

# What Now?

By Dr. Jeff Meyers

sermonaudio.com

**Bible Text:** Acts 1:4-15  
**Preached On:** Sunday, May 6, 2018

**Crossroads Ministries**  
301 S. 8th Street  
Opelika, Alabama 36801

**Website:** [www.fbcopelika.com](http://www.fbcopelika.com)  
**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers](http://www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers)

Your promise still stands and great is your faithfulness. For those who are marching around Jericho, that was seven days. For Moses, it was 40 days. For the Apostle Paul, it was three years. And for the Israelites in the Old Testament, it was 400 years. But no matter what the time frame was, it did not change that God's promise would still come to fruition in their life and maybe today, you're on day 6.5 or maybe today 39 or maybe some of you are saying it's been 15 years, it still does not change God's faithfulness and today we're going to be challenged to hang in there when the world says give up, to keep trusting God when the world says surely he has forsaken you. Jesus said, "I will never leave you. I will never forsake you." His promise still stands. Great is his faithfulness.

Let's pray.

*Lord, as we come today, we desire to be challenged by your word and, Lord, we confess it's tough waiting on you, it is difficult when we allow you to be in control of things and it's not in our own strength and our own power, in our own ability. Lord, I know there are many of us in this place that we're tapped out, we're taxed out, we've hit the end of our proverbial runway and we don't know if there's another piece ahead, God. So we pray today that we would see from your word that you are still faithful, we can still trust you, and even though your ways are not our ways and your thoughts are not our thoughts, may we seek you this day while you may be found. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

This morning, I want to encourage you to open your Bibles to the book of Acts 1. As you're turning to Acts 1, you may be a guest or visitor with us today and we want to welcome you here but as a church family, as a family of faith, we have been on a journey for some time now, in fact, for the last couple of months, we've been walking through this question, we've been answering this issue of what does a disciple in Jesus Christ really look like? When someone says they believe in Jesus, when someone says that they are a Christian, what does that look like? Kind of the key verse has been John 15:5 where Jesus uses this analogy of him being a vine and us being the extension of or the branches thereof. But just to give you a little backstory if you're a guest with us, a little over a year ago, we began to share our desire to see how many of our people would gather together and walk through the same challenge and the same passages of Scripture every day and you answered. In fact, when all was said and done, about 1,300 of our people both adults

and students over the last few months have walked through the Scriptures together, have been challenged to look at what does a disciple in Jesus Christ look like and today we come to the proverbial end of the road. The hype is over. The study has been completed and there are many people, in fact, maybe you haven't voiced this out loud but maybe to yourself you're asking yourself, "Now what? What do we do now? We talked about it, we prayed about it, we walked through it, but what happens next?"

Today in Acts 1, I want us to look at biblically the answer to the question, "Now what?" because maybe you have that question in your mind. Now what? Can you imagine how the disciples felt? For three and a half years they had walked with Jesus. They had seen him do miracles, walk on water, multiply food. They had heard the most incredible messages of their lives, then they saw that day where he bore the sins of the world. They saw three days later where he rose from the grave. For 40 days they sat as he taught them the Scriptures and what's about to happen is the fulfillment of what he said, that he would not remain with them but he would be caught up and the Holy Spirit would descend, what we know of in Acts 2. Can you imagine how they felt? "Three and a half years we've been on this journey and we're not going to see you tomorrow. Three and a half years and you've taught us in display but what happens next?" If you've ever asked the question in your own spiritual life, "Now what?" Acts 1 is your answer. Beginning in verse 1, it says,

1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 3 To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. 6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. 12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. 13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew,

James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. 15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

What we see take place here in Acts 1 is the "Now what?" of the apostles which helps us understand as we come to the end of a study, as we come to the end of a season in life, "Now what? God, what do you have for me tomorrow? What do you have for me next week? What's just around the bend?"

Well, the first thing that we see in Acts 1 is that the Lord lays out the protocol. He lays out the process. He lays out kind of the agenda of what they are to do. Notice what he says in verse 4, he says, "Don't go anywhere. Just hang out here." They assembled together. In fact, later you go to verse 14 and it says they were there in that Upper Room about 120 of them. The first order of business was as believers in Jesus, to make it a regular practice to assemble together.

You know, the Bible says in Hebrews 10:25, "Do not forsake the gathering of believers as some have done." And yet in our world, and by the way, what I'm about to share with you I think is a great privilege. We live in a world today of incredible mobility, we live in a world of technology and yet it is our mobility and it is our technology that oftentimes allows us to be disjointed from or distant from each other as believers in Jesus Christ. I love what happens on the other side of those cameras. By the way, last week during one of our services, I got the testimony of, "I know of a young girl who gave her life to Jesus while watching by way of video." So the Gospel goes forth and that is exciting but I'm going to tell you something about our multimedia ministry, let me tell you something about technology and mobility: what I'm doing right now and anytime I preach or teach, you can get it anytime, anywhere, at 2 in the morning. It's archived. We've even got a channel 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. But do you know what you can't get? You cannot get a word of encouragement from each other. You cannot get a handshake. You cannot get a hug. You cannot get someone who says, "I'm praying for you. I love you, friend. What can I do to help you?" Let me challenge all of us in the day of mobility, in the day of technology, let us not forsake gathering together. Let us not forsake it because even though we can get information and even though we can have access to, you cannot get those interpersonal relationships by way of our technological advancements and even in those days, he said, "Do not forsake gathering together."

So when they assembled together, the second protocol is real quick, he said, "Wait here until the Holy Spirit comes upon you." He said wait. In other words, you need to anticipate what God desires to do in your life. Now here's where we struggle because I have a feeling a lot of you are a lot like me, you've got plans, you've got desires, you've got a spreadsheet, you've got a marketing strategy and God says, "Throw all that away. Hang out until I show up."

You know he didn't tell them how long it was going to be, right? Let me give you a chronology here. On what we know as Passover, Jesus goes into the grave three days, three nights. He raises from the dead. The Bible just told us that for 40 days he preached and he taught the disciples. It's going to be seven days until what we know as Passover when the Holy Ghost comes and the Holy Spirit comes upon them. Notice what Jesus said. He did not say hang out until Pentecost and then it's all going to be good. He said, "Wait here until I show up." That's tough, isn't it? Because we like deadlines. We like to be told, "If you'll just hang in there one more day, it's good." Or, "Give it one more week." Or how about this one, "One more year." I know it's a long time but at least I know there is a finish line. That's not what Jesus said. He said, "Here's the protocol, that as you assemble together, as you encourage one another, as you walk as a family of faith, don't get ahead of me. Wait until I show up," because I've got news for you, according to Ephesians 3:20, he desires to do abundantly more than we could ever think or ask.

Protocol: gather and anticipate, but then he talks about what our purpose is. Notice verse 8, he says, "But you shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you. You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the uttermost parts of the earth." I've got news for all of us: the purpose of the church is not to stay in the huddle. The purpose is for us to go. In fact, you can go through the Scriptures in 1 Corinthians 11, it says they gathered on a daily basis. In Acts 20, it says they met in the house, they met in a corporate environment. It doesn't matter how you slice it or dice it, though, those early believers spent more time in the streets than they did in the seats and you and I as the church, we discover that when we wait on the Lord to move in our lives, our purpose isn't about having more huddles, it's about going forth.

And you say, "To whom and to where?" To all people. In Jerusalem, those were the Jewish people. Samaria, the Samaritans. The uttermost parts, those were the Gentiles. You do realize of all those three groups of people, each one of them despised the other two groups which gives us this incredible revelation and this may be difficult for some: the church of Jesus Christ was never designed to be a country club. We were designed to be a hospital. Let me share with you the difference. At a country club in order to get in the door, you have to show a "membership card." At the hospital, it's a beautiful scene, it doesn't matter the color of your skin, it doesn't matter the language that you primarily speak, it doesn't matter the balance of your bank account, when you step on the sensor, the doors just open and that's exactly what the church has been called to be to all people and we have to get out of this mindset that the body of Christ should look like us, have the same interests as us, and only be like us. He said 2/3 of the people you're going to go to, you don't even like yet.

Then he says to go to all places. Jerusalem, that was right there in their back yard. Samaria, a little ways. The uttermost, that's a big fancy word for as far as you can see and as far as you can go. What I'm going to address this morning is one of the proverbial what we call elephants in the room of the modern day church. Work with me. There are some both in and outside of here, I'm talking the church at large not just this local congregation, there are some that feel like that with all the resources and all the talents and all the abilities we have, we ought to exhaust all of that in reaching the billions of

people somewhere else who have yet to hear the name of Jesus. There are some who say we ought to take all those resources and all those gifts and abilities and we ought to reach those that are just literally across the street. Can I give you some news? Acts 1:8 doesn't say it's either/or it says it's both/and. We have been called to the uttermost parts of the earth and we've also been called across the street and oftentimes we get caught up by saying, "But this is more important." No, they are not important, they're all of the greatest importance. Yet the man who walked me through Master Life the very first time, I'll never forget one of the challenges he gave me. He said, "Jeff, before you go across the world be sure that you've gone across the street first." It's not an either/or, it is a both/and.

So we say, "What happens now?" We assemble together. We wait for the Holy Spirit to move in our lives and then we reach those who we may not even like and we go places we may not even have heard of even if that's across the street. I know what you're thinking: how on earth are we going to accomplish this? That's where the power comes in because you're not going to in your strength and I'm not going to in mine. No matter how many people we've got with degrees in marketing and entrepreneurship and all that stuff, it all fails in this strategy.

Look in verse 14, "They all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus with his brethren." Let me share with you the power here, this aspect of what took place. I want you to notice what it says, they were in one accord. Now that is not a reference to an automobile. That is in reference, some of y'all will catch that a little bit later. It's okay. That meant – listen – they weren't fighting with each other. I've got news for you: there are people even in those room that you may not like, there are people you may not get along with, you've got disagreements, you may have some issues, but do you know that they're not the real enemy? The Bible says in Ephesians 6 we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and rulers of darkness.

I heard a man some years ago make this incredibly profound statement, he said, "Oftentimes the Christian community fights face-to-face with those that they were meant to fight shoulder-to-shoulder with." Let that one soak in really good. Oftentimes we're so busy fighting each other, we forget that we're missing the real fight.

They are with one accord and what does it say? They prayed. Now I want you to think about the amount of time they prayed. We've already talked about the chronology here. They prayed for seven days. Peter gets up and he preaches for three minutes and 3,000 people get saved. Now I know what some of you are thinking, "Well, pastor, you preach for 30 minutes. Man, it would be nice to see 3,000 people get saved." I think one of our problems is we pray for about seven seconds. We pray for seven seconds and seven minutes and say, "Okay, God, show up. Please." But we've got things reversed. It wasn't in the craftiness of the words of Peter, it was in the power of the words they prayed, the amount of time that they spent in preparation for rather than the situation at hand.

This last week when this profound statement that I heard, someone made this statement to me, they said, "I would rather be prepared for an opportunity and not have it than to have

an opportunity and not be prepared for it." They were prepared for whatever God would do because they were anticipating him move and they prayed and they sought the face of the Lord saying, "What should we do?" So when the opportunity came, Peter didn't have to preach for 30 minutes, he didn't have to preach for three hours, three minutes and it says that those of every nation came.

But it's not just the amount that they prayed, it's also the aspects or what they prayed for. In fact, if you'll read through continuing in verse 16, one of the things that happens is Judas, who went by the wayside, has to be replaced by Matthias and they say that the Scriptures must be fulfilled and they began to talk about the things that have to happen because the mission, the Gospel's got to go forth. I want you to notice something incredibly absent in Acts 1. Now some of you are going to get upset the way I say this and I apologize in advance. When you write the letter or send the email, just sign it. That's all I ask in advance, okay? Nobody in Acts 1 is praying what I can an organ concert. You say, "What do you mean, an organ concert?" Lungs, hearts, knees, toes, eyes. Now trust me, I believe 1 Corinthians 12 says that there are some that have been given the spiritual gift of healing, I believe in James 5 it says that if there is somebody that is sick among you, surround them with the elders, anoint them with oil, pray over them so that they might be healed. I believe in healing but let me give you some wisdom from a lady much more mature than I who had outlived her husband years ago from a small little town in the middle of nowhere, Texas. She left me with this thought one day. She said, "Jeff, have you ever thought it's kind of strange when Christians gather together that we spend so much time trying to pray that people who are going to heaven won't get there sooner, and those who aren't going, we don't pray that they'll believe so they can." That outta hurt. Let me ask you a question: how many times do we pray more for people who are already believers to delay their eventual going to heaven and what about those who are lost who have yet to understand the way? The aspects of their prayer. They don't pray for themselves, they're praying that the message of Jesus Christ will go forth into all the world and somehow, God, can we just be a part of it?

So as we kind of look at this passage of, "Now what?" we see kind of the marching order the Lord gives. We see the purpose, it's not just about gathering but it's about going forth. And we see the power, the power is in yielding to the Lord not to ourselves. But here's the parameter. Notice what it says in verse 15, they are gathered with the 120. Verse 16, he got up and he began to speak. The parameter is made very clearly at the end of this chapter and it's this: that our authority is the word of God. In other words, the Holy Spirit in your prayer life, he's never going to lead you to go anywhere beyond his word and how it directs you. Sometimes all these people have all these crazy ideas, "God said this. God said that." Well, if it's not verified in Scripture, you heard the wrong voice. The authority is the Bible. Oftentimes people come to me and they say, "Jeff, I need a fresh word from God." I'm like, "Well, read Habakkuk. I bet you haven't read that one yet." I mean, think about it for a moment. It's pretty fresh if you've never read it.

But let's talk about application here because a lot of this, man, we can get all hyped about and excited about it but tomorrow morning the alarm clock's going to go off and hopefully by way of these last few months you will participate in something you've been

challenged with, to spend a few moments every day not only in prayer but in reading through the word of God and allowing it not only to be your authority in life but to be applicable to your life.

You know, these last few months as a family we've been walking through what we know as the Master Life Bible Study, not just here at church but also in our home, and we haven't been real introspective of our boys, we've challenged them, we've asked them, they've fulfilled and we just kind of have conversations here and there, but one of my children has a propensity in the morning, he gets up, he does the Bible study and there were five of them a week if you remember, and then he would leave his book and his Bible on his bed. Sometimes it was placed where the cover was on top but many days he left it open to the last page that was there, of which and if you went through the Bible study you know that five days a week there was a passage to read, sometimes it was a chapter, sometimes a few verses, and there were two questions on that piece of paper. The first question: what did God say to me? Second question: what did I say back to God? It just encouraged us to dialogue to interact with the Scriptures how does this apply to my life?

Now I want you to know as a dad I didn't go through and look at every single day, but as I would walk through his room and that book was laid out, I want you to know that I did take a glance at what was there. You know, the Bible says that out of the mouth of babes comes forth wisdom. Let me give you a challenge today from one who must likely is a significantly younger person than each and every one of you. As I would look at his book and it said what did God say to me, and he would write a couple of sentences about the passage that he had read, but on every single day when it said what did I say to God, here's what he wrote: okay. Think about that for just a moment. How many times do we say, "But God, you don't understand. That's going to be hard. Woo, that's going to stretch me." He said, "Alright, I'm good. Okay."

That's the blank check that makes the difference. When you say, "Now what?" when we do it God's way, listening and walking through his word and we say, "God, whatever it says, whatever it challenges me, wherever it tells me to go, whoever it tells me to have a conversation with, okay." You say, "What do we do now? The Bible study is formerly over. We've kind of walked through this study." I've got an idea, why don't you take out a blank check to God and say, "Okay, whatever you say to me, I'm good with it."

Let's pray with our heads bowed and our eyes closed. This morning as we come to this time in our service, you know, maybe you're that person like I referenced earlier on the other side of the cameras last week who has never said okay to Jesus. Maybe today you recognize that you've been places you should have never been, done things you should have never done, said words you should have never said. The Bible says that that is sin, that we have rebelled against God and the wages of our sin is death. Maybe you've tried to become religious, maybe you've tried to forget about it, maybe you've tried to work your way here or there, but the only solution is found in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Would you today say okay to Jesus' plan and his love for you?

Here's great news. You don't have to sign up for a bunch of courses, you don't have to check off a bunch of boxes, the Bible says whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. If that's who you are this morning, whether you're in this physical room or maybe you're that person on the other side of the cameras, let me just encourage you to have a conversation with the Lord. You don't have to have it out loud. You don't even have to say the same words I might say, but maybe your conversation would go a little something like this. "God, today I just want to admit I've finally realized that I'm the problem and that Jesus is the answer. I believe that Jesus loved me so much that he was willing to be born on my behalf. I believe that Jesus loved me so much that he was willing to live a sinless life on my behalf. I believe that Jesus loved me so much he was willing to pay the price for my sin against you on the cross and three days later I believe he rose from the dead so I could be forgiven and I could be saved. God, today I don't have all the answers to all the problems of this life but I do know that Jesus Christ is the only answer to my sin problem. In the best way I know how, I'm asking you to forgive me, I'm asking you to save me. I just want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads still bowed and our eyes still closed, maybe you're that person today. We'd love to have a conversation with you. We'd love to celebrate what the Lord is doing in your life. But maybe that conversation took place years ago. Maybe it took place decades ago. Let me ask you a question before I pray over us: when is the last time you just said, "Okay, God"? You didn't argue. You didn't dispute. You didn't question. You just said, "Okay." To answer the question in your life, "Now what?" you just need to say, "Okay, God. Whatever. Wherever. However. I'm yours."

*Lord, as we come to this time in our service, thank you that in the midst of our rebellion and in the midst of our going to and fro you have not abandoned us. You made it clear you would never leave us, you would never forsake us, and now this very moment you're impressing upon our hearts what we need to say okay to. For some of us, we need to say okay to Jesus as a means of salvation. For some of us, it means saying okay to where we'll go or who we'll go to, what will stop or what will start. Help us, O God, today just to be where you've called us to be. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

I'm going to ask you to stand with me as our team leads us. Whatever decision, I'll be here at the front.