

**Acts 1:4-8 (NIV)** 4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” 6 So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

44-01-02-The Empowerment of the Gospel  
Pentecost, Spirit-filling, evangelism, missions  
Acts 1:4-8

The proclamation of the Gospel requires the power of the Spirit.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

–[**When automobiles became popular**, someone made a cartoon of a rich family leaving for vacation. The car was loaded with suitcases, but when the father tried to start it, nothing happened. His wife spoke up, “*I had the footman remove that thing under the hood, so we could load more baggage. Do you suppose that has anything to do with it?*”] We can have a **beautiful church loaded with luggage, but it’s going nowhere without engine power**—the *power of the Holy Spirit*.

–In **Galilee**, Jesus gave **the command to GO**– **Mat 28:18-20**, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make 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 obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” In **Bethany**, He commanded them to **STAY: Luke 24:49**, “I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

–“**GO!**” but “**STAY!**” Jesus wasn’t confused. He was **putting things in the right order: HOM.idea. The empowerment of the Gospel (title)** always precedes the effective *spread of the Gospel*. In **Acts 1:4-8 (text)**, Luke expands on Christ’s command to “wait” in Jerusalem, when He had already commissioned the disciples to “go” evangelize....

**I. Why Were They to Wait?**– **v.4**, “*Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.*”

A. **God has a birthday gift for His children:** “*wait for the gift my Father promised*” [**Naked newborns** leave hospitals dressed in baby clothes from their parents. Nothing’s wrong with our God-given *birthday suits*. They’re beautiful to behold, especially when we’re young....]

B. **But for spreading the Gospel**, Jesus said in **Luke 24:49b**, “...stay in the city until you have been **clothed with power** from on high.” **All Christians need this divine gift:** “*Don’t leave home without it.*”

C. Also, we have **orders from headquarters:** Jesus said, “I will build My church...” [**Soldiers don’t fight battles** when, where and how they like. *They follow orders.*] Our **commanding officer is Jesus**, and even though He’s in heaven now, He’s **still in charge of building His Church**....

1. **By the Holy Spirit, His Father was the One working in Him** (He

said in **John 14:10**, “Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.”)

2. By the same Holy Spirit, Jesus will be the One working in us—Mark 13:11, Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.
- D. Staying put often gives significance to going somewhere else. (“Do not leave Jerusalem.”—if the Gospel was going to work where it was going, it had to begin to work where it began!)

**TRANS:** [Suppose a genuine repair man knocked on your door without wearing a work uniform and carrying his tool box. You might give him zero credibility and not let him in!] We may be true Christians, but Christ won’t send us to help repair the damage of sin without clothing us with His Holy Spirit and giving us power to proclaim His Gospel effectively. So...

## II. What Are We Waiting For?— v.5, “For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

- A. Water-baptism signifies the kind of total repentance that leads us into spiritual new birth— **John 3:5**, Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of **water** and **the Spirit**.”
  1. Water-baptism isn’t an optional feature of new birth, but Christ’s foundational mandate to every newborn Christian!
  2. Early church fathers spoke of water-baptism and the new birth synonymously: water-baptism was the external ritual portraying new birth; the Holy Spirit was the internal Reality conveying it.
- B. BUT God doesn’t stop with new birth: He has more in store! [Our best example is Jesus Himself: His bodily birth was by Holy Spirit conception in the virgin womb of Mary; but His empowerment for Gospel ministry was by the Holy Spirit coming upon Him after He was baptized by John the Baptist.]
  1. In saying, “you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit,” Jesus did not mean Spirit-birth but Spirit-blessing—Spirit-empowerment!
  2. By Spirit-birth we are given a new life; by Spirit-baptism we are empowered to live that new life. (New birth makes us children of God in a lost world; Spirit-baptism empowers us to act like His children and to proclaim His Gospel to a lost world.)
- C. We have empty places in us that God wants to fill! (At Pentecost, Spirit-baptism was described as being “filled” by the Holy Spirit.)

1. Empty places in our lives—where “the world, the flesh and the devil” used to take up space—need to be filled up by the Spirit. *Then...*
  - a. Where the devil was working in us, now God can work!
  - b. Where the flesh was directing us, now God’s will can guide us!
  - c. Where the world attracted us, now God’s eternal kingdom can capture our full attention.
2. In repentance, we poured out our hearts to God to be saved; through Spirit-filling, God pours His heart into us, giving us His heart-burden for the salvation of others who are still lost in sin.

**TRANS:** Like the disciples, we can ask wrong questions— v.6, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” Jesus said in v.7, “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.” We get sidetracked with Bible prophecy questions, philosophical questions and political questions. We need to ask for and wait for empowerment “from on high.” *But there’s another question we get concerned about...*

## III. Where Are We Going?— v.8, *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

- A. God is concerned about HOW we go: He wants us to be “witnesses” (telling what we ourselves have experienced through Christ [When interrogated by the Pharisees in **John 9:25**, the blind man Jesus healed told them, “*One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!*”])
- B. God is also concerned about FRANS [our Friends, Relatives, Associates (or Acquaintances), and Neighbors]. We are to reach out...
  1. “in Jerusalem”— to those living where we live
  2. “in all Judea and Samaria”— to those living near where we live
  3. “to the ends of the earth”— to those everywhere else [The Internet has made it possible to send a digital Bible around the globe in just a minute.]

## **CONCLUSION:**

—We’re *in* the *season* of Pentecost, but is the *power* of Pentecost *in* us? “We’ve a Story to Tell To the Nations” but are we telling that story?  
 —**The proclamation of the Gospel requires the power of the Spirit.** For the sake of those who need to hear that Gospel, our daily prayer should be “*Fill me, Lord, with the power of your Holy Spirit.*”