

Looking Out

Acts 1:1 – 11

I. Intro

- A. **Question:** What is the church? People, but is it more than just people?
The body by which the work of Jesus is continued on this earth
- B. **Question:** Is the church having an impact on society today, or is society having more of an impact on the church?
- C. The book of Acts, true name – *The Acts of the Apostles* – about the beginning of the first Christian churches; about early disciples continuing the work of Jesus Christ on earth after He ascended back to heaven:
READ Acts 1:1 – 11
- D. Key points in verses 1 – 3:
- i. **v. 1:** ... *all Jesus began to do and to teach* – key word being *began*; Jesus just started work of spreading the message of salvation on earth and that work continued with the early church and still is a work that is to continue with the church today
 - ii. **v. 2:** ... *giving instructions* – Jesus left instructions for His disciples just before His ascension; not just instructions for disciples of that time but for all of Jesus' disciples for all time until He returns (**those specific instructions in v. 8**)
 - iii. **v. 3:** ... *convincing proofs that He was alive* – proofs (plural) that Jesus truly is the Son of God, the Christ (anointed one), the Savior of the world; *proofs* that the Gospel is real – Jesus came to this earth, He died for the sins of the world, He rose again so that men could have eternal life; Gospel that is still true and real today
 - iv. Apostle Paul – once known as Saul the great persecutor of early Christian believers – gives **simple explanation of this Gospel: 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (NIV)**
 - ¹ Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.
 - ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.
 - ³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
 - ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,
- E. The true church of Jesus Christ **purpose** is **to continue the work** that Christ began on this earth
- F. The true church of Jesus Christ **purpose** is **to live in obedience** to the specific instructions Christ gave His apostles and gave His church
- G. The true church of Jesus Christ **purpose** is to **work together to spread the**

Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout its community and throughout the world

- H. DBA Celebration service, message by Scott Smith; focused direction of people – up, down; focus of church – in or out
- I. **Question:** How does the true church of Jesus continue His work? How does the direction focus of the church become out, instead of in or up or down?

II. **1 – Power, Energy, Motivation**

- A. **Only one source of power** for church looking out – the Holy Spirit
- B. **v. 5: not first time promise of sending the Holy Spirit** made; Holy Spirit promise given before Jesus' earthly ministry really began
 - i. John the Baptist words in Luke 3:16 (NIV)
16 ... "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.
- C. **Word baptize** – to submerge, immerse, literally in Greek – to make fully wet; baptized with Holy Spirit means to be submerged, immersed in the Spirit
- D. Paul says in letter to **Galatians 5: ... live by the Spirit ... be led by the Spirit**
- E. **v. 8:** Says the **we will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon us** – when we are baptized – submerged, immersed in the Holy Spirit
- F. **** ON SCREEN** – The church to continue the work of Christ, to look outward, is first about **provision**; Christ has given (provided for) us His Spirit
- G. When we **surrender hearts to Jesus as Lord**, believe in Him by faith, **Spirit comes and dwells within our hearts** and our spirits, once dead to sin, **are reborn** – made alive in Christ; but **not just Spirit living in us, we are baptized, immersed** in the Spirit and His power comes upon us and is accessible to us
- H. As believers are baptized in the Spirit, **the church** consisting of all believers **has great power to make a great impact** on communities and the world in spreading the Gospel of Christ
- I. But we have to ...

III. **2 – Look Out and Move Out**

- A. **Quit just looking up** (“dilly dallying” just waiting for Christ to come back); **quit looking in** (focusing on just us, our little “civic” organization, our little “country club”); **always looking out**, but does **no good if we don't move out**
- B. **v. 8:** Jesus didn't stop with just telling the apostles about the power they

will receive when the Holy Spirit comes but He continued by saying ...
you will be my witnesses

- C. **Can't be the witnesses Christ commanded us to be by just standing around, just counting the days looking up for Jesus to return, just being concerned and ministering to ourselves; witnessing is sharing with others who need to know the truth**
- D. **** ON SCREEN --The church to continue the work of Christ, to look outward, is second about conviction – being convinced**
- E. **To be witnesses we're commanded to ...**
 - i. **1 – Look out, look around us to see how many are lost, dying, headed for hell**
 - a) **John 4 – account of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well; Jesus tells her He can give her living water; Jesus' disciples return amazed He is talking with this woman, a Samaritan woman – they've brought Jesus back some food and try to get Him to eat, Jesus says: John 4:34-35 (NIV)**

34 **"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.**

35 Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look [out] at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.
 - b) **Question: What “food” are we the church feeding on today? “Food” of entertainment, “food” of a social gospel – just do what’s right we’ll make the world a better place (making the world a better place to go to hell from), “food” of power and control, “food” of politics and recognition, or is it the “food” of doing the will of our heavenly Father and continuing His work**
 - ii. **2 – Move out, to be willing to get out in our Jerusalem (our community), our Judea (our state), our Samaria (our nation), to the ends of the earth (our world)**
 - a) **Church of Jesus Christ is not to be a stationary, quiet entity; church is to be mobile, visible, vocal for its Lord and His kingdom**
 - b) **Saying: “Flat bottoms” are reflection of “flat faith”; if you’re sittin’ you’re stagnate**
- F. **Finally, how the church is to continue the work of Christ on earth, look outward**

IV. **3 – Keep Peripheral Focus Up**

- A. **Peripheral vision – not the direct focus of our seeing but still indirectly aware of what’s around us; what the church needs to constantly be aware of in their indirect spiritual line of sight is return of Christ**
- B. **** ON SCREEN – The church to continue the work of Christ, to look outward, is about anticipation**

- C. **REFER v. 6, 7; When Christ returns is not to be our focus** – our direction focus is **not to be “up”**; all our attention is not to be on Christ returning
- D. **REFER v. 8; Our focus as the true church of Christ is to be “out”**; all our attention is to be on those who are lost and dying with no hope for eternity
- E. **REFER v. 9 – 11; Nothing wrong with living each day in anticipation of Christ returning but along with that anticipation we are to be doing what He commanded us to do** and that is continuing His work on this earth and our **focus outside of the church** – **across the street**, in our **neighborhood**, in our **workplaces**, in our **school**, in our **families** and even for some in their very **home**
- F. **Our direct focus** as the church, as disciples of Christ, is **look out** but always in **our “spiritual” peripheral sight looking for Christ’s return**
- G. **Question:** If we knew for certain that Christ would return to earth tomorrow, would it change anything we do as the church or personally as disciples of Christ the rest of the day today?
- H. **Matthew 16:27 (NIV): Jesus said ...**
²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then **he will reward each person according to what he has done.**

V. **Close**

- A. **The true church of Jesus Christ, even this church, has to turn our focus on being immersed in the power of the Holy Spirit carry on the work of Jesus Christ**
 - i. **Looking out at our community that is lost and dying**
 - ii. **Looking out at our nation and world that is without hope of the Gospel of Christ**
 - iii. **Anticipating, and keeping in our “spiritual” peripheral vision, that Jesus Christ will return one day in the same way in which He ascended back into heaven**
 - iv. **We have to focus now being a church that is looking out and moving out under the leadership of the Holy Spirit in obedience to the King of kings and Lord and lords**