

A New Beginning

“Living Large”, part 1, Insights from Acts 1:1-11
Pastor Bob Johnson, April 23rd, 2023

The Context:

- **the Author is ...**
- **the Setting is ...**
- **the Outline is ...**

Initial Truths Regarding the Holy Spirit:

1. His Value is ...

(Acts 1:4-8, John 15:5, Galatians 5:25)

2. His Focus is ...

(1 Cor. 12:13, Romans 5:1-5, Galatians 2:20, 2 Cor. 5:17)

3. His Purpose is ...

(Matthew 5:13-16)

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This Week's Discussion Guide

Welcome to our first week of our 10 week study and discussion based on our current Sunday series at GPC called, "Living Large". In this series, we are slowly unpacking the Book of Acts. Each week we will read and reflect on a passage and discuss ways we can apply what we reflect on to our daily lives. Our last week in this small group season (before a summer break) will be the week of Sunday, June 25th.

It is our prayer at GPC for our Sundays and small groups to provide the encouragement we all need to support each other as we desire to grow closer to God and build friendships as part of our vision at GPC to raise up committed Christ followers in a healthy church community.

Getting Started:

Each week, we typically start out with a few lighter questions to get us warmed up :).

As this is our first meeting in this small group season, what can we decide upon as a group to help us all have a positive experience?

What are some things we ought to attempt? What are some things we ought to avoid?

The title of last Sunday's message was "A New Beginning". Speaking of new beginnings, when did you start something new that stretched you? Looking back, if you were to start again, what would you do differently? What are you glad you did the first time?

Last Sunday's message introduced the Book of Acts and highlighted how a helpful title for it is, "The Acts of the Holy Spirit". We have all had different experiences and influences that affect our view of how God's Spirit works. As you look back in years past, how would you describe your understanding of the Holy Spirit? Has your understanding changed over time? If so, explain.

One of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to produce the fruit of the Spirit (which is also the character of Christ) in our lives as described in Galatians 5:22-23. Let's read this list of 9 character qualities and share which one that each of us would like to further develop in the next few months. Regarding this area, is there a specific environment or relationship that exposes the need for more of this particular quality?

When we reflect on this list, we can often focus too much on what our part is in producing this fruit instead of on God's part. What insights into our role in fruit bearing do you see in this quote by Charles Stanley.

"I believe there is a reason Paul listed these virtues and moved on. They aren't given to us as goals to pursue. Why? Because you and I cannot produce fruit. That's not our responsibility. The Holy Spirit is the producer. We are merely the bearers. The fruit of the Spirit was never intended to be a demonstration of our dedication and resolve. It is the evidence of our dependency on and sensitivity to the promptings of the Spirit."

Reviewing and Reflecting on last Sunday's Passage:

Let's read the main passage from last Sunday. (Acts 1:1-11)

After reading this passage and looking back on our notes from Sunday, was there a particular thought, verse or comment that caught your attention, encouraged you, challenged you or raised a question for you?

Digging Deeper:

1. Since God's Spirit is at work in our lives, we want to make sure we are staying in tune with how He wants to work. Let's read the following passages and share how they can help us understand how the Holy Spirit desires to work in our lives.

John 16:12-15
1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11-13
2 Corinthians 3:17-18
Acts 9:31
Romans 8:26-27

Is there one of these verses you feel you need to be more aware of when it comes to understanding the Holy Spirit's guidance in your life?

2. Jesus' last conversation with his disciples before his death was at the Last Supper. Several times during that dinner discussion Jesus talked about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. After reading the following verses, let's identify what the Holy Spirit does for Christ followers and how He facilitates the spread of the Gospel.

John 14:16-17, John 14:25-26, John 15:26-27, John 16:5-15

3. Acts 1:8, was not the first time Jesus had spelled out the mission he was giving his disciples. What insights can be found from the following two passages regarding the mission God desires all Christians to be involved in?

Matthew 9:35-38, Matthew 28:18-20

What role do you see yourself playing in this mission?

4. In Acts 1, we saw how Jesus encouraged his disciples to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Back then and today, waiting well is a challenge but also an opportunity to mature and express our trust in God.

Let's read the following two passages that encourage us to wait well on God:
Isaiah 40:29-31, Lamentations 3:25-26

Where in your life are you being stretched to wait well?
What can help you and the rest of us choose to not run ahead of God?

Wrapping Up:

What is an application from what we read or discussed together that you would like to practice in the coming days? Is there anything that came up from this week's sermon or discussion that you would like prayer for? Is there anything else that you would like to express prayer for?