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2026 ANNUAL THEME: “*Hope in Motion*”

BIBLE STUDY

April 1, 2026

“The Called: Who Are We Called To?”

(Acts 1:8)

Topics

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Scripture Reference:

“...but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8 NASB).

Reflection Questions

- A. When you think about the people God might be calling you to reach, who comes to mind first—those close to you, those on the margins, or perhaps someone you’ve never considered before?

B. In what ways can one feel empowered or equipped by the Holy Spirit to connect with and serve those who are powerless, marginalized, or overlooked in their community?

Important Emphasis

The Ministry is the most honorable employment in the world. Jesus Christ has graced this calling by his entering into it. Thomas Watson

The Apostle Paul knew the importance of the call and the integrity that is invariably ingrained into the fabric of ministry. This is why Paul expressed to the church at Rome his strong spiritual ties to the gospel of Jesus Christ. **Roman 1:16**

There can be no higher calling than to be a mouthpiece for God. **James 3:1-12**

There should be a spiritual consciousness that the Lord does not reside in an unclean temple. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** As believers we must make it a priority to engage in daily consecration before God as we approach the ministry given to our hands. This should not be entered carelessly. **2 Corinthians 4:7**

Six Stages of the calling *Dr William Myers*

- Early religious exposure
- Experience
- Struggle
- Search
- Sanction
- Surrender

Who are we called to

(The) Struggling Matthew 25:36

(Those who) Stumble Galatians 6:1

(We are called to) Stand Titus 3:10

Calling featured in the Book of Acts

Most scholars recognize that the primary activity of the Spirit emphasized in Acts is the empowering of witness for their mission. Witness or testimony was a widespread motif in early Christianity; terms *marturew* 167 times used in scripture, expected testimony for Christ when tried in court for their faith.

Main focus of Acts 1:8

Promise for the Journey (Promise of Power) Luke 24:49

Provisions for the Journey Luke 4:18-19

Partnerships for the Journey Acts 3:1-7

Process in the Journey Matthew 28:19-20

Key Words and Terms

Ambassadors
Ascension
Calling
Church
Declare
Disciples
Empowered
Ends of the Earth
Gospel
Holy Spirit

Mandate
Marginalized
Mission
Peripheral
Proclaim
Proximate
Salvation
Testify
Transformation
Witness

Outline

- I. People:** Called to the Powerless
- II. Places:** Called to the Proximate and the Peripheral
- III. Purpose:** Called to Proclaim

Introduction

The call to witness is at the heart of the Christian faith. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave His disciples a clear mandate: to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. This call is not limited to the apostles of the first century but extends to every believer today. Understanding the scope and significance of this calling is essential for living out our faith with purpose and passion.

In this study, we will explore the nature of our calling as outlined in Acts 1:8. We will consider what it means to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, the scope of our witness, and the steadfastness required to fulfill this mission. Through this, we hope to gain a deeper appreciation for the privilege and responsibility of being Christ’s witnesses in our world.

Background and Context

The Book of Acts was written by Luke, a physician and companion of the Apostle Paul. Addressed to Theophilus, Acts serves as a sequel to the Gospel of Luke, continuing the story of Jesus’ ministry through the early church. The opening verses (Acts 1:1-8) recount the final instructions of Jesus to His disciples before His ascension, emphasizing the coming of the Holy Spirit and the global mission of the church.

The setting is Jerusalem, shortly after the resurrection of Jesus. The disciples, still grappling with the meaning of recent events, are gathered together. Jesus assures them of the promise of the Father—the Holy Spirit—who will empower them for the task ahead. The major theme is the expansion of the gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, highlighting the church’s mission and the power of the Spirit to accomplish it.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

I. People: Called to the Powerless

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...”
(Acts 1:8a).

Who are we called to?

We are called to reach those who are powerless, marginalized, and overlooked by society. The Holy Spirit empowers us to minister beyond our natural abilities, enabling us to bring hope and transformation to those in need with empathy, compassion, and love (**1 Corinthians 1:26-29; Matthew 9:36**).

To minister beyond our abilities means relying on the Holy Spirit to help us serve others in ways that go beyond our own natural skills, strength, or resources. It involves stepping out in faith to help, encourage, or support people—even when we feel inadequate or unqualified—trusting that God will provide what is needed. This kind of ministry is marked by empathy, compassion, and love that surpasses what we could offer on our own, allowing

us to bring hope and transformation to those who are powerless, marginalized, or overlooked.

“What does [this kind of] love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.”
~ Augustine of Hippo

This quote from Augustine of Hippo describes **love** as an active and compassionate force. Rather than being just a feeling, love is portrayed as something that takes action: helping others with its hands, moving quickly to aid the poor and needy with its feet, noticing suffering with its eyes, and listening to the pain of others with its ears. Augustine emphasizes that true love is **empathetic** and responsive to the needs and struggles of people, showing itself through caring **compassionate** actions and genuine concern.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. How does the empowerment of the Holy Spirit enable individuals to overcome personal limitations when reaching out to the powerless and marginalized, according **1 Corinthians 1:26-29; Matthew 9:36**?

2. In what practical ways can Augustine’s description of love as “hands, feet, eyes, and ears” be embodied in daily life to address the needs of those who are overlooked by society?

II. Places: Called to the Proximate and the Peripheral

“...in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”
(Acts 1:8c)

Our calling is not confined to our immediate surroundings. We are sent both to those nearby (Jerusalem, Judea) and to those far away (Samaria, the ends of the earth). God’s heart is for all people, and our witness must cross cultural, social, and geographical boundaries. (Matthew 28:19; Romans 10:14-15)

The phrase "**Places: Called to the Proximate and the Peripheral**" suggests a focus on both nearby (proximate) and distant or less central (peripheral) locations. It implies an invitation or responsibility to engage with or pay attention to places that are close at hand as well as those that are farther away or on the margins. This could relate to physical locations, communities, or even metaphorical spaces, emphasizing the importance of considering both the familiar and the overlooked.

Jesus told his followers, **you will receive power**. To do what? To **tell people about** him. They were to start right there in **Jerusalem (1:4)**. **Judea** was the region surrounding Jerusalem (possibly including Galilee). **Samaria** was Judea’s hostile next-door neighbor, a more difficult but equally important place to take the gospel. The **ends of the earth** may have referred to Rome or the Roman Empire, the world power at that time. The direction was of primary importance:

Beginning from where you are at this moment, take the message of Christ outward, like ripples caused by a pebble thrown into a pond, not stopping at just your city or state but moving on beyond regional influence to the very “ends” of the earth. In other words, reach it **all!**



CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

3. How does the concept of being "**called to the proximate and the peripheral**" challenge our understanding of mission and outreach in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts?

4. Reflecting on the directive to begin sharing the message "from where you are" and then move outward, how can individuals and communities discern where their immediate "Jerusalem" is today?

EXPLORE THE TEXT

III. Purpose: Called to Proclaim

"...and you will be my witnesses..." (Acts 1:8b).

The **ultimate purpose of our calling** is to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. As witnesses, we testify to what we have seen and experienced, pointing others to the hope and salvation found in Him. Our lives and words together bear witness to the transforming power of the gospel. (**2 Corinthians 5:20; 1 Peter 2:9**)

Who are we called to proclaim to?

We are called to proclaim to others—those who have not yet heard or experienced the good news of Jesus Christ. As witnesses and ambassadors, our purpose is to share the message of hope and salvation with the world, declaring the praises of God to those still in darkness so they too may come to know Him.

What are we called to proclaim?

We are called to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. This involves testifying to what we have seen and experienced, sharing the message of hope and

salvation, and declaring the praises of God to those who have not yet heard or experienced this good news.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

5. How does the concept of being a "witness" as described in Acts 1:8b and referenced in the text shape the way individuals approach sharing their faith and experiences with others?

6. In what ways can believers effectively proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to those "still in darkness," and what challenges might they face in fulfilling this calling as described in 2 Corinthians 5:20 and 1 Peter 2:9?

LIFE APPLICATION

Think About It!

- How can you intentionally reach out to someone in your life who may feel powerless, marginalized, or overlooked, reflecting the call and compassion of Christ this week?

- In what specific ways can you step beyond your comfort zone—whether geographically, culturally, or relationally—to proclaim the good news of Jesus to those who have not yet heard or experienced it?

Resources:

Adult Questions for LESSONMaker, LOGOS Bible Software

Augustine of Hippo Quotes.

Barnes Notes on the New Testament.

Enns, Paul P. *Moody Handbook of Theology*. Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

Galvin, Dr. James C., Veerman, Rev. David R., Barton, Dr. Bruce B., and Lucas, Daryl J. *Life Application Bible Studies*. © 1999 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Database © 2006 WORDsearch Corp.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J., et al., eds., in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (London; Grand Rapids, MI: SPCK; Baker Academic, 2005), 94.