

Union Methodist Church

Sermon Outline: **The Acts of the Holy Spirit, Part 9: Led to Do Greater Works II**

August 13th, 2023. Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **Acts 9:1-20; Matthew 14:13-32**

1. **Recall: Called To Great Works by Christ [the Anointed] Jesus.**

- **Jesus's Promise**

- "Very truly, I tell you, **the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.** 13I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son." John 14:2-13 NRSV

- **The Means**

- **The Holy Spirit - the Anointing**

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 NRSV

- **The Name of Jesus**

Jesus said, **"I will do whatever you ask in my name,** so that the Father may be glorified in the Son." John 14: 13 NRSV

2. **Being a Disciple (and Apprentice) of Jesus: Listen, Observe, Do**

As disciples (followers) of Christ, we must become his apprentices if we are to be able to fulfill the call to do what he did and greater works than that.

"Whoever says, "I abide in him," ought to walk just as he walked."

1 John 2:6 NRSV

In other words, a Christian must walk and live in the way Jesus did. We are to imitate Christ. As we do that, those we introduce to Christ can see Christ in us and imitate us as well. As Paul told the Corinthian church,

"Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." 1 Corinthians 11:1 NRSV

How can we imitate Christ? At least three steps are necessary:

- **Listen**

We must listen to everything Jesus said and taught. Where do we find that? In the scriptures

- **Observe**

We must be close observers of everything Jesus did. That means studying what he did and how he did those things.

- **Do**

We must act as Jesus did if we are to get the results he got.

There are many things Jesus taught and did. Examples include loving us, forgiving us, suffering for us, being humble, etc. The list is a long one. But today I want to focus on what he did.

The Works of Jesus (What he did)

Jesus did and achieved many things, but let's consider three of them today.

- **Overcoming human weakness and sin through God's Power**

"He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth."
23When he was abused, he did not return abuse;
when he suffered, he did not threaten;
but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. "
1 Peter 2:21-22 NRSV

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. " Hebrews 4:15-15 NRSV

- **Overcome human challenges with God's Power**

Jesus did not run away from challenges. For instance, in Matthew 14, when faced with a crowd who needed to be fed, he met the challenge with bold faith and action.

15When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into

the villages and buy food for themselves." **16 Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." 17 They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." 18 And he said, "Bring them here to me.**

19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. 20 And all ate and were filled... " Mathew 14:15-21 NRSV

Jesus' response was

- A response of faith
- Using what he had available to him
- Dependence on the power of God

○ **Destroying the works of the devil**

"The Son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil." 1 John 3:8b

What are the works of the devil? Holding people in bondage to sin, disobedience to God, blind to the gospel and salvation in Christ, etc.

3. **Jesus Walking on Water**

Our example of the day is Jesus walking on water in Matthew 14.

A few observations:

○ **What Preceded Jesus Walking on Water**

Prayer Lifestyle, Focus, Dependence on the Holy Spirit

In Matthew 14, we read about the cruel killing of John the Baptist, who was Jesus' cousin. How did Jesus' react to the news?

"His [John's] disciples came and took the body and buried it; then they went and told Jesus. **13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself.** But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. **14 When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick."**

Jesus responded by

- Withdrawing to a quiet place by himself
This was a prayer response - we know that Jesus often withdrew to quiet places to pray.
- With focus on his calling and purpose
- With compassion on those in need, and healing the sick

- **Recharging after great miracle**

It is notable what Jesus did immediately after the feeding of the 5,000.

“Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23And **after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone ... early in the morning he came walking toward them [the disciples] on the sea”**

Matthew 14:22-23 NRSV

- **Led by the Spirit of God**

It seems clear that Jesus only walked on the water at the direction of God the Father - direction he received during that night of prayer. As he himself said

“Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. 20The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing; and he will show him greater works than these, so that you will be astonished.” John 5:19-20 NRSV

- **Faith and Fear in Action**

“Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. **27But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”** Matthew 14:25-7 NIV

Jesus was walking on the water in faith, held up by God’s power.

The disciples were terrified but we see the classic God response to fear, in this case, “Take courage!, It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

- **Responding to the Word is Faith, which activates God's power**
28 "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."
29 "Come," he said.
Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.
- **Doubt Stops God's Power**
 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"
 31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. **"You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"**

4. Doing the Works of Jesus: Listen, Observe, Do

Living a life of faith and victory over sin, sickness, lack, and every form of human weakness and challenge takes courage. We must endeavor to listen to Jesus, closely observe how Jesus lived and operated, and do as Jesus did. In so doing we shall obtain the results that Jesus obtained.

Let's remember that Jesus is our High Priest who is praying for us and has made every provision for our success in our faith walk with Him.

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. **16 Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**" Hebrews 4:15-16 NRSV

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, **let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.** For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." Hebrews 12:1-3 NIV