

THE ONGOING WORK OF CHRIST

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Acts 1:1-5

1. Here we find Luke referencing the former account that he had made.
2. He was referring to what we call the “Gospel According to Luke.”
3. That account focused on all that Jesus began to do and teach.
4. In other words Jesus’ earthly ministry, sacrificial death, victorious resurrection, and ascension constituted a beginning; which implies that there would a continuation and a completion.
5. The book of Acts is a record of what Jesus continued to do and teach through the Apostles and the early church.
6. We read the Gospels and sometimes say, “How wonderful it would have been to be alive and present during the earthly ministry of Jesus.”
7. Or we read the book of Acts and pine for the days when the church was vibrant and victorious in spite of obstacles and sometimes fierce opposition.
8. In some parts of the world new chapters are being written related to the work that the Holy Spirit, the Lord of the Harvest, is doing.
9. It is my belief that individually and collectively we could be seeing great things taking place in our local churches, but for that to happen some things need to change.

I. We need to understand the potential that we represent.

A. What Jesus began to do and teach and what He continued to do and teach is what He wants to continue to do and teach.

B. If there is a problem it is with us and not Him.

C. Notice the following.

1. Jesus stated that His power to do was limited until He completed His earthly ministry. Luke 12:49-53

a. “I have come to cast fire on the earth; (referring to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit) and how I wish it were already kindled!”

b. **“But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed (straitened, constrained, limited) I am until it is accomplished.”**

NOTE: On the Day of Pentecost Jesus multiplied His ministry by filling about 120 believers with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ.

2. Jesus stated that it was advantageous to the Apostles that He go away.

John 16:7-8

"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. 8

"And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; 11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged."

3. Jesus stated that those who believed in Him would take part in the greater work that He would continue to do and teach. John 14:12-14

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. 13

"Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it."

II. We need to understand that we constitute the body of Christ.

A. Every true believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

B. Every true believer has been given at least one spiritual gift. 1 Peter 4:10

"As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

C. Every true believer has been empowered and gifted to accomplish the ministry and activities Jesus wants to continue to do through them. 1 Corinthians 12:1-7

NOTE: "But One and the same Spirit (the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ) works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills." I Corinthians 12:11

D. Every true believer has both a corporate and individual responsibility.

1 Corinthians 12:27

"Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it."

III. We need to understand that we must function as a body if we are going to continue to do and teach what Jesus wants to do and teach through us.

A. The church, the body of Christ, is healthy to the degree that each individual member functions as God intended. Ephesians 4:11-16

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; **15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.**

B. Paul emphasized this truth a little differently in Romans 12:1-8.

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. 3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. 4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not

have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

APPLICATION

1. Every individual Christian should be writing a chapter about what Jesus is continuing to do and teach through them.
2. Every church should be writing a book about what Jesus is continuing to do and teach through it.
3. Each of us must honestly ask ourselves, “What is Jesus Christ doing and teaching through me, and what am I contributing to the doing and teaching ministry of my church?”
4. Just because the wider church in America is becoming increasingly irrelevant does not mean that you and I and our church have to be irrelevant as well.
5. Jesus Christ wants you and me to be a part of the “greater works” He is continuing to do through His Spirit-filled body, the Church.
6. Let me suggest a prayer we might consider praying, “Lord Jesus, I do not want to be left out. Fill me with your Spirit and empower me to both do and teach the things You want done and taught through me within my sphere of influence, May I be all that you want me to be individually that my church might be all that you want it to be corporately.”