

"Ye Shall Receive Power"

*Bailey Chapel
9/8/57
ave*

Scripture Lesson: - Acts 1:

Text: - Acts 1: 8. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth!"

Introduction: - These are the words of the Risen Lord. He had finished the work the Father gave him to do. Before his return to the Father he wanted to give to the disciples, his parting charge. Here are given his orders to the disciples. Here is his thrilling program to us as individuals and as a group.

I.

What is the business of the church? What is the business of every member of the church? It is to witness to Jesus Christ. "Ye shall be witnesses unto me!" This is the solemn duty and high privilege of every follower of Jesus Christ. To fail to witness is to fail to bear fruit. To fail to bear fruit is to separate ourselves from our Lord as the branch might be separated from the vine. Thus separated, we wither and die.

How are we to witness?

1. We are to witness through what we say. A witness must have first hand knowledge. An evangelist must have an evangelist. Hearsay evidence may be of value, but it is never of supreme value. Those who witness for Christ must have ~~some~~ firsthand knowledge of him whom they seek to commend to others.

The early church was blessed with great preachers, such as Paul, Barnabas, Peter and Apollos. But the fact is, that Christianity spread over the hard Roman world, not so much by great preaching, as by effective witnessing. Men and women went out to tell of a Lord who had made a difference in their lives. These early saints won largely through their testimony. That is still the most effective way of winning others to Christ.

2. We are to witness not only by what we say, but by what we do. We are to let our light so shine that men may see our good works and be led to glorify our Lord. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees of his day, not because they failed to teach the truth, but because they failed to practice what they preached. They pointed the way to the spring, but they never drank of the water of life themselves. They indicated the road, but they did not have the consecration to travel it. They commended a life that they themselves did not live. This always spells tragedy. Of course, the best of us preach better than we practice. This is so because ours is a perfect gospel, and the best of us practice it imperfectly. Yet it is stark tragedy when we do not accept for ourselves the gospel that we offer to others.

3. We are to witness also by what we are. One day Peter and John stood in the presence of the court that sentenced Jesus to death. The men of this court were not disposed to see the best in Peter and John. But, although they looked at them through critical eyes, this conclusion was forced upon them, they were Christlike. "They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." What these men might say by the words they spoke, what they were was more impressive. Yes, we are to witness through what we are, yea, we do witness by what we are.

II.

Where are we to give our testimony? Jesus said, "In Jerusalem and Judea. That means that we are to witness to the people among whom we live. We are to witness first in our own homes. The home is a place of supreme importance. If we can bear effective witness in our homes, then we can win the whole nation and the world for Christ. No church, no nation, no community will rise higher than its home life. If we save the home, we save all. If we fail at home, we fail everywhere.

To witness in Jerusalem and Judea is also to bear witness in our home church, in our community, our city, our state and nation. We are to witness by being good churchmen, good citizens. We are to witness right where we are.

2. We are to witness to the Samaritans. The Samaritans were kinfolks of the Jews. But they were a mixed race. They were held in great contempt by the Jews. But Jesus was as keenly interested in the Samaritans as he was in the Jews. Therefore he gave them a commission to Samaria. We too have our Samaritans, our minority groups. We are to witness to them. I have known professing Christians who were ready to go to Africa, but who took no interest in the needs of those who lived in their own community.

3. Finally, we are to witness to the ends of the earth. Ours is a world religion. Jesus taught that it was. He declared that the field was the world. If I did not believe that the Lord cared for all men, I could not believe that he cared for any man. The very heart of the gospel is this, "God so loved the world, that he gave." To assume that God is interested in home missions but not in foreign is to assume that he is lacking, not only in heart, but intelligence. The one institution that girdles the world today is the church of Jesus Christ.

But while we are out to save the world, we are not to forget the individual. I have known of a few who lost the individual in the mass. The first Christians who went out, went out to preach Christ. They gave their testimony to the individual man they met. As they gave their testimony, they won the individual to Christ. They won him to an intense loyalty to Jesus Christ.

III.

This was the program of Jesus. But what of the power to see it through? If so, where shall we turn for that dynamic, that power? Our Lord never said that it was his purpose to conquer in the energy of the flesh. No more is it to be the work of God alone. The changing of the kingdoms of this world into the kingdom of God and his Christ is a co-operative movement. Man cannot do it alone. God can not do it alone. But God and man working together can accomplish it. Therefore the Lord said, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you." It was

in the vivid awareness of God through the Spirit that
that these early saints went forth to change the
world.

Conclusion:- Why then, are we so lacking in power
as individuals? Why do we have so few churches that
are really powerful? The answer is right here. We
lack wholehearted committal to our Lord and to his
program. We cannot expect Pentecostal power if we
do not take the program seriously. It is just as t
now as it was then, that wholehearted surrender
brings power. When we give, God gives. "We are wit-
nesses of these things; and so also is the Holy Spirit
Whom God gives to them that obey him.

Illustration of the missionary in China.

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible due to fading and bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. It appears to be a long paragraph or a list of points.]