

## CALLED TO BE A WITNESS

### Acts 1:1-11

#### OPENING QUESTION

Today we are going to unpack the command Jesus gives to his disciples to spread the Gospel message. We will be looking at what God is calling them to and also, how He will empower them to fulfill that calling. Can you think of a time you knew you were being called to do something? Give us a 30-second description of that calling and describe how you felt in the moment you knew you were being called.

#### CONTEXT

The book of Acts can be summarized as the Holy Spirit empowering believers to spread the Gospel message far and wide. The book was written by Luke as a sequel to the Gospel of Luke. Acts repeatedly emphasizes that the suffering Jesus endured, His death on the cross, and His resurrection fulfilled His promises and Old Testament prophecies (Lk. 24:6, 25–27; 44–47). We begin our study of Acts in the first chapter as Luke describes a conversation between Jesus and His disciples right before Jesus ascended to heaven.

#### READ ACTS 1:1-11

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen. 3 After His suffering, He presented Himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. 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 Then they gathered around Him and 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."

9 After He said this, He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven."

## DISCUSS

1. Look at verse 4. What did Jesus command them to do? Why couldn't they begin spreading the word of the kingdom of God immediately? What did Jesus mean by "the promise of the Father"?
2. How do the disciples respond to what Jesus says in verse 4? Why is this important to note?
3. As eyewitnesses to the resurrected Jesus, the apostles' hopes for Him to restore Israel as an independent and powerful nation are renewed. How does Jesus redirect their attention and call them to be focused on something else? [verses 7–8]
4. What is the scope of the disciple's assignment (1:8)? What was Jerusalem, Samaria and the ends of the earth to them? If this occurred in your town or campus, what places could be substituted for those in verse 8?
5. Picture yourself as one of Jesus' followers as Jesus rises from earth to heaven (vv. 9–11). What do you see, hear, think, feel, say, and do?
6. What difference might the angel's promise of Jesus' return make in how His followers approach their assignment? How might the angel's words in verse 11 speak to us? What do they encourage us to think about and do?

## REFLECT

1. Jesus redirects them from wanting to know about restoring the kingdom of Israel to telling them about the gift of the Holy Spirit and the mission He is calling them to. Can you think of a time when God has redirected you, like the disciples, from your plans to being on mission with Him?
2. Jesus first called His disciples to Jerusalem, which was the city around them. God has brought you to this University for this season in your life. It can often be very scary to be a Christian and to share your faith in the world of academia. How might you be a witness in your department and amongst other graduate students and/or faculty in this season?



GRADUATE & FACULTY MINISTRIES

## PRAY

- Thank God for entrusting you to share His message with others, and ask God for help.
- Share your fears about this with Jesus, and invite Him to help you.
- Ask the Holy Spirit for help with the specific ways you want to be a witness while in graduate school or as a faculty member.