

As we gather together this Sunday morning as the body of Christ in Port Alberni, British Columbia, we are joined with our brothers and sisters throughout the world for the purpose of pursuing the Greatest Commandment to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength, in order to fulfill the Great Commission of making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that our Lord Jesus has commanded us. We, here at Arrowsmith Baptist Church, have framed that purpose into a mission statement with says: “We seek to passionately proclaim the Glory of God in Christ for the joy of all people.” It has been estimated that Christianity is still the largest religion in the world, with an estimated 2.2 billion Christians, organized into between 35,000 and 40,000 organized Christian church denominations, nearly a third (31 percent) of all 6.9 billion people on Earth. Islam is second, with 1.6 billion adherents, or 23 percent of the global population. Of that 2.2 billion Christians, it is estimated that about 22 million are in Canada and 280 million in the United States.

This morning, as we open our Bibles together in the book entitled the Acts of the Apostles, we will begin a three-month journey of taking a look how the church of Jesus Christ started. Anyone who calls themselves a Christian who truly wants to know how to be a follower, a disciple of Jesus Christ in this world, needs to take a look at how the first Christians lived out their faith. Acts is a radical challenge to the contemporary church of today because it introduces the basic foundational themes of not only the book of Acts, but also the basic foundational themes of what it means to be a follower of Jesus and a member of the body of Christ, which is the church. Within its pages we read of Jesus’ life and ministry, his sufferings as a fact prophesied in the Old Testament, the importance of and evidence for his resurrection, the prominence and power of the Holy Spirit, the priority of being a witness for Jesus, the Great Commission with its scope extending to the ends of the earth, the church’s call to embrace a missionary attitude as opposed to a social club mentality, the greatness of kingdom of God, the desperate need for the truth of Scripture in the Christian life, the role of the apostles, the ascension and return of Christ, and the importance of prayer and fellowship.

As we look at the first chapter of Acts we know that verses 1-11 describe what happened to the apostles during the 40-day period between Jesus’ resurrection from the dead and his ascension into heaven. Verses 12-26 explain what the apostles did during the 10 days between Jesus’ ascending to heaven and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of “Pentecost” – a word which literally means “fiftieth day.” In this first chapter Luke, the author of Acts, writes of how the church *prepared* for the reception of the Spirit. More specifically for us we will see in our text for today how the first followers of our Lord Jesus lived out their faith in Jesus Christ as they prepared themselves for the power of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Here we see the ingredients for a Spirit-anointed church.

*In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.*

Acts 1:1-3

The author, the physician Luke, opens by referring to his “*first book*,” (Gospel of Luke) by giving the name of the recipient (Theophilus), and summarizing its contents. If verse 2 tells us that that Luke’s first volume describes “*all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up*,” we can assume this second volume (Acts) describes what Jesus continued to do and to teach “*through his Spirit*” after he was taken up. In verse 3 we begin to see how those in the first Christian church lived out their faith in Jesus as they prepared themselves for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Today we first see that those in the early church prepared themselves for the coming of the Holy Spirit by putting their faith in the risen Jesus Christ: *“He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God”* (Acts 1:3). After his resurrection, Jesus remained on earth and ministered to His disciples because the days were soon coming when He would no longer be with them in person. Faith in Jesus’ resurrection was important to the church because their spiritual power depended on it. To a society that defines truth as subjective and personal, we read here that the church is to find truth in the objective facts in God’s Word about Jesus Christ. It is an objective fact Jesus *“presented himself alive”* after his crucifixion and death *“by many proofs.”* In 1 Corinthians 15:5-8 the apostle Paul wrote that Jesus *“appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.”* The word *“proofs”* carries with it the idea of certain and infallible evidence. Jesus’ resurrection was not an illusion. There was rock-solid, undeniable proof that he was alive. Jesus wanted to make sure there was no doubt about his resurrection, and so he spent 40 days after he had been crucified showing himself to be alive. The world was dramatically changed by the first-century church because the early Christians could not get over the fact the Jesus had risen from the dead. We read in Luke 24:32 after the risen Christ had talked with two disciples, they said to one another: *“Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?”* The power of the Holy Spirit will come upon us when we put our faith in the risen Jesus Christ.

Verse 3 also tells us that those in the early church prepared themselves for the coming of the Holy Spirit by putting their faith in the Kingdom of God: *“He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God”* (Acts 1:3). Jesus taught *“about the kingdom of God”* often throughout his time on earth. *The Kingdom of God* was something that was foremost on the mind of the Jews in those days, as the Hebrew people were expectantly waiting for a Messiah to restore Israel as the greatest kingdom in all the world. In Jesus’ day, God’s people listened most intently whenever he talked *“about the Kingdom of God.”* But the *“Kingdom of God”* Jesus spoke of was not the Kingdom of God they expected. The people were waiting for a *future* kingdom, but Jesus defined the *“Kingdom of God”* as *“the realm or place where God rules”* in the present tense. In the context of Luke 17, Jesus stated that he, as King, was present: *“The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ - for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.”* The *“Kingdom of God”* will occur once God truly rules and reigns in the hearts of His people. The power of the Holy Spirit will come upon us when we put our faith in the coming Kingdom of God.

*And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”* Acts 1:4-8

Here we also read also that those in the early church prepared themselves for the coming of the Holy Spirit by putting their faith in the power of the Holy Spirit. In verses 4-5 Luke quotes Jesus words in Matthew 3:11 (*“he who is coming after me is mightier than I . . . He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire”*) and references God’s Words of promise in Joel 2:28: (*“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.”* In John 15:26 Jesus said: *“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me”*). Jesus promised his followers would be *“baptized with the Holy Spirit.”*

In Acts 1:8 Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit comes, his followers will receive “*power*.” In describing what happened when that promise was fulfilled, in Acts 2:4 Luke wrote that those following Christ “*were all filled with the Holy Spirit*.” The words “*power*” and “*filled*” in these verses suggest that the baptism with the Holy Spirit involves *the experience of the fullness of God’s Spirit*. There are numerous opinions within differing denominations regarding what this experience is. Traditional evangelical belief regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit is that Acts was a unique experience, and so today such a baptism takes place at conversion. But there are also many evangelicals who see this baptism as a second work of God’s grace, distinct from conversion, experiences of sanctification that usually takes place at times after our conversion. Our purpose together today is not to take a position on this issue other than to look at what God’s Word says. 1 Corinthians 12:13 tells us: “*For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit*.” In that context, clearly we all are baptized with the Holy Spirit when we come to faith in Jesus Christ. But Galatians 5:5 tells us that the Holy Spirit is a work sanctifying us (making us more righteous) also: “*For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness*” 1 Corinthians 6:11 affirms that baptism with the Holy Spirit occurs both at conversion and as we grow in spiritual maturity: “*You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God*.”

The early church showed that being filled with the Spirit was mandatory. Christians who are not experiencing God’s fullness in their lives are an abnormality. The baptism with the Holy Spirit should open the door to our moving on to an experience that it implies more and more of the fullness of God from our original step of faith in Christ Jesus. We are all called to pursue the fullness of God by His Spirit with all of our heart. We know, given the human make-up of our remaining fallen nature, that spiritual maturity throughout our lives is a process. Spiritual life on earth is not static; we are either progressing or regressing. Whatever one may call it and however one may enter it, what is important is that all Christians experience what the baptism in the Spirit implies: the fullness of God’s Spirit for the power to witness. The supreme place the Holy Spirit has in ministry in Acts is evidenced right from chapter 1. The ministry that the apostles were called to could only be fulfilled by the power of the Holy Spirit. So important was this that they were not allowed to launch out on the urgent mission of the church for which they had been called by Jesus during the fifty days before they baptism with the Holy Spirit. The fullness of the Spirit is essential for Christian life and ministry. Those who were in the early church prepared themselves for the coming of the Holy Spirit by putting their faith in the promise of God that He would baptize and fill them with the power of His Holy Spirit. The same is true for us. Amen!

“*So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel”* (Acts 1:6). One wonders if it might have saddened Jesus’s heart the heart to hear his disciples ask about the time of restoring the political, earthly “*kingdom to Israel*.” Though he had often taught them about the kingdom of God, as he now spoke to them about putting their faith in the power of God through the baptism of the Holy Spirit - their minds again went back to using that power to restoring the kingdom of Israel. They were still thinking in terms of God establishing His *future* kingdom of Israel over all kingdoms of this world rather than Jesus establishing a *present* spiritual kingdom in which God would reign in the hearts and lives of His people.

“*He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth’*” (Acts 1:7-8). Note that Jesus did not rebuke them when they asked him about the future Jewish kingdom. After all, He had opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, so they knew what they were asking. But God has not revealed His timetable to us and it is futile for us to speculate. We should not to be curious about the future but to be busy in the *present*, seeking to passionately proclaim the glory of God in Christ for the joy of all people. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are to be witnesses for Jesus.

*“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”* (Acts 1:8). “Witness” is a key word in the Book of Acts and is used twenty-nine times as either a verb or a noun. A witness is somebody who tells what he has seen and heard. When you are on the witness stand in court, the judge is not interested in your ideas or opinions; he only wants to hear what you know. Our English word *martyr* comes from the Greek word translated “witness,” and many of God’s people have sealed their witness by laying down their lives. This is the mission that we, just as the early church, are called to. Jesus said: *“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses.”* The power of the Holy Spirit is the power of the risen Christ in our hearts being lived out in our lives. A “witness” is one in whom the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit is sacrificially working because they have seen and heard and *experienced* the dynamic, life-changing power of the risen Christ. When Jesus appeared to the disciples after he had risen from the dead he said, *“You are witnesses of these things”* (Luke 24:48). In Acts 4:19-20 Luke writes of the joyous compulsion, the passionate unction that pours out of after a personal encounter with the risen Christ, when he wrote what Peter and John said: *“Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”* (Later Peter would write: *“For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty”* (2 Peter 1:16).

Over and over in Acts we read that a “witness” is one who has seen and heard and experienced the power of the risen Christ. We are to be “witnesses” – in “Jerusalem” (in our church and in our homes and in our community), “in all of Judea and Samaria” (in our country and other countries), and “to the ends of the earth” (in places where Jesus has never been known). We see in this the principle that the church and local ministries is the training ground for world missions to unreached people around the world. The pursuit and fulfillment of serving in the church and local ministries validates and empowers our heart for God and validates and empowers our sending out “witnesses” for Jesus out into world missions. The early church prepared themselves for the coming of the Holy Spirit by putting their faith in the power of the Holy Spirit so the might be witnesses for the crucified and risen Jesus Christ. May God ignite have passion within our hearts. Amen?

*And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”* Acts 1:9-10

Here we also read also that those in the early church prepared themselves for the coming of the Holy Spirit by putting their faith in the assurance of Jesus’ return. As the disciples watched Jesus being taken up to glory, two angels appeared and gently rebuked them. These particular angels assured those in the early church that Jesus would come again, just as He had been taken from them. The Bible tells us that Jesus is in heaven today; he is our interceding High Priest, the one who empowers us through His Spirit, giving us the grace that we need for life and service. Jesus is our Advocate before the Father, forgiving us when we confess our sins; he is the exalted and glorified Head of the church. Jesus is at work through with His people in the church on earth and helping them accomplish His purposes. Someday Jesus will return coming on the clouds of heaven with great power and greater glory, and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his people and take them home to glory to be with Jesus forever and ever. In the mean time we need to remember Jesus said: *“I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven”* (Mathew 16:18-19). The power of the Holy Spirit will come upon us when we put our faith in the assurance of Jesus’ return.

*Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.*

Acts 1:12–14

As those in the early church prepared themselves for the coming of the Holy Spirit they put their faith in the power of prayer. Jesus's disciples return from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem was a Sabbath day's walk, which was a little less than three-fourths of a mile. Since this happened forty days after Jesus resurrection, and so it was a Thursday, not the Sabbath day. The disciples "*went up to the upper room, where they were staying.*" An "*upper room*" would have been a good place for prayer as it would have been above the noise of the crowded streets and beyond the prying eyes of people passing by. It was there that they "*with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer.*" Imagine the power of the prayers in that were going on in that room. The phrase "*with one accord*" means "with one mind or passion" and while the Greek word "*devoting*" is often translated "constantly" it literally means "resolute, persistent, obstinate." The idea of "prevailing prayer" comes from this word. Prayer plays a significant role in the story of the church as recorded in the Book of Acts. In almost every chapter in Acts you find a reference to prayer, and the book makes it very clear that something happens when God's people pray together in unity. This is certainly a good lesson for the church today. Prayer is both the thermometer and the thermostat of the local church; for the "spiritual temperature" either goes up or down, depending on how God's people pray. John Bunyan, author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, said, "Prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to Satan." In the Book of Acts, you see prayer accomplishing all of these things. The power of the Holy Spirit will come upon us when we put our faith in the power of prayer.

*In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry." (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) "For it is written in the Book of Psalms, "'May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it'; and "'Let another take his office.'*

*So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. Acts 1:15-26*

As those in the early church prepared themselves for the coming of the Holy Spirit we then see they put their faith in the power of God's leading through God's Word and prayer. At some point during the 10 days between Jesus' ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter stands up before a group of 120 disciples and declares the need to find a replacement for Judas among the apostles. Peter views Judas's act of betrayal as a fulfillment of *Scripture*, but also clearly states that does not take away from the pain of what happened, for, as Peter says, Judas "*was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.*" Peter's view of the divine authorship of the Word of God is evidenced in his words, "*Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.*"

The theme of God's sovereign will at work in the suffering and death of Christ is one that occurs several times in the apostles' preaching, especially when speaking to Jews. When the disciples faced the outlawing of their faith in Acts 4:25–28 they again reflected on the sovereignty of God as it was manifested in the most terrible event in history: the death of Jesus. This perspective helps us believe that God will turn the evil done to us into good, as in the words of Joseph to his brothers in Genesis 50:20: "*As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.*" This truth would have helped take away the bitterness the disciples must have had over the betrayal of Jesus by one so close to them.

After Luke provides some background regarding the tragic life of Judas, he then returns to Peter's dialogue with the church which are quotes from two Psalms – each of which clearly reveal the Holy Spirit was speaking to Peter, as they are scriptures that have practical application to their situation: "*May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it*"; and "*Let another take his office.*" The most stunning is Psalm 109:8, which quoted more broadly in Psalm 109:6-8 declare: "*Appoint a wicked man against him; let an accuser stand at his right hand. When he is tried, let him come forth guilty; let his prayer be counted as sin! May his days be few; may another take his office!*" Luke tells us Peter then states the qualification required for the replacement had to do with the role of the apostles as witnesses: "*So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.*" Being a witness to the resurrection of Jesus was a crucial, never to be repeated, role of a select group of men in the early Christian church. We read that two men who fit those never-to-be-repeated qualifications were put forward, and the church prayed that God would lead them in choosing the one God had chosen, as external qualifications do not reveal the inner heart. And when they were finished praying "*they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*"

It's often been asked why casting lots - which was the practice of throwing sticks or stones with markings or symbols like dice - was used by God's people to determine the will of God. Well, the answer is that the most common use of casting lots for God's will was done only after prayer for God's guidance. In the situation we've just looked at, they also pursued God's guidance through God's Word. Its highly significant to note that the practice of casting lots to determine God's will ended at Pentecost, undoubtedly because after Pentecost they had the guidance of the Holy Spirit instead. Luke records this event to highlight the truth that this is a symbol of the end, the signing off, as it were, of the old era. The power of the Holy Spirit will come upon us when we put our faith in the power of God's leading through God's Word and prayer. The context of the Acts of the Apostles is *the gospel*; by his love and mercy our most sovereign God sent his only begotten Son to die on a cross in our place so that we might know forgiveness and redemption and restoration and new life with God forever and ever. The words we have read today were written to both challenge us and encourage us and empower us. We will know the power of the Holy Spirit and the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the assurance of the return of Christ and the guidance of God, when we put our faith in the risen Jesus Christ and commit ourselves to living under his authority in His Kingdom and seek God's will through the power of prayer and through the Word of God (Scripture as the Word of God and Jesus being the Word of God).

Jesus declares to us: "*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*" My dear brothers and sisters - What are you doing to prepare yourself for the coming of the Holy Spirit in your life? Some of you may be thinking: "I am a Christian. I already have the Holy Spirit." Well if that's true, then how are you living out the power of the Spirit as a witness for the crucified and risen Jesus Christ – who died in your place on a cross so that you might be forgiven and redeemed and restored and empowered to live your life for God as a living witness for Jesus Christ?

None of us can be witnesses in the same sense as the apostles were, for we have not seen the risen Lord as they did. Yet even their preparation to be witnesses would not be complete until they received the Holy Spirit (1:8). On our part, when we believe their witness regarding what they had seen and heard and entrust ourselves to Christ based on that belief, we too can experience the risen Lord through the indwelling Holy Spirit. As we've just seen in the first chapter of Acts, it was not only the apostles but also the other Christians who were active in their witness for Christ. In the same way we too must witness for him. Yet for our witness to be effective, it must be witness; that is, it must come out of a firsthand knowledge of the risen Christ. Like the apostles in Acts 4:20, we too must say: *"We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."* The Word of God is clear – Jesus died on a cross to save us from our sin, so that we might then live our lives for him!

Titus 2:11-14 says: *"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works."* Jesus said: *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?"* (Luke 9:23-25); *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him"* (John 12:24-26).

What are you doing to prepare yourself for the Holy Spirit to empower you to serve God? Jesus himself said we are to start at home in *"Jerusalem"* – and the church, which is the physical body of Christ, was created by God for that purpose. Have you followed Jesus into the waters of baptism? Have you made the commitment to Christ through church membership, which is the blood-bought gift of God's grace to God's people? Are you serving God by volunteering your time and money? Are you joining together with your brothers and sisters in Christ for Bible study and prayer?

William Shedd once said: *"A ship is safe in harbour, but that's not what ships are for."* The same could be said for the church. Jesus told those of us who make up the church to *"Go . . . and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age"* (Matthew 28:19-20). After he said these words the book of Acts tells us Jesus declared: *"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* Today we read that the first church prepared themselves for the power of the Spirit to coming upon them, and next week we will see that when the power of the Holy Spirit did come upon them, they became powerful witnesses for Jesus Christ. This church exists today because of their witness. May God do the same in us. Amen?

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Pastor Leland Botzet

Arrowsmith Baptist Church