

Acts Chapter 1 Verse 8

by Earle Maxwell

The sermon emphasizes the importance of waiting on God and receiving the power of the Holy Spirit before embarking on our mission and ministries.

Duration: 25:22

Scripture: Acts 1:4

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Discipleship And Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker highlights the faith and trust of Christians in developing countries who have very little material wealth but are rich in their experience of trusting God's promises. The speaker shares a story of a sergeant major in Nigeria who started a meeting in his new house and had 15 people willing to attend. The sermon emphasizes the importance of waiting on God and claiming His promises, as seen in Luke 24:49 and Acts 1. The potential for discipleship is discussed, with the speaker challenging the audience to reflect on their own response to God's command and their level of dependence on Him.

Transcript

God we just pray that as we look at thy word that the Holy Spirit shall take the word and bring it to our understanding in such a way as to deepen our capacity for your presence that your spirit might speak through us through the life that we live for the glory of God. Amen. I want to just commence with a reference to an experience that happened to us when we were in Israel a few years ago.

And we were traveling with a group of American Salvation Army officers and one of them got a message from a friend of his in the States. And he made a quotation from St. Francis of Assisi. And this is what he said to his army officer friend.

Preach Christ at all times and when necessary use words. Preach Christ at all times and when necessary use words. I haven't been able to get that out of my mind in terms of it just comes back to me again and again.

And in my maturing years as I seek to cope with all the avalanche of new choruses that are coming our way with melodies that sometimes have a tempo and a rhythm that I'm not quite catching up with. Sometimes Ben Master I'm a little slow. But when I was thinking of this meeting this morning you know the chorus that came into my mind and challenged me.

And I don't know that I've heard it for a little while. Holy Spirit come O come. Let thy mighty work in me be done.

All that hinders shall be cast aside. And this is the part. Make me fit to be thy dwelling.

Make me fit to be thy dwelling. And I imagine something of the challenge that the disciples must have felt as they stood to farewell Jesus the Ascension. And he went back to the Father that he gave them his farewell command.

Earlier in the Old Testament we got the Ten Commandments. Then in John we've got the the commandment that he gave to the disciples that they should love one another. But here in the Acts of the Apostles is his farewell command.

And Jesus said to the disciples wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father. You will be, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you. And so this Sunday morning I say to myself make me fit to be thy dwelling.

And when I think of that part of that Salvation Army chorus that we have in our own song books. I think of the way that Jesus put that challenge before the 11 disciples. There have been 12 but now the numbers are down.

The soldiers role is drooping. And Jesus turns to them and he gives them this challenge to wait in Jerusalem that they might receive the promise and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And so this morning I just want to briefly share with you something of my own understanding as to how this speaks to me.

A disciple's potential. First of all Jesus said I give you a command to wait. Wait.

As salvationists sometimes we are often classified as the most active aspect of the Christian church. Salvationists are often described as Christians with their, with their sleeves rolled up and their muscles on the alert to be doing something. But Jesus said to these disciples I want you first of all to wait.

Oh you know the Old Testament though that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. And you know I just find in my maturing years that this is one lesson I need to remind myself to daily, daily just make sure that I've had that time to wait upon the Lord. And Jesus said to them I want you to go back and he told them where they would wait.

You'll go back to Jerusalem. And I imagine just for a moment the disciples might have said that's got possibilities to be filled with the Spirit but it's also got problems because Jesus is telling us to go back to the very city where he was crucified. Jesus was telling them to go back to the city that his, the love of his innermost being, divine being just was almost broken again and again as he looked at that city of Jerusalem and said how often would I have gathered you and you would not.

Jesus said go back to Jerusalem and wait. And if ever you wanted to have encouragement as to the gospel of the second chance here it is. Go back to Jerusalem and wait.

And I want to just say to you this morning that Jerusalem was the place where the disciples had failed. This was the place, this was the setting where Jesus knew that they had forsaken him and fled. And he said I want you to go back there and I want you to wait.

Commissioner Brangle said that if he was dying and he had only one more opportunity to speak to the world and it had to be confined to just a few words he would only need three words. And he would say to everyone this is the message. Wait on God.

You know the chorus, meet my need Lord, meet my need just now. I am waiting, I am waiting and thou art coming to meet my need just now. And the potential for discipleship only starts to blossom into its fullest possibility when first of all we've waited upon God.

And then Jesus said I want to just put with that challenge to wait. I want you to give you a promise that you might claim a promise. Luke 24 49 he said the promise is my father's promise.

And when Luke took up his inspired pen again in Acts chapter 1 he said it's the promise of the father. And I want to tell you this promise is not only for these disciples who were on the verge of breaking out into the establishment of the New Testament Church which within 30 years would break right across national boundaries and reach right to Rome within a generation. Jesus said I give you a promise.

And I want to thank God that that promise is for you and for your children. It's for me and for my children. And this is a promise that God wants you and I to fully understand and experience.

It's an important promise. Up until this moment the disciples had been a little erratic. They had some ups and down moments.

On more than one occasion they got exercised about the pecking order as to who was more important than the other. On another occasion they were so anxious that they were more concerned about his place beside the throne than they were to take a towel in the name of Jesus. On other occasions they were known to turn children away who were wanting to come to our Lord.

The disciples were a little erratic. I can remember an open-air meeting in Manly in Sydney. A dear brother, he got up to give his testimony.

This was going back a long time. And he said in his testimony I've been serving the Lord on and off for 40 years. On and off for 40 years.

And I took the microphone and I said brother tell them that you've been more times on than off. But the disciples had been erratic. And Jesus said this power that I'm going to give you, it's an important promise.

And it's an inspiring promise because Jesus said when the Holy Spirit comes upon you your witness will begin here in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and the outermost parts of the earth. Just before we retired we were leading some meetings in Tokyo Japan. And I went into the territorial commander's office for a little time of fellowship and prayer.

And I looked up on his wall of his office and he had this draped and framed statement that was signed by George Scott Rylton in 1905. And do you know what George Scott Rylton wrote in 1905 in Tokyo? Let us claim all Japan for Christ. And so Jesus was giving to these disciples an inspiring promise.

And it was an imminent promise. He said not many days hence it'll be yours. It'll be yours to have an experience.

And 10 days later that experience was theirs. The wonderful thing is that you and I don't have to wait 10 days. We don't even have to wait 10 minutes.

We only have to wait until we meet God's condition. And when Jesus spoke to these disciples and gave them this inspiring promise that they would, that their discipleship would take them into an orbit that would cover the world. He said it'll be yours very very soon.

And so in response to this command to wait. And in response to this promise to claim they then resorted to a time of prayer. And 120 of them they remember the words of the mother of Jesus when she said in her farewell statement in scripture whatever he says to you do it.

And they went back to Jerusalem. They went to the upper room and they bathed themselves in prayer. I just want to share with you then this morning this great challenge that the potential for discipleship is before us in the same formula today.

We need to take time to wait on God. We need time to take his word. And we need to read his word every day and say God may the Holy Spirit bring to my understanding and my experience the truth of your word.

And then we need to go in prayer and ask that God by his Holy Spirit will consolidate in our innermost being this awareness of his presence that will make us fruitful disciples. After having visited a number of Salvation Army centers and territories that we sometimes call third world or developing world. I sometimes think that in the Western world we've got a lot to learn and we've got to take note of the challenge that our Christian brothers and sisters in Christ in developing countries who have so little of these were this world's good yet they are so rich in their experience of trusting the promises of God.

In Lagos Nigeria there was a sergeant major in the corps who was moving his house into another district. And if you know that part of Nigeria there are people just wherever you look. And he'd gone out into a new area and he said to his officer do you mind if I start a meeting in my new house.

And the corps officer said why not how many do you think you might get on a Sunday. Well he said I've got 15 people who said that they will come to the meeting if I have it in my house. The corps officer said you go ahead and do it.

I believe it's God's challenge to you. And do you know three years later General Rader went to lay the foundation stone for the first corps hall. And by that time 400 people were coming every Sunday to the meeting.

400. And the first corps building that they had being built was to seat 3,000. I tell you where's our vision? Where's our vision today? And that's why I've been to those some of those parts in the world and I've said to Wilma as we've walked away I can now understand why Jesus said we'll be in for some surprises when we get to heaven.

That those who are first here might not be seen quite so conspicuously in heaven. But I tell you these dear people who are so poor in this world good and so rich in Christ I can understand that they deserve to be first. I want to just leave that challenge with you this morning because the potential for discipleship it rests with you and it rests with me.

It rests with how we are going to respond to the command of God. Are we waiting on him? Did we wait on God before we set out to come to this place of worship this morning? How long since we've taken the bible just to ourselves and sat down and said God bring to my understanding promises that I can experience of your presence. Then in the spirit of prayer may God be pleased to put a seal upon the offering that you and I bring to the place of prayer.

In 1972 it's 30 years ago Dr. Stanley Jones spoke in this temple. Now Dr. Stanley Jones an eminent Methodist theologian and missionary from the states and mainly in India. He was well into his eighties and I can just visualize the control room used to be over there.

Those of you remember the temple setting in that era. There'd always be someone looking out through that little window to juggle the controls. I was sitting over there and it was a minister's meeting on the Monday afternoon here in Brisbane.

There are two things I want to comment that Dr. Stanley Jones challenged us about. Firstly he said in the western church today we have replaced the upper room with the supper room. And secondly he said I invite all you ministers here on this Monday afternoon and there were just over a hundred.

He said I invite all of you to come to the Salvation Army mercy seat. And I will never forget that sight in 1972 of seeing more than a hundred ministers from all around Brisbane kneeling at the mercy seat and then speaking to God in prayer that he might anoint us. I believe that's the challenge before the Salvation Army today as part of the Church of God.

We need to come back to the place where we have our time to wait. We need to come back to the place where we're looking again at the promises and saying I want to take them for myself. We need to come back to the place where we are a people of God who march on our knees because we are a praying army.

Meet my need Lord, meet my need just now. I am waiting and thou art coming to meet my need. And as we just sing them quietly together in the spirit of prayer you can look at them on the screen.

I am waiting and thou art coming to meet my need just now. If there's a need here this morning that God by his Holy Spirit has alerted you or me to just ring before him. Then let us do this very simply but sincerely to the place of prayer as we sing once twice through this refrain together now.

Confess our need that the Holy Spirit might have a freedom in our innermost being in a way that we'll be able to speak to others of the presence of Christ. We confess our need of thee this morning O God in a manner that we ask that you might see us and make us through the blood worthy to receive that working of the Holy Spirit in our midst that will bring you glory and will bring souls into the kingdom of God. Lord for a mighty revival we plead, we need it.

And we just pray that even as this time of prayer brings our meeting to a close that the Holy Spirit shall take of all that we shared and continue to minister to us. We would ask that you would make us fit to be thy dwelling that you will abide with us. Just a closing verse with the band to assist us with the music and the words we have them in our songbook it's number 505 who those who would find that resource helpful or you can look at the screen and the two verses actually blend to this one tune and we'll stand and share it together please.

Give us a couple of bars before we started if you don't mind them. And the fellowship and power of the Holy Spirit fill and empower us until we show in our lives more of the Spirit.

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