



THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"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."

- Acts 1:8

Have you ever missed the point of something? When I was about 5, I went to Disneyland for the first time. After the trip, my mom asked what my favorite part was, expecting me to say a ride, meeting one of the characters, or any of the other magical moments that we experienced in the happiest place on earth. My response? The banners. Apparently, I really loved the flags that depicted Mickey and his friends that decorated the streets of Anaheim outside of the park! I had just had a "magical" experience, but I was focused on something much less important.

When it comes to spiritual matters, oftentimes we have an equally short-sited perspective. Even the disciples who were able to be first-hand witnesses didn't always understand the point of Jesus' mission! In Acts 1:6, they ask again, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus had already told them that his kingdom is not of this world, but they were still waiting for Him to usher in an earthly kingdom, even after the resurrection!

And yet, through the disciples repeated lack of understanding, Jesus continues his ever-patient teaching and guidance by responding, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority" (Acts 1:7). He reminds them of God's authority and that His mission is not to overthrow the Romans. Despite their frequent incompetence, Jesus goes on to explain their part in His plan to save the world. In verse 8 he says, "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." Even though these disciples have spent years following Jesus and still don't understand His plans, even though they regularly miss the point of his parables, even though some of them still doubt his power after he ROSE FROM THE DEAD, Jesus still has a part for them in his divine mission!

I find this reassuring because I relate to the disciples on many levels. My guess is that you do too. I often have my own ideas about how God should be working, instead of trusting God's plan. Fortunately, despite all of the disciples' (and our) shortcomings, Jesus still has an important role for them (us) to play in his kingdom! They get to be the witnesses that document and share his message of salvation for generations to come! And we have the opportunity to be a part of this mission as well.

Discussion/ Journal Questions:

1. What "banners" or distractions steal our focus away from the "magic kingdom" or God's mission?
2. How do you see God using you in His mission to witness to the world and bring his message of salvation to others?

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank you for sending your Son to accomplish the mission that we could not. When we lose sight of that mission, remind us that you are in control and will guide us to the correct path. Amen.