

Union Methodist Church

Sermon Outline: **The Acts of the Holy Spirit, Part 8: Led to Do Greater Works**

August 6th, 2023. Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **Acts 8:26-40; Matthew 14:13-21**

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

• **Our Commission & Calling**

- "And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.** And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20 NRSV

- "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**

Jesus himself said he did what he did because of the anointing on him:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me

to proclaim release to the captives

and recovery of sight to the blind,

to let the oppressed go free,

to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Luke 4:18-19 NRSV

The Holy Spirit has been sent by God our Father, to help us fulfil our commission and calling. Jesus emphasized to the early disciples and apostles the importance of the Holy Spirit.

"Jesus said to them again, **"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."** **22When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit"** John 20:21-22 NRSV

“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

The early apostles and disciples exercised their faith in the name of Jesus and saw great things happen.

“By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.” Acts 3:16 NIV

2. **Christ Jesus, Our Model & Example: His Works and How He Did Them**

Matthew 14 - two great examples of the works of Jesus and how he did them.

- **Context: the killing of John the Baptist - Matthew 14:1-12**

In these first 12 verses of Matthew, the killing of John the Baptist is narrated. It is important to recall that John was Jesus’ cousin. Mary and Elizabeth (John’s mother) were cousins. What was Jesus’ reaction to the news?

“His [John’s] disciples came and took the body and buried it; then they went and told Jesus. **13Now 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. **14When 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

o **Facing Challenges and Leveraging God's Power**

Having responded with prayer, focus, compassion, and ministry to those in need, Jesus faced another challenge – how to feed the thousands who had come to him.

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

19Then 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.** **20And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.** **21And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children."** 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

o **A Life of Prayer - Dependence on the Holy Spirit**

It is notable what Jesus did immediately after this great manifestation of the power of God:

"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"** Matthew 14:22-23 NRSV

A life of prayer is indispensable if we are to experience the power of the Holy Spirit and do the great works that God has in mind for us to do.

In this case, after a night of prayer by himself, verse 25 says, "early in the morning he came walking toward them [the disciples] on the sea"

3. Doing the Works of Jesus: Philip's Example

In our Acts 8 reading, we see Philip doing the works of Christ and fulfilling the Great Commission given by Jesus.

- **Great Manifestation of God's Power**

Philip did great works similar to what Jesus did:

"Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. 6When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. 7For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed."

In the rest of Acts 8, we get some clues about how Philip achieved this.

- **Led Every Step of the Way**

Philip had a close walk with God and was led every step of the way in his ministry.

- 26Now **an angel of the Lord said to Philip**, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." **27So he started out.,.**
- **29The Spirit told Philip**, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."
30Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.
31"How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.
- 39When they came up out of the water, **the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away**, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. 40Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

- **A Life of Prayer, Listening to the Lord, and Obedience**

We see in the life of Philip what Jesus also did and achieved. They achieved similar results. Philips did the works of Jesus. So can we, if we live the way Jesus did and do what Jesus did.