

PROMISE/MISSION

THE LESSON: ACTS 1, 2

The book of the New Testament called “Acts” follows on the tail of the Gospels and was written by Luke, one of the Gospel-writers. In fact, it’s the sequel to the book of Luke. The Gospels end with the resurrection of Jesus, and the book of Acts tells us what happened afterwards.

The full title for the book of “Acts” is “The Acts of the Apostles” because the book follows the same disciples whom we met in the Gospels - who were transformed from being a confused and frightened collection of men into bold witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus. But some scholars prefer to refer to the book as “The Acts of the Holy Spirit,” because it was *through* the Holy Spirit that the disciples were able to accomplish all that they did.

As we read through today’s text, keep this in mind: Jesus left the disciples with a job to do, but he also kept his promise to send them exactly what they would need in order to fulfill that mission.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow the rule of prayer that you created for yourself.

(If you didn’t make one, try saying the morning and evening prayers from the “Forms of Prayer to be used in Families,” which begins on page 728 of the BCP. If you don’t have a copy, you can look it up here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer>.)

Spend some time bringing before God those things that make you feel unprepared to serve him. Ask him to guide and equip you, then just remain quietly in his presence, waiting. Close with this prayer adapted from Hebrews 13:20-21: **“God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip me with everything good that I may do your will, working in me that which is pleasing in your sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”**

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this prayer, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

Heavenly Father, we thank thee for loving us, and for sending thy dear Son into the world to save us from our sins. We pray to thee for all who do not know of thy love, both at home and in other lands. Grant that through the work of our missionaries they may be led to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and with us become soldiers and servants in thy holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN MISSIONS FROM THE SERVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, BCP PAGE 625)

PROMISE/MISSION

ACTS 1, 2: **SPIRIT-FILLED WITNESSES**

1 ¹In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ²until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

⁴And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” ⁹And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven”..

2 ¹When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance...

⁴²And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.