

Jesus' last word as resurrected Saviour before ascending so proves, doesn't it, that there is not a single sinner on earth, not one human being anywhere at any time Whom Jesus does not care about and want the gospel to come to. The question is, are you and I up to the gracious plan of Jesus and His Word? How good to be drawn to Jesus and motivated in His service and for His Church and kingdom, for as our last point, notice yet, the sure fruit upon Jesus' parting word.

The whole book of Acts tells the story of how the Christian church expanded, beginning with people who were few and weak and empty vessels in themselves. They turned the then known world upside down (Acts 17:6), and still today, any objective survey of world history will show, the power and influence of Christianity is phenomenal, regardless of all the sinful and worldly and demonic resistance against it. Jesus is King of kings! His is the kingdom, the power, and the glory and in the day of days, this you will see and all will find out, some to their eternal horror and many to their eternal joy and glory, that Jesus reigns! And all whom the Father has given to the Son will be gathered into His eternal kingdom. In Revelation 7:9ff John writes "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God Which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

There is one, only one, everlastingly successful and infinitely blessed mission in this world and that is the mission of Jesus Christ and of the Triune God in and through Him. Let us not live by sight, but by faith and God's Word, including Jesus' promising powerful last word in Acts 1:8, the fruit of which the rest of the book of Acts and world history tells. Nothing can be as important as knowing Christ as your Saviour and Lord, and nothing is as wonderful and exciting and rewarding and fruitful as serving Jesus as Saviour and Lord, beginning at home and from there outward even to the ends of the earth. 'The harvest is ripe', said Jesus, and the time is short as we are hastening to the last day. "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Jesus' last word before His ascension, His powerful promising last word - are you living by it and in view of it and in promotion of it too, by God's grace? Amen.

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BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

Radio Ministry of the FREE REFORMED CHURCHES of North America

Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



JESUS' POWERFUL AND ENCOURAGING WORD [2]

We continue, dear friends, speaking of Jesus' last spoken word before He ascended into heaven 40 days after His resurrection from the dead. "But ye," Jesus says to His disciples in Acts 1:8, "shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." We have been thinking about this amazing verse under the theme, "Jesus' powerful, promising last word" and there are four points we are considering. The first was the solid basis of this call to His disciples which was the fact of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Jesus rising from the dead proclaims and proves Him to be the one and only God-approved almighty Saviour of sinners indeed! Then we thought about the almighty power behind this word and call of Jesus for His disciples to go out as His witnesses. We saw last time the power behind this call is the Holy Spirit Himself Whom the disciples were to wait for in Jerusalem. Let me continue still with this second point and then move to the third and fourth points, noticing from the text also the gracious plan with Jesus' last word, and the sure fruit upon His last word.

"But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Jesus is making quite a claim here in this calling He gives to His disciples. Surely, it would have gone nowhere except for the solid basis of this word with Jesus as the risen living Saviour and the almighty power behind this calling with the outpouring of God the Holy Spirit. Acts 2 tells of the Holy Spirit suddenly coming upon the disciples in an almighty way while they were praying for Him, and what great things began to happen to the disciples not only but also to many others as the Word was opened to them and they were opened to the Word and proclaimed that Word. With the Holy Spirit's outpouring on Pentecost, people became truly saved by the hundreds and by the thousands, and the book of Acts tells of the spread of Christianity and the rapid powerful spread of the Church to the ends of the earth. You see, the Holy Spirit, as the Agent of Christ and the Father, with the gospel as His instrument is the strength behind the all promising powerful last word of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the almighty sovereign strength Who works in and through His Word as it is brought to others by His people.

Someone has compared the Holy Spirit to a transformer that is used when you have an electric train set. The transformer breaks down the 110 volts from the wall plug to even less, something necessary to prevent the little train engine from burning to a crisp. It breaks down the 110 volts to where a little tiny HO train, whose engine can be held in your fist, can smoothly move about all around the track because that transformer deals out the power in the exact level required. Even so, when the Holy Spirit, the divine Transformer, comes, He takes the majestic powerful truth of God in Christ Jesus and gives it out, makes use of it, and applies it personally as needed, to convict of sin, to draw to Christ, to comfort and encourage, to inspire and to call, and to equip. The Spirit makes a connection with the sinner to the power Source of salvation in Christ Jesus, and applies that living truth of God so that there comes a flow of life-giving, saving, and holy power in our lives. Do you know of this regenerating, saving, transforming power of the Holy Spirit in your life? Call on Jesus for the Holy Spirit and He will give Him to you, to work in you and connect you and guide you too. In Luke 11:13 Jesus states, *“If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?”* “It is the Spirit’s delight to take the full truth of God and to make it speak to us and be a power of God unto salvation for us. When He accompanies the Word, it comes to us effectually and exactly as needs to be applied at that time. This is the work of the blessed Holy Spirit. He is the almighty Transformer of God Who never makes a mistake, and without Whom there is no spiritual movement whatsoever, just as without a transformer in an electric train set, the train just won’t move, no matter how beautiful the train, or how good the tracks, or how expensive the locomotive.

We need the Holy Spirit initially and constantly for real and everlasting blessing on the Word of God and in all Christian ministry and outreach. Did you pray for the Holy Spirit to be present with you this day, and to work in you and others through the Word? All through history, the Christian church has been guilty of neglecting and forgetting the Holy Spirit, the strength behind Jesus’ promising, powerful last word, and instead people would rest in their own works and abilities and resources, or even draw from the world for the spreading of the gospel and increase of the Christian church. But how deadly and deluding that is and always has proved to be in the long run. We need the Holy Spirit and His almighty saving ministry in us and with us and among us and through us. A healthy Christian prays much and continually for the Holy Spirit, and then you pray and work too not to grieve or resist or quench the Spirit of God. What reasons to pray for the Holy Spirit in our times, in our churches, in our families, in our world. Will Jesus’ last word before He ascended so guide you, dear friend? Are you one who seeks to be a Spirit-minded, Spirit-filled person? The secret to new life and the increase and progress of the Christian Church is the Holy Spirit of God moving with saving power. Listen to this poem by Samuel Stevenson:

Where is God’s Power?

A city full of churches, Great preachers, lettered men
Grand music, choirs, and organs;—If all these fail, what then?
Good workers, eager, earnest, who labour hour by hour;
But where, O where, my brother, Is God’s almighty power?

It is the Holy Spirit, that [sets on fire] the soul.
God will not take man-worship, nor bow to man’s control.
No human innovation, no skill or worldly art,
Can give true repentance, or break the sinner’s heart.

Great God, revive us truly! And keep us every day;
That men may all acknowledge, we live just as we pray [and say]
The Lord’s hand is not shortened, He still delights to bless,
If we depart from evil, and all our sins confess.

Every living Christian will acknowledge how true the words of this poem are. Do you humbly confess the initial and ongoing need of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your own heart and life? And do you pray too for the work of the Spirit in God’s Church and kingdom as something always essential and most blessed? Isn’t this what Acts 1:8 teaches us so plainly is so necessary? Should we not be fervent prayers for the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our times that God’s church and kingdom may truly grow and expand far and wide? *“But ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth.”* We have seen something of the solid basis for Jesus’ last word, and the almighty power behind it, and notice next, briefly, the gracious plan for it

The disciples, filled with His Spirit, were to start in Jerusalem, the city where they took Jesus and crucified Him. They were to be witnesses of Christ and tell the gospel to whoever would hear. In all Judea too how many had despised and rejected Christ, but never mind, the gospel is for heartless, hardened, blind, sin-sick, worldly, humanly hopeless, sinful sinners! What makes the gospel of Jesus Christ so great and glorious is that it is the gospel for sinners. Are you a sinner needing cleansing, needing forgiveness, needing a heart transplant, a life transformation, an eternal hope and peace? Jesus is the answer for you, and however you have responded to Him before, He still yet reaches out to you, even with this message. The gracious plan Jesus gave for outreach with His gospel also included Samaria, gospel ministry also to those miserable, unwelcoming, and naturally compromising and distorting Samaritans. Indeed, no one is excluded in Jesus’ outreach plan as given in His last word, for Jesus says, ‘Go on and be my witnesses to the end of the earth’, meaning to the furthest and most remotest of peoples from all places across the globe.