**Empowered to Bear Witness (Acts 1:4-8)**

 God empowers us with the Holy Spirit so that we can be witnesses of Christ. During His baptism, Jesus saw that the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and rested on Him. After spending time in the desert, our Lord ministered by the Holy Spirit’s power. When He rose from the dead, He appeared to His disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit – as the Father has sent me, I also send you.” (John 20) Today, we’re going to be speaking about two important spiritual realities: first, about receiving power (from the Holy Spirit), and second, about being a witness (to Christ). God empowers us with the Holy Spirit so that we can be witnesses of Christ.

 God fills us with the Holy Spirit so we have the power to accomplish His works in this world. The apostles were ordinary people. They all came from different families and they each had different personalities. However, they all lacked one important aspect in their lives - the power to cause people to understand the message of Jesus’ supernatural salvation.

 For example, when we want to light a bonfire, we need a few things to light the fire and to keep it lit. We need something to light, a means by which to light it, and a way to strengthen the fire and not let it die. If we consider a human being as the substance to be lit, and the Holy Spirit and the Word of God as the means by which the person will repent of their rebellion against God and be filled with the light of Jesus’ salvation, then the Holy Spirit would be our Sustainer, so the we can bear witness to Christ effectively with words or deeds, with a faith that is full of trust. For us, it is important to always ask for the Holy Spirit in whatever we do. The Apostle Paul tells us to pray ceaselessly. We are called to ask for the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish God’s will, thereby living a life pleasing to God.

 Jesus, however, did not only say that the apostles would be baptized in the Holy Spirit; He also said that by being filled with the Holy Spirit, we would become His witnesses in all situations. The disciples were interested in their own local political liberation, but Jesus redirected their focus by His call to bear witness.

 Today, it is not only important reach out, but also to realize that God has called us His disciples to be a witness everywhere. Jerusalem was a dangerous place for the disciples to be witnesses and Samaria was a difficult assignment because of the hazards of a foreign hostile country and the dangers of travel. But the Lord mentioned those lands to prove the Holy Spirit’s power over any hindrance to evangelism. When we speak in difficult situations, we can bear fruit by the Spirit’s Power, whether people are converted or physically healed. God empowers us with the Holy Spirit so that we can be witnesses of Christ.

 May the Lord Bless You All. Amen.