

January 15, 2012  
First Presbyterian Church - Coeur d'Alene

**Series: Gone Fishing - Acts 1-3**

**Message: Acts 1:6-11 - 'Mission'**

*So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. 8 But 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." 9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, 11 and 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."*

1. Illustration - clear glass candy jar. Bag of large jawbreakers or gumballs. Bag of m&ms. Bag of sugar.
  - a. Get volunteer to help - preferably an older-elementary
  - b. "Need your help to fill up this jar."
    - i. Ask to fill with gumballs. Ask: "Is it ALL filled?" Yes. "no, not yet!"
    - ii. Bring out m&m's -pour through gumballs (shake jar if needed). Ask: "Is it ALL filled?" Yes. "no, not yet!"
    - iii. Bring out sugar - pour through m&m's and gumballs. "Now that's ALL filled!"
    - iv. "Thank you!"
  - c. It's easy to settle for less than 'All' and miss out on true life.
    - i. **Slide1** John 10:10 - Jesus said that his mission was that through faith in Him you would have life and have it abundantly/have it to the full.
      1. Have it all!
      2. All what? The abiding presence of God bringing light and new life to transform the dead and dark.
      3. But also that you might have All-plus: Abundant Life and then have more so it overflows.
    - ii. **Slide2** Many get filled with new spiritual life, then think the job's done.
      1. Maybe a little of the abundance is allowed to trickle or seep out and makes a small impact on others...
  - d. Jesus gives God's gift of new, abundant life so that it comes to us on way to someone else, and we are to be passionate about them getting just as much ALL as we are.
    - i. No one was more filled with God than Jesus, His Son, and what did He do? He poured it ALL out for the world.
    - ii. And the church is called to do the same thing - to not rest until ALL we have received from God has been given away.

1. One writer put it this way: "Lord, I want no blessing that I cannot share."
- iii. Visitors, non Christians are saying "Now we're talking!"
  1. You who are Christians are gulping, wondering "If I get it ALL, and give it ALL, won't that leave me empty?"
2. Let's pick up the story from the first chapter of the Book of Acts.
  - a. Last week we looked at vss. 1-5, which was Luke's prologue to this 2<sup>nd</sup> book (the Gospel of Luke is the first).
    - i. These two books make up Luke's persuasive argument to a Roman government official and new convert to Christianity, named Theophilus, that this new movement of Jesus Christ wouldn't fade away with time. It was God's new Kingdom and it was built to last. He needed to be a part of it.
  - b. The action starts in Vss. 6-11. Jesus is still with his friends and followers, but as the resurrected from the dead Jesus. Turns out, this is his 2<sup>nd</sup> last day with them.
    - i. **Slide3** (v.6) They 'came together.' Where have they been?
      1. Perhaps they've been together all along, but disjointed, incomplete, purpose-less. So Jesus gathers them up and gets ready to speak to them about what will happen next.
    - ii. But before He speaks they jump the gun: "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
      1. "What are YOU going to do next?"
      2. He IS going to do something, but their question shows they think they will be passive spectators. The "in-crowd" with a luxury-box view of the field.
  - c. **Slide4** Jesus first reply is "It is not for you to know..." - that's humbling.
    - i. Imagine how you'd feel if you had a question about something, logged on to the internet, tapped in your question and you go the reply "That is not for you to know." Or called 411 and got that reply from the automated recording.
      1. You wouldn't like it! You don't want those kinds of limits on your knowledge!
    - ii. Notice that the church has limits placed on it before anything else happens. In this case it is times and seasons, but probably covers more.
      1. How often does the church or Christians begin with an understanding and acceptance of what they don't know and can't know?
      2. What else is it 'not for us to know?' There's an interesting question.
  - d. **Slide5** Jesus second reply gets the conversation back to where it's supposed to be: about the way they are to be limit-LESS: being witnesses to the ends of the earth.
    - i. They will not be spectators, they will be in the center of the action. And they will "Receive power" to carry the task successfully to the end.
      1. They will be made into a powerful people, but it will come upon them from the outside, it will not be already found within.

2. The Holy Spirit of God will arrive and empower of His own volition and in own timing.
- ii. They are empowered to be 'witnesses.' The Greek word usually meant a legal or historical observer or bystander, but Jesus implies that it will mean more to them.
  1. Here's where we see that ALL word. They will be witnesses in Jerusalem, ALL of Judea and Samaria, and to the ENDS of the earth.
  2. They will take what they have heard and seen and share it so thoroughly that no one they meet will be left behind not knowing about the good news of God's new kingdom of grace, forgiveness and peace in Jesus Christ.
3. And then, with his last word "earth" still ringing in their ears, Jesus leaves.
  - a. **Slide6** They are not abandoned, immediately two angelic messengers join them to guide them into their next steps, but instead of getting busy with their new mission they just stand there.
  - b. **Slide7** As you read vss. 9-11 you see a lot of standing and looking and seeing and gazing and looking again.
    - i. Like what deer when they cross a busy road at night.
  - c. The messengers explain that Jesus is out of their sight and will be for awhile.
    - i. This will not be the age of seeing, but believing, discerning, coming together, and doing what Jesus has commanded.
    - ii. Believing will be better than seeing, for seeing alone can be deceiving. We trust our eyes rather than our heart.
    - iii. Until Jesus returns, the church will be 'flying blind' yet also filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be effective witnesses, sharing freely with the world ALL which it has received.
4. How are we to apply this? What does giving it ALL look like?
  - a. Do you go and empty your pockets and bank account, liquidate everything and give it away to the poor?
    - i. Do you give of your time so selflessly you have none you spend for yourself?
    - ii. Do you pour yourself so completely into relationships there's none of you left?
  - b. It may be that your new life will be a radical re-ordering of your priorities, but the end result will never be depletion.
    - i. In all four gospels Jesus says, "whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."
    - ii. Whoever receives ALL, and makes it their mission to give ALL, will at the end of the day still have ALL.
    - iii. Jesus' gift of the Holy Spirit will give you power to pour out God's love into the world with extravagant generosity yet still feel completely full and abundantly provided for.
    - iv. It may not always be seen, but it can always be believed.
  - c. **Slide8** So that means that you can wake up every day and know that, no matter what difficulties and challenges you face, you are filled with Christ's abundance of new life.
    - i. And every person you encounter is someone worthy of receiving ALL the Jesus you have.

- ii. Each day this week, you can have it ALL.
5. Pass out cards with the word "ALL" on them to carry as reminder of the new life you have been given, the power you have received, and the mission you are pursuing.