**Acts 1:1-11**

I. Introduction to Acts

A. v. 1: “in my former book”

Acts was written by Luke (Gentile physician) who wrote the gospel in his name

B. v. 1: “all that Jesus began to do and to teach”

Luke sees his second book as very much a continuation of the story in his first book: “The continuing Acts of Jesus Christ, now risen and exalted and working through his apostles by power of his Holy Spirit

C. v. 3: This is Jesus final post-resurrection appearances before his ascension

II. Summary of Acts (v. 8)

A. The what of Acts: “witnesses”

1. A witness is someone who has 1st hand experience of something

2. That person can then witness to what they’ve seen and heard

3. Witnessing is a very natural human response

a. When we experience something unique or compelling we can’t help but share it with others

b. These 11 men had experienced the most compelling events in history and it would be natural for them to share it with others

B. The where of Acts

1. Jerusalem (ch. 1-7)

2. Judaea and Samaria (ch. 8-12)

3. The ends of the earth (ch. 13 on)

C. The how of Acts

1. “the Holy Spirit”

= God’s own personal presence who dwelt in Jesus will now dwell in his disciples

2. “you will receive power”

a. In Acts that power primary enables people to verbally share the gospel with boldness and courage even in situations where it would be risky

b. For example, see 2:4, 4:8, 4:31

III. We are part of this story today

A. At some point in our lives, someone was a “witness” to us

B. We are called to be “witnesses” to others

IV. Consider how Jesus’ vision for their future differed from their vision/expectations for future

A. Their vision: the kingdom restored to Israel (v. 6)

1. = The Messiah defeating Israel’s enemies, ruling in Jerusalem, restoring Israel to its status as world leader

2. = 1st century Jewish version of “the good life”: our people gathered together in our land, safe, secure, living in homes free of oppression, our children growing up in safety and prosperity

3. As good as that vision was, it was very insular, small, and Jewish. It was about safety, security, and privilege

B. Jesus’ vision: witnesses to the ends of the earth

1. His vision for their future is so much more expansive.

2. His vision isn’t about safety and security. Rather, it’s about them going out and giving their lives away for the spread of the good news

3. And after giving them this huge mission, he leaves! (v. 9-10). He entrusts this mission to them

C. How does our vision for our future compare with Jesus’ vision for our future?

1. Our vision tends to be similar to the disciples: about a family safe and secure, a home we love, in a nice neighborhood, good job, financial security, fun hobbies, etc. The danger is that becomes the sum total of our vision, and Jesus just becomes someone we pray to in order to help us achieve that vision

2. Jesus has a vision that is bigger than that and involves us being witnesses to the world (starting with our local neighborhoods and communities)

V. Jesus’ command: Wait (v. 4)

A. Notice the disciples’ response: unified, expectant prayer (v. 12-14)

B. At the beginning of this series, let’s commit ourselves to expectant prayer, asking the Spirit to open our eyes to the opportunities around us and to give us courage and passion to share the gospel

**Discussion Questions**

1. What struck you most from Sunday’s message? What idea hit you in a new or fresh way?

2. Consider Christ’s call on the apostles in v. 8. In what ways is that call still applicable to us if at all, and in what ways is that call unique to them, if at all?

3. Consider the contrast between the disciples’ hope for their future in v. 6 and Jesus’ plan for their future in v. 8. In what ways are you tempted to simply work towards a future that is about security, comfort, and privilege? And where specifically might Jesus be calling you to a future that is more expansive and outward-focused?

4. As you consider being a witness of the gospel today, what is the main barrier that gets in the way for you personally?

5. This week we talked about committing ourselves to prayer at the beginning of this Acts series. How specifically can your group be praying for you in this area of outreach?