

## TOGETHER REACHING THE NATIONS

### Acts 1:8

**Intro.** What is the primary passion of our church? Is it “satisfying the saints” or “looking for the lost?” What evidence can we point to that would indicate that our passion and purpose is that of Jesus who indicated that He came to seek and save the lost? Do you believe that our church can actually participate in something as large as the reaching of the nations? We have been guilty of thinking too small when it comes to the church.

#### **1. Jesus alone can determine the scope of our ministry. (Acts 1:8)**

Previously we have looked at the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 and the restatement of that mission in the Acts 1:8 mandate.

Do you remember the immediate context of the Acts 1:8 mandate? Jesus, the resurrected King had just appeared to the disciples giving them many convincing proofs concerning the resurrection and teaching them about the priority of His kingdom (1:3). Pretty impressive stuff! If you had been among them, what would your reaction have been? Sad to say, theirs was a little myopic. Look at verse 6. They want to know if it is time for the kingdom to be restored to Israel? They are still thinking about political independence and the restoration of the Jewish state.

Are we sometimes equally myopic? Seeking a church for what it offers us rather than for its mission passion and strategy. Are we more interested in our kind of music and times for worship that are convenient to us than in reaching the lost?

Good news is that verse 6 seems to be the final vestige of this myopic view of the kingdom. The early disciples gave themselves wholeheartedly to the proclamation of this kingdom. They had to overcome personal prejudice to take this message beyond Jerusalem and the Jewish people. But by the grace of God they were able to make the leap and turn the world upside down.

The four quadrants of the Acts 1:8 imperative must be addressed simultaneously by our church.

#### **2. The pattern displayed in Acts illustrates the global mission.**

a. It all begins with Pentecost.

Luke tells us that devout men from every nation under heaven were gathered in Jerusalem (2:5). Luke tells us that each one heard in his own native language. However, we describe the miracle the point is clear, God’s heartbeat is for every tribe, tongue, and nation to know of Him as their rightful King. The church was birthed with this as its DNA.

b. The book of Acts confirms it. Acts 1:8 actually outlines this book and we are privileged to watch as the Holy Spirit directs and moves the early believers to embrace the goal of global witness.

- c. The local church is at the heart of global expansion. The church at Antioch (Acts 11:19-30 and 13:1-3) is at the heart of this global explosion of the gospel. Read 13:3. This simple verse hardly does justice to the world changing strategy that follows--the beginning of the missionary strategy of sending out the called to evangelize the nations.
- d. A four-fold strategy emerges. We must pray, send, go, and give.

### **3. The scope of the task mandates cooperation.**

No single church, working alone, can reach its own local community; much less advance the kingdom to the ends of the earth. When we work cooperatively our strength is multiplied and magnified.

Let's take one example of cooperation in the first century church. It begins in Antioch, the church at which we have been looking. A prophet named Agabus tells the church of a severe famine which has already impacted Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30). The immediate response of the believers in Antioch was to send an offering in relief of the brothers living in Judea. The offering for the saints in Jerusalem remained a focus of Paul's ministry for nearly a decade. Read 1 Cor. 16:1, 2 Cor. 8:3-4, and 9:3. When we read of Paul's travel plans in Romans 15:25-26 we discover that this cooperative offering was a grand success.

(You can illustrate this with cooperative partnerships your church has with other churches for the reaching of the world. Explain how this partnership is funded.)

Cooperation is a critical component of the church's strategy for fulfilling the Acts 1:8 mandate. We can accomplish little at the local or the global level without cooperation. But with cooperation we can finish the task in our generation.