

The Holy Spirit Sends Witnesses

Opener: Who's been a witness to you? What made it effective?

Scripture: 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." Acts 1:8

"As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." John 20:21

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! ²⁰ As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." Acts 4:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

Discussion Questions

1. Acts 1:8 is the key verse in a book that chronicles the progress of the unstoppable gospel. It states Jesus' mission for His church—when the Holy Spirit empowers you, be my witnesses to all the earth. What does the word "witnesses" actually mean as Jesus uses it here? Acts 1:8; John 20:21
2. For the disciples, everything was secondary to declaring their personal testimony. As Peter says in Acts 4:20, "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." What had they seen and heard that people would want to know? How had Jesus prepared them to be good witnesses? Matt. 28:18-20
3. Jesus originally gave the job to be his witnesses to His disciples. Are we also supposed to be His witnesses? If so, how is our witness today like theirs? How is our witness different? What distracts or keeps us from being an effective witness? How can our difficulties and failures help or hurt our witness?
4. How does the Holy Spirit empower believers to be witnesses for Jesus? How do we know when we're relying on the power of the Holy Spirit or striking out on our own? Acts 1:8
5. The Samaritans were despised by the Jews, and the feeling was mutual. The way the Jews and the Samaritans felt about one another is similar to how Israelis and Palestinians feel about one another today. What was the significance of being a witness to Samaria? Who are your Samaritans? Acts 1:8
6. Being a witness doesn't mean we have to persuade others to believe in Jesus, nor does it mean we have to defend the gospel. Does understanding we're called to simply report what we've experienced and found to be true make it easier or harder to be a witness? Why?
7. Tell about a time you or someone you know told someone about Jesus and it was well received.

Wrap Up: The gospel has spread like wildfire for one reason: people who believe in Jesus have witnessed to anyone and everyone who would listen. And they've done it with the power of the Holy Spirit. Nothing has stopped them. Not language barriers, persecution, government opposition, suffering—nothing. In fact, opposition has only fueled the fire. So don't be afraid to be a witness. Don't be too busy. Don't miss out on being part of what God wants to do through you. You wouldn't have heard about Jesus if someone hadn't witnessed to you. The last thing you want anyone you could have shared with to say on judgment day is, "if only I'd heard."