preach it and then a little while later they run off and they get into some kind of gross kind of sin and everybody in the congregation falls apart and they don't know what's going on. I mean, "Wait a minute, man, what have you been telling us all this time? Doesn't it even work?" Oh, I hear this many, many times. I mean, you better be able to live it if you're going to preach it or else you better not preach it because

it reflects on God.

Robert Murray McCheyne said this, "Remember, you are God's sword, in great measure according to the purity of perfection of the instrument will be the success. It is not great words, no. It is not great talent. It is not great ideas God uses, it is great likeness to Jesus Christ." That's good, isn't it? And then McCheyne said this, "A holy Christian is an awesome weapon in the hand of God." You better be able to do it and then you can teach it.

This is the beginning of everything. Jesus taught them and taught them until the very moment, it says in verse 2, when He was taken up. He kept on teaching. He knew how important it was. Nothing will substitute for teaching the Word of God, absolutely nothing. It's amazing how many people don't know that. And by that I don't mean that you need to be bottle fed, I mean that you need to get your own dinner once in a while.

Taken up, he says. When Jesus was taken up, pick that thought up in verse 2, just pulling that out of context for a moment to look at it, what does it...what does it mean Jesus was taken up? Well, that's His ascension. What a fantastic thing that is. We think it's great when somebody gets in a big metal box and blasts off into space. Jesus Christ didn't need any of that paraphernalia. He stood on that mountain and just left. That's all. He was taken up.

Verse 9 emphasized it. It said He was taken up. Verse 11 says He was taken up. And verse 22 says He was taken up. And the Holy Spirit is trying to tell us something. He was taken up. Physically in His glorified body, Jesus went up into heaven. Did you get that? Now think about that thought for a minute. Do you know what that means? That means that right now in this month in this year, 1900 and plus years later, the same Jesus Christ in the same glorified body that was touched by those disciples is sitting at the right hand of the Father, no different than He was when He left.

You say, "You mean He's up there in that same body that walked on the earth, that same body that the disciples felt and touched and ate with and talked with, that same Jesus Christ in that same form is sitting at the right hand of the Father?" That's exactly what I mean. He was taken up. And the proof of the pudding comes in verse 11 when it says this same Jesus who was taken up shall what? Shall so come in like manner as you see Him go. When He comes back He'll be the very same that He was when He left. He...that's why we can have confidence in what the writer of Hebrews says that we have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He knows how we feel because He's there even now in a glorified body.

And so, Jesus Christ was to be taken up. But until that moment that He was taken up, He faithfully, faithfully, faithfully taught and taught that they might have spiritual knowledge translated into living patterns. And He taught not only out of His mouth, all that does is give information that doesn't change lives, He taught out of His life. He gave them something to pattern their lives after.

He promised them that He was going to go. John 6:62, John 13:1 and 3, John 10...er, 16:28, John 17:13, John 20:17, all those verses He said, "I'm going to go, I'm going to go, I'm going to go," and He did. He fulfilled His promise. He went to the Father. But before He went, He carefully taught.

I want to show you something here. It says in verse 2 that through the Holy Spirit He taught. He gave the commandments through the Holy Spirit. Did you know that Jesus Christ really ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit? Did you know that? It's a beautiful blending of the Trinity because in Christ's ministry, He was an individual in the Trinity. And yet He only did the Father's will, right? And secondly, He did it in the energy of the Spirit. The whole Trinity was active in Jesus Christ. But what He did He did by the power of the Holy Spirit and that's why in Matthew 12 when the Pharisees came to their great astute conclusion they came to Jesus and they said, "We understand now, we've got it, what You do You do by the power of...whom?...the devil." That was their brilliant conclusion after everything Jesus did. That was a hundred and 80 degrees from the truth. And that's what sin will do for you, blind your mind. And Jesus said, "Well, gentlemen, I could tolerate it if you spoke a word against the Son of Man, that is My humanness, humanity, but I will not tolerate that you have blasphemed Me?" No, whom? "Holy Spirit." Why? Because it was through the Holy Spirit that these things were done. The Holy Spirit was ministering through Christ.

You say, "Why did they do it that way?" I think for one reason to give us a great example of how it is that the Spirit of God wants to work through us. The Spirit of God ministered through Jesus. Tremendous truth. It even tells us in Hebrews, I'm thinking of chapter 9 there, that the death of Jesus Christ in His crucifixion even involved the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 9:14, "How much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself." The Holy Spirit was even active in the death of Christ. And so, Jesus set the pattern. If Jesus Christ operated on the power of the Spirit and He's God, how much do we need to operate on the power of the Spirit. There's the pattern.

And so He taught. And whom did He teach? He taught His Apostles whom He had chosen. He taught the ones that were called to be His own. He chooses His own missionaries, chooses His own and then commissions them, teaches them, gifts them with spiritual gifts and sets them in the body in certain positions of leadership and expects them to do the job. And you'll notice that He chose them, isn't that beautiful? One of the wonderful things about being a Christian is to know that you're chosen by Him. Jesus said in John 15:16, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." So it is that we have been chosen and appointed and placed in the body with certain spiritual gifts and certain ministries as these were to minister for Jesus Christ.

Now what are we saying to begin with? We're saying to be effective you've got to be in the Word, you've got to be saturated with the book. Spurgeon said this, and I love this, Spurgeon said, "We might preach till our tongue rotted, we might preach till our...till we exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be converted unless the Holy Spirit uses the Word to convert that soul." So he

said it is blessed to eat into the very heart of the Bible until at last you come to talk in scriptural language and your spirit is flavored with the words of the Lord so that your blood is bibblingwhatever that isand the very essence of the Bible flows from you.

And I like that. That's saturation with the message. I hope the message just flows in and out of you and gushes out of you, that's what he's saying. And so, Jesus gave them the proper message. He taught them and He taught them and He taught them and He taught them. And in great measure, dear ones, your effectiveness depends on what you know and what you've been able to transfer from here into the pattern of your life...proper message.

Secondly, the proper manifestation, verse 3. "To whom also," that is just to the chosen, He didn't appear to everybody, didn't appear to the unbelievers. You remember I told you in our study of John, Jesus doesn't go around making miraculous appearances to convince the unbelieving. You know how He convinces the unbelieving? By convincing you and then empowering you to do the job. And so He appeared only to those that He had chosen. "He showed Himself alive after His passion, or His suffering on the cross, by many infallible proofs being seen by them 40 days." Stop right there.

Now it was very important for these people to really believe and have confidence that Jesus was a risen Lord, right? I mean, who wants to go around and propagate a gospel of a dead leader? Are you with it? Who wants to do that? Who's going to go out and say, "I'll die for Christ because He's dead for me?" No. Who wants to go out and announce to the world a dead Christ? And so they need to know that He's alive and that He lives in power. And they need to know that or else they'll have no reason to go out and propagate the gospel. Haven't we said many times in our study of the Word of God that one of the greatest proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ was the boldness and the commitment of the early church to preach Christ? They had seen Him in His resurrection glory. And so it says in verse 4 He gave them the proper manifestation, He revealed Himself to them. Had they not seen Him postresurrection, they never would have cut it. They would have walked away. Peter already went back fishing after he had even seen Him once, so He repeatedly permitted them to see Him, many infallible proofs over a period of 40 days. He just kept repeating His presence. And you'll notice that He had to show Himself to them, verse 3 said, because they couldn't perceive Him in His glorified body unless He opened their eyes to see who He was.

And so, He gave them the proper manifestation. Now if you want a comprehensive list to whom He appeared, you can find it in 1 Corinthians 15:5 to 8 as Paul gives it there. But Jesus knew they needed to see who He was. And, of course, by the time you get to John 21 verse 12, as we saw a couple of weeks ago, in verse 12 it says, "Nobody dared ask Him, Who art Thou, knowing that it was the Lord." They were convinced. They weren't deceived. They knew it was the Lord. They had seen Him. He had manifested Himself to them.

And then there's an interesting footnote at verse 3, it says, "And speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." Now you know that's the final proof that it was really Him. Why? Because He just picked up the same lessons that He had given before His death and continued right on from there. They knew it was Jesus because they saw Him, they touched Him, they ate with Him, they talked with Him and all of that but they also knew it was Jesus because when He started to talk, He talked about the same things that He talked about before. And you know what? He wanted them to know that the crucifixion, that all that took place at the cross never deterred Him from the Kingdom that God had promised.

He came to announce the Kingdom to Israel, didn't He? A physical, literal, millennial Kingdom. And they rejected Him and He was killed and the disciples began to wonder, "Well, how in the world do you put together a dead leader with a king? I mean, that doesn't figure. Something's got to happen in the middle." And what was it? Resurrection. And once He rose from the dead, their confidence was restored and now they saw. And so He came right back and what did He teach them again? He taught them, "Remember, men, I'm a King and there's a Kingdom coming." And He taught them the things concerning the Kingdom of God, I think, in a millennial sense.

But the Kingdom of God is broader than that, isn't it? The Kingdom of God includes all the spiritual truths and all the realm of God's understanding and God's dealing with men. And the Kingdom of God even includes the mystery Kingdom, the mystery form of the Kingdom which is the church age. And we'll get into all this in chapter 2 so I won't take any more time than that. But the scope of God's dealing with men under the category of the Kingdom of God which involves how God has dealt with men in the past, how God deals with men in a mystery Kingdom in the church age and how He will deal with the great Kingdom on earth. He wanted them to be reminded that He was a King and the Kingdom was coming. And so, isn't it beautiful that He confirmed to them who He was not only by what He looked like but by what He said?

You say, "Well, how does that apply to me? Jesus hasn't manifested Himself to me." Oh yes He has. The Apostle Paul never saw Jesus in a human body but he sure saw Jesus. And I love what he says in 1 Corinthians 9:1. He doesn't say, you know, "I've seen Jesus sort of, kind of in a thing and it wasn't really Him but it was...you know..." No. Paul says, "I have seen the Lord." You know, that's it. You say, "Paul, you didn't see Him."

"Oh, I saw the Lord."

"You see Him with the physical eye?"

"Nothing as mundane as that. I saw Him with a spiritual eye."

Jesus said, remember Thomas? "Good, you saw and you believed. Blessed are they that...what?...have not seen...what?...yet believe." Is the only eye that you can see Jesus the eye of the body? Can you see Him with the eye of faith? I've seen Jesus Christ. He's as real to me as if He were alive in a physical body and a lot better off because if He were in a physical body, He'd be restricted to where He was. Apart from physical body, He can be where I am all the time. I don't need to see Jesus Christ in a physical eye, He's been manifest to me by the Holy Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12 says that no man can declare that Jesus is Lord except the Spirit of God do it. The Spirit of God reveals Christ. He shall testify of Me, He will show you Me.

I dare say, it is an absolute fact but maybe some of us need to be reminded of it, every Christian who has ever lived on the face of the earth has had a personal intimate revelation to the person of Jesus Christ. True? And it's not only, you can't always say, "You know, boy, when I was saved 15 years ago, I saw Christ." No, you're seeing Him right now, aren't you? It's a constant ongoing presence within your life. Oh yes, Jesus Christ manifested Himself to you, definitely and positively and He did that in order that you might know He's alive. Would you preach a Christ that you'd never met? Would you? I wouldn't. I want to have confidence in the product if I'm going to sell it and I know this product. Jesus reveals Himself to those that are His.

I like what Peter says in 1 Peter 1:8. "Whom having not seen, ye love." Isn't that good? Can you love somebody you can't see? Oh, I love the Lord and I can't see Him with my physical eye, but He's as real to me as any of you...maybe more real.

So He gives them the proper message and the proper manifestation. We've got the equipment, folks, to do the job the facts and the presence of a living Christ manifest to us. Here's a third thing, and I'll close with this one...the proper might...the proper might. Now you might say, "You know, well, I've got the facts and not only that, I've got it down pat and I've seen Jesus and goodbye. Wham, I'm cutting out, I'm going to do the job. Here I go," see. And that's evidently what was going on with these disciples. After Jesus got done teaching them, they had all the facts, they'd seen the resurrected Lord, manifested Him, they're ready to go, see. And He had told them, "Go into all the world," you know, "and declare..." and they were fired out. And all of a sudden, one of the strange commands in the Bible, verse 4, "Don't do anything." Now it doesn't apply to you, definitely doesn't apply to you because you're...you're into the Holy Spirit age, they were waiting.

Watch this, verse 4, "And being assembled together with them," evidently they were eating, the implication of the word, "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem." Now evidently implied here is the idea they were ready to roll, see. I mean, they had the facts, they'd seen the resurrected Lord, they were committed to love Him and to serve Him and they were ready to go but He says, "Now don't go anywhere for a while, until something happens, you must wait for the promise of the Father which ye have heard from Me."

Now He had promised them, He had told them the Father had something special for them. Now He says, "People, I don't want you going anywhere, I want you to wait right here for the promise of the Father." It's interesting in Luke 24:49, Luke closes out that particular volume by saying, "And behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until you be imbued with power from on high." Whatever the promise of the Father is, it's got something to do with power. Will you buy that? Whatever it is, it's got something to do with power. And that's a very important point because you can have the facts and you can have the manifestation and you can run out and try to do it on your own and you'll never cut it...never cut it, you've got to have the power. They were like a wellequipped car with no engine.

Now He says the promise of the Father that I've told you about. He had told them about this in John 7:39, John 14:16, John 14:26, John 15:26, John 16 verse 7, John 20 verse 22 and in all of those places He told them that the Father was going to send something. And the promise of the Father is indicated to us very specifically as to what it is in Luke 11:13. It says this, "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father give the...what?...Holy Spirit to them that ask."

What's the promise of the Father? The Holy Spirit. Look at Acts 2:33, it says this, "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted," that's Christ after He's ascended, "having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit." That is the Father's promise that He would send the Holy Spirit.

Now, you see, Jesus had said in John that the Father cannot send the Spirit until I go to the Father. He says I must go to the Father so that He can send the Spirit. You see, the Father, as we taught long ago, the Father sent the Spirit, in a sense, as a reward for the faithful service of the Son. So, when Jesus was to go back to heaven, then the Father would send the Spirit. So He says you're going to have to wait. Now it's about ten days that they had to wait until Jesus got back, got everything arranged up there, spent some time with the Father, whatever goes on in heaven, I don't know, and then the Spirit came ten days later. But He says don't do anything till He gets here. This is good.

You see, what is this pointing up to us? This is pointing up to us the absolute hopelessness of doing anything in your flesh. It can't be done. You can't do it. You can make all your nice plans and all your little deal and you can run out to do it in your own strength and it will just be as empty as a banging bucket in a dry well. It don't make any sense at all, it doesn't amount to anything if it's done in your own energy. And we learned that, didn't we, when Peter went fishing all by himself, didn't catch anything in his own strength.

You say, "Well, does this...are you trying to tell me that they never understood anything about the Holy Spirit?" No, of course not, they knew about the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 10, you remember they

were sent in a marvelous commission by the Lord, sent out to preach the Kingdom and in verse 20 Jesus said, "It's not you that speak but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you." They knew the Holy Spirit was with them when they went out even then. I'm thinking of another verse in Luke 12:12, it says, "For the Holy Spirit shall teach you in the same hour what you ought to say." When you go out, the Spirit will be with you and teach you what to say and even speak through you. They knew about the Holy Spirit. In fact, in John 14:17, Jesus said, "He is with you," right? The Holy Spirit is with you. Right then He was with them in John 14, He shall be...where?...in you. You see, that's what He's saying here. The promise of the Spirit was that the Spirit who was with them would be...where?...in them. Oh, that's different. Because you see, in the old economy, the Spirit would come and go according to the need. If you're going to...if you're going to do a special work, the Spirit would come in and when the work was done He would depart. The Old Testament says the Spirit of God descended upon Elijah then the Spirit of God departed. This is how the Spirit of God worked. Never indwelling but just moving in and out for a specific purpose.

But, the promise now is that the Spirit will come and be in you. That's John 14:17, one of the really key verses in all the Word of God.

Now this new ministry is defined in verse 5. "For John truly baptized with water," John the Baptist and he's called the Baptist because he baptized, he didn't baptize because he was a Baptist. "For John truly baptized with water but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now...not many days from now." He says just stick around, guys, until the Holy Spirit comes and you'll be baptized by the Spirit. This is introducing to us this tremendous fulfillment of the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

In John 1:33...well, backing up even from that, John, of course, this session...this section is baptizing and he says there's one coming who is going to baptize you different than I am baptizing you. In verse 33 he said, "This other one upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He who baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I saw and bore witness that this is...whom?...the Son of God." It is the Son of God Jesus Christ who will baptize us with the Holy Spirit. So, you see, Jesus goes back to heaven and then He baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And they couldn't go anywhere till they had been baptized by the Holy Spirit.

Now, at this point in our message, I'm not going to get into a big treatise on the theology of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We'll reserve that for a special message which we'll do in connection with chapter 2 when we get into all that was involved when the Spirit of God baptized them on the day of Pentecost and they spoke in other languages. We'll cover that at that time. So, suffice it to say, we stand here on this one principle, that they needed to have the right power and it was the Holy Spirit, right? You can't do the thing in your own energy, it can't be done, can't do it in your own strength.

Now the baptism of the Holy Spirit was going to come. It was going to come in ten days. It is a unique experience. The Bible says it happens to every believer. It happens at the moment you receive Jesus Christ. We're not trying to tell you that ten days after you're saved, get ready 'cause the Spirit will come. That's not what it's teaching. This is a transitional historical period. They were waiting for the first coming of the Holy Spirit. From then on, the Spirit of God indwells every believer from the moment of salvation or else Romans 8:9 is a lie because it says, "He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of His." And the "His" refers to Christ. A person without the Holy Spirit isn't even a Christian. That means a Christian has whom? The Holy Spirit. That settles it.

So, the baptism of the Spirit became then the pattern for all believers at the moment of salvation. Now there's one baptism but there may be many times when there's the filling of the Spirit and the power of the Spirit is expressed in many different ways. One baptism. So He says just stay there, men, till you get the power. You can't go anywhere without the power. Oh, that's so practical.

To add to that, jump down to verse 8 and we'll wrap it up with this little thought. "But ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you." You see, they couldn't do anything, they couldn't generate anything on their own strength. They had to wait till they were empowered by the Holy Spirit. I love that word "power." Oh, that's great. That's the Greek word *dunamis*, which is the basis of our English word "dynamite." And that says that every Christian that possesses the Holy Spirit is literally packed with dynamite. You say, "Not me, I'm not even a dud." Right? "I don't even fizzle very loud. Somebody wet my wick, you know. What's wrong with me? Where's my power? If I have the Holy Spirit, I'm supposed to be filled with divine dynamo, with divine energy and where is it?"

Well, it's there. It is there. It's not God's fault if you haven't turned on the ignition switch. It's there. You are supercharged, my friend. You say, "How do I turn it on?" You turn it on in Ephesians 5:18 when it says, "Be not drunk with wine but be...what?...filled with the Spirit," that's the turn on, that's the key to the whole thing. That's the key. You need to get it turned...He says. A simple illustration I use in connection with our message on the Spiritfilled life on Ephesians 5 which is a good message for you if you're a new Christian, you need that, and you can pick up one of the tapes on Ephesians 5:18, but in that message I said...simple and a very crude way to illustrate it is with a "Fizzy." You all know what a Fizzy is, one of those putrid flavored AlkaSelzers, put in a glass and it turns it into a grape drink, or something. But a Fizzy, in a sense, analogous to your relationship to the Holy Spirit who in your life is a concentrated compact form of energy that wants to release that power to turn you into what it is, see. The Spirit of God wants to make you like Him. He wants to fill your life in every dimension. The question is not, "Is the Fizzy there? The question is, Has it been released to permeate your life? The Spirit of God is in your life. That isn't the issue, He's...the power is there. The question is, have you ever removed the lid of sin and self to let the Spirit of God be released? That's the whole issue.

The Spiritfilled life, my friend, is simply yielding yourself to the control of the Spirit. Now the word "filled" in the Bible appears in connection with a dominant kind of attitude. For example, it uses the

same word when it says they were filled with rage, or they were filled with anger, or they were filled with sorrow, or they were...Stephen when he was being stoned was filled with faith, or Ananias and Sapphira were filled with Satan. And it means that that thing with which they were filled then superimposes itself over every other emotion and every other consideration. Somebody who is filled with anger doesn't really consider other things, that's overwhelming them. Somebody who's filled with sorrow is overwhelmed by sorrow. Somebody who's filled with the Spirit is completely overwhelmed with the control of the Spirit in His life. That's what it means. Very simple. And so what He's saying is it's one thing to possess the Holy Spirit, it's something else to have your life totally controlled and overwhelmed by the Spirit.

You say, "Well, how do you get that? I'd like to have it." It's simple, Colossians 3:16, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly." We went into this in great detail. Being filled with the Holy Spirit and letting the Word of Christ dwell in your richly are synonyms because the results are both the same in both passages. In both passages you speak to yourselves in Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, love your wife, love your husband and do the whole thing, it's all the same. To be filled with the Spirit is letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. What does that mean? That means to be preoccupied with the presence of Jesus Christ. How do you get preoccupied with the presence of Jesus Christ? You see this book? This tells about Him, get into it. And the more you're in here the more saturated you are with Jesus Christ, the more saturated you are with Jesus Christ the more He controls your thoughts, the more He controls your thoughts the more you're filled with the Spirit. It's so simple. It's a matter of yielding yourself totally to the saturation of the Word of God which presents Jesus Christ so that His Word dwells in you richly and that's synonymous with being filled with the Spirit. It simply means you're controlled and overwhelmed by the desires of the Spirit, not your own desires. But it's one thing to possess the power, it's something else to turn it on, isn't it? But don't you think it's a positional problem, it isn't. You've got the power, it's just a matter of getting it going.

Why, did you know that Ephesians 3:20 gives a description of you that almost knocks you off your feet? Ephesians 3:20 describes you this way, put your name in there, this is how it describes you, "Now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we can ask or think according to the power that works...what?...in us." You like that description of yourself? You say, "Who me? That's me, that I can do exceeding abundantly above all that I can dream?" That's you according to the power that's in you. Now it's up to you to turn it on. And you turn it on by yielding the absolute control of every piece of your life to the Spirit of God.

And so, Jesus begins to commission His own by saying, "Guys, here's the right message, make it a living part of your life. Here's the right manifestation, you've seen Me, you know that I'm alive. Here's the right might, the energy of the Spirit of God."

Those are the first three ingredients to really finish the unfinished work of Jesus. We'll consider the next three next week. Let's pray.

Our Father, we thank You this morning that You've given us the strength, You've given us the knowledge, and You've given us that personal intimate fellowship that equips us to finish Your unfinished work. Lord, I thank You for so clearly and concisely and simply presenting these basics to us this morning. Lord, we would just stand convicted. Even in my own life, Lord, I've been a Christian too long to be like I am. I've known these things too long to not let them operate in full capacity in my life. Father, make me more diligent in my study of the Word, more faithful. Make me a more honest student, truly pursuing the truth to every degree. Help me to search it out everywhere and to know You because it's in the Word that You're revealed, to know You even richer and fuller and deeper as Paul expressed.

And then, Father, help me to gaze on You in that personal manifestation and sense Your presence to a greater degree. Help me to live a more Christconscious life. Help me, along with all these beloved people here, Father, to yield to the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives so that we do nothing in our own strength, so that we are energized in the might of the Spirit of God who dwells within us. Help us to recognize that the power is not of us but of God, that the power is there if you'll turn it on. Lord, we just really want to be the ones that You need to finish Your work. We want to exercise our gifts in the energy of the Spirit. We want to fulfill our appointed ministries in the power of the Spirit for Your sake. Father, thank You for making us a part of what You wanted Jesus to do, giving us a ministry. Help us to be faithful to be what we need to be and appropriate the proper things to do it right.

Now as we close our service, Lord, we just ask that You'll speak to hearts, cause us to make some real commitments in our life to You about the things that are so needful. And wherever the Word of God has been applied to us by the Spirit of God, may there be a breaking down of the resistance and the melting of the heart of stone and a softening so the Spirit of God may mold us into what we ought to be. We'll give You the praise in Jesus' name, amen.

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