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## SENT BY GOD | SENT TOGETHER (37)

June 8, 2025

Acts 1:1-11

### PURPOSE

To discover and experience Jesus Christ in our midst  
To cultivate mutually encouraging relationships  
To participate in God's mission to the world

### GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

#### Discussion Question

- Do you have a favorite free NYC activity you like to do in the summer?

### PLEASE OPEN IN PRAYER

### INTRODUCTION

In our passage today, we'll see how Jesus teaches his disciples and sends them to continue furthering "the kingdom of God." This Sunday, we heard from Walter Henegar, who preached on the theme from Acts 1 of being sent together. The book of Acts is the direct sequel to Luke's Gospel, telling readers how Jesus' followers were transformed by their encounters with Jesus and spread the Good News. Our study today will focus on Jesus' final words to his disciples — how he reorients their focus, encourages their faith, and commissions them as witnesses.

### SCRIPTURE READING

#### Acts 1:1-11

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

*<sup>4</sup>And 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; <sup>5</sup>for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*

*<sup>6</sup>So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup>He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. <sup>8</sup>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." <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, <sup>11</sup>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."*

## BIBLE STUDY 1. Looking at the Bible

- From the passage, share with the group some keywords/themes that stood out to you.

### Digging Deeper:

Notice the repetition and contrasting uses of “kingdom” throughout the passage. In verse 3, we see Jesus proving his resurrection and teaching about “the kingdom of God.” Yet, just a couple verses later, the disciples are asking about restoring “the kingdom to Israel” (verse 6). It’s implied that Jesus’ response in verses 7-8 describes a different kingdom, one empowered by the Spirit to be Christ’s witness throughout the world.

The phrase “kingdom of God” is a central theme of Luke’s gospel, describing the new heavens and new earth as well as the immediate presence of God that Jesus’ ministry began. Seyoon Kim writes that in Acts, “the preaching of the kingdom of God was in effect the preaching of Christ Jesus.”

## 2. Looking at Jesus

At Central we believe that all of Scripture points to Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the theological center of the Bible. Every passage not only points to Jesus, but the grand narrative of the Bible also finds its fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus.

- Look at Jesus’ response to the disciples in verses 7-8. How does his response address or leave unaddressed the disciples’ questions in verse 6?

### Digging Deeper:

As Walter Henegar points out, Jesus’ response to the disciples is unexpectedly gracious. He does not berate or condemn them, but rather redirects them. While they ask about their temporal, socio-political kingdom, Jesus points them toward the eternal kingdom of God. Jesus does not give them “the times or seasons” that they asked for, but instead promises them power through the Holy Spirit. This power was not to throw off their Roman oppressors or to restore Jerusalem’s independence; rather, it was to be Jesus’ personal witnesses.

Notice where Jesus commands them to witness in verse 8. His response creates concentric circles that subvert the disciples’ Israel-centric question. While they begin with their own city and country, Jesus commands them to share the Good News with their sworn enemies, both racially and religiously. Remember the reminder in John 4 that “Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.” And, as if that wasn’t radical enough, Jesus commands them to witness “to the ends of the earth.” This “kingdom of God” was not limited to their specific nation or people group but was meant for all people. So as we live in NYC today, what might it look like to be Christ’s witnesses in uncomfortable places? How might we, like the disciples, have an insular view of the gospel? How might sharing the gospel stretch us out of our comfort zone or involve interacting with those who are different from us racially, religiously, or otherwise?

### 3. Looking at our Hearts

- How do we, like the disciples, ask the wrong questions of Jesus? What do the requests or prayers we ask of Jesus reveal about our deeper desires?

#### Digging Deeper:

These “chosen apostles” — who had seen Jesus’ entire ministry, death, and resurrection — still seemed to be missing the point. While Jesus was instructing them about the coming kingdom of God, the disciples were preoccupied with their kingdom of Israel.

Like the disciples in this passage, we often ask things of Jesus without listening to what he has taught us. We treat Jesus like a genie, expecting him to fulfill our wishes without sitting under his wisdom. This can reveal our lack of trust, our missing intimacy, or our ignorance of Jesus’ teaching. None of this is to promote a legalistic relationship with God — where we have to earn his delight through our tireless action — but rather it’s an invitation to sit with our Savior whose heart is “gently and lowly” (Matthew 11:28). Notice how Jesus does not command them to try harder or reset their perspective but instead promises “power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” (verse 8). The disciples’ work is empowered by the Spirit of God, not their own ingenuity or achievement.

Jesus promised that he has come as our Good Shepherd so that we “may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Deep down, do we still believe the serpent’s lie (Genesis 3) that we know what’s best for us more than God knows?

### 4. Looking at our World

- How should we, following Jesus’ teaching and empowered by the Spirit, seek to be Jesus’ witnesses in New York City?

#### Digging Deeper:

This prompt is intended for open-ended discussion.

**SHARING** Share your prayer requests, thoughts, hopes and fears for the coming week, and as you do consider how this passage might give light to what you are sharing.

**KINGDOM** Pray that we would see ourselves called by God.

**PRAYER** Include other prayer requests.

**SENDING** God’s word is a lamp to our feet. Christ’s teachings are a light to our path. May God’s word take root in our lives. May Christ’s love nourish and sustain us. Amen.