

# The Promise

Joseph Carty / General

Holy Spirit / Holy Spirit / Acts 1:4–8

This Sermon describes the original promise of the Holy Spirit to the first century disciples and how it still applies to us today.

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## › 258 – Baptize Us Anew

We live in an era of unkept promises. Nations sign important treaties and then break them at will. And many couples show little regard for their wedding vows. In this kind of society, we who are God's people should be known for keeping our promises

Booker T. Washington describes meeting an ex-slave from Virginia in his book Up From Slavery : "I found that this man had made a contract with his master, two or three years previous to the Emancipation Proclamation, to the effect that the slave was to be permitted to buy himself, by paying so much per year for his body; and while he was paying for himself, he was to be permitted to labor where and for whom he pleased.

"Finding that he could secure better wages in Ohio, he went there. When freedom came, he was still in debt to his master some three hundred dollars.

Notwithstanding that the Emancipation Proclamation freed him from any obligation to his master, this black man walked the greater portion of the distance back to where his old master lived in Virginia, and placed the last dollar, with interest, in his hands.

In talking to me about this, the man told me that he knew that he did not have to pay his debt, but that he had given his word to his master, and his word he had never broken. He felt that he could not enjoy his freedom till he had fulfilled his promise."

- Repeatedly Jesus
  - gave special promise.

- Picture the scene:
  - Jesus leaving
  - last conversation
  - Bethany

#### Acts 1:4–5 ESV

And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said,

“you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

- Twice Luke records
  - same story:
- End of Luke
- Beginning of Acts
  - Ties the books
  - Ties the purpose
    - Christian Church.

#### Luke 24:49 ESV

And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

- At this point,
  - they were a mere
    - 10 days away
      - from Pentecost.
  - the fulfillment of promise.
- We are getting
  - ahead of ourselves.

### Repeatedly Promised

- If we rewind a little,
  - we see,
    - it was continually
      - promised
        - throughout ministry.

### Beginning

#### Matthew 3:11 ESV

“I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am

not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

## Final Week

- John 13-17 is one convo.
- Beginning of chapter
  - Jesus says He is going away
    - But he gives them
      - final promise:

### John 14:15–17 ESV

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,

even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

- Jesus is leaving
  - but he promises
    - something better.

### John 16:7 ESV

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

- Why did Jesus
  - have to leave
    - for the promise
      - of the Spirit to come?

- John explains:

### John 7:39 ESV

Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

- After Jesus,
  - had be received in heaven
    - sacrifice accepted
      - inaugurated as
        - King of kings
        - Lord of lords

- His first,
  - inaugural edict
    - give the Spirit
      - to my disciples.
- Once Jesus is
  - “with the Father”
    - He sends the Spirit.

#### John 15:26 ESV

“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

- What did Jesus
  - say the indwelling Spirit
    - would do for them?
- Jesus knew they
  - still had lots of
    - growth.

#### John 16:12–13 ESV

“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...

- Jesus wanted
  - to teach them more.
- But he was passing
  - this job on to the Spirit.

#### John 14:26 ESV

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

### To Whom Is This Promised?

- We know Jesus
  - gave this promise
    - to the disciples.
- But what about
  - use today?
- Does His promise still stand?

- To whom is the promise given?

**Acts 2:38–39 ESV**

And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

## **Is it for us today?**

**Galatians 3:14 ESV**

so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

- But let’s
  - go back
    - to the final
    - conversation.

## **The Ascension**

- Back at ascension:
- Right before he leaves
  - he reiterates
  - the promise:

**Acts 1:4–5 ESV**

And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me;

for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

- Most powerful promise
  - given to humanity.
- Yet,
  - disciples didn’t get it.

## **Are you ready for the promise?**

**Acts 1:6–7 ESV**

So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord,

will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

- Jesus trying
  - to explain
    - where He is going
    - they will stay
    - Holy Spirit come
    - Beginning of Gospel
      - to the whole world.
- They missed it.
  - they were not ready.
- I see a parallel

## Parallel Movements

- Disciples were
  - standing on the brink
    - world changing experience.
- Immanently:
  - Outpouring of early rain
  - Spirit given
  - Gospel to the world
  - Beginning of Christianity
- Similarly,
  - we stand
    - precipice of
      - world changing experience.
- Immanently:
  - Outpouring of latter rain
  - Spirit given
  - Gospel to the world
  - End of Christianity
    - and the world!
- Yet, sadly,
  - Disciples missed mark
    - confused
    - focused wrong way
- They still thought

- earthly kingship
- overthrow Romans
- reinstate Jewish empire
- Essentially,
  - they were
    - focused on this world!
- Similarly,
- Christians today,
  - stand in the shadow
    - greatest promise
      - ever given.
- Are we prepared?
  - Or distracted?
- Just look at these promises:

#### Malachi 4:5 ESV

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

- What will happen?
  - What, who
    - Elijah?
- He was a prophet
  - special message
    - of preparation.
- What is this message
  - what prepares God’s people
    - for "great and awesome day"?

#### Joel 2:28–31 ESV

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

“And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke.

The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to

blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

- Holy Spirit Power
  - Given to God's people
    - to finish Gospel message

#### Revelation 18:1 ESV

After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory.

- Before Christ comes
  - the earth is illuminated
    - truth and power
      - of the Holy Spirit.

### Unclaimed Promises

- The biggest problem
  - we face as believers
    - promise left unclaimed.

An aged Indian, half naked and famished, wandered into one of our Western settlements, begging for food to keep him from starving. While eagerly devouring the bread bestowed by the hand of charity, a brightly colored ribbon, from which was suspended a small dirty pouch, was seen around his neck. On being questioned, he said it was a charm given him in his younger days; and opening it, displayed a faded, greasy paper, which he handed to the investigator for inspection. It proved to be a regular discharge from the Federal Army, entitling him to a pension for life and signed by General Washington Himself. (*Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations* - 115).

- Back to disciples
  - what next?

### What are we supposed to do with this indwelling power?

- What does
  - Spirit do for
    - final message?



- What did it do
  - for disciples?

#### Acts 1:8 ESV

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.”

- He gives power
  - to give to proclaim
    - everlasting gospel
      - to entire world
        - rapidly
        - powerfully.
- How are we
  - going to finish
    - the work?
      - 3ABN?
      - satellites?
      - Ad World Rad?
      - GodPod?
- We are losing ground...
- Solution:
  - supernatural power
    - of the spirit.
- Back to disciples:
- What is
  - last thing
    - that happens?

## Second Coming

#### Acts 1:9–11 ESV

And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes,

and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

- Last experience for them:
  - Jesus leaving.
- Last experience for us:
  - Jesus returning!
- We stand on the brink
  - of eternity.
- The promise is
  - for us and our Children.
- Jesus wants
  - to finish the work.
- He wants to
  - come back.
- Will you claim
  - that promise
    - with me today?

In the stillness of the early afternoon Thursday, Grace Eckart sat at the Yuba County War Memorial, surrounded by family members and waiting eagerly for a man she'd never met.

But when that man, Harold Huggins of Albany, Ill., arrived, the two embraced in a long hug, united by the memory of a soldier who died in World War II.

Some would call Thursday's reunion between Huggins and Eckart "divine guidance." Huggins simply calls it a mission accomplished. Eckart calls it an answered prayer.

Thursday's gathering in front of the war memorial marked the fulfillment of a 57-year-old promise Huggins made to Eckart's brother, Mack McClain, during World War II.

Huggins, now 79 and living in Albany, Ill., said he clearly remembers the day when McClain approached him in Italy shortly before the battle at Anzio Beach and handed him some personal photographs and the web belt he was wearing.

McClain asked Huggins to deliver the items to his sister, Grace Jennings and her daughter, June.

"I'm not going to make it this time, but you will," McClain told his buddy.

Huggins said despite his friend's premonition, he was still shocked the next morning when he learned of McClain's death during the night.

McClain was one of 10 enlisted men killed the night of April 14, 1944, by German mortars and artillery shells. Huggins put McClain's personal items in a 50-caliber ammunition box and carried it with him in his vehicle throughout the rest of the war.

When he returned to his hometown of Albany, Huggins placed the items, including one of the last pictures taken of McClain at a hospital in Naples, Italy, in a glass display case in his basement.

In 1959, when Huggins and his family traveled to California for a vacation, they searched unsuccessfully for Jennings, who by that time had divorced and was now going by the last name of Eckart.

Huggins said he never forgot about McClain or the promise he made on that dusty road in Italy. In May, Huggins was encouraged by his daughter, Marlene Stone, to use the Internet to continue his search.

"I thought it was really a long shot," Stone said. "It was kind of like a needle in the haystack."

Stone said she tried a variety of Web sites, even looking at local cemetery records. On a whim, she decided to look at the Web site for the Yuba-Sutter war memorials and found McClain was listed on the memorial in Marysville.

She e-mailed the contact name on the Web page and was put in touch with Dan Logue, the driving force behind the two memorials, and ironically, the man who had sponsored McClain's name for the memorial. Logue then picked up the search locally for McClain's sister. A story about Huggins' search ran in the Appeal-Democrat May 29.

Eckart said she remembered reading the article and saying aloud, "That's me."

Logue and the Yuba-Sutter Veterans Memorial Committee helped raise the funds to bring Huggins and his family nearly 2,000 miles on a Amtrak train to deliver McClain's personal items to Eckart after 57 years.

When Huggins and Eckart finally met, he hugged her and said, "This is from Mac."

Eckart was accompanied by her sister Edna McClain Winsett of Jamestown, who was also very close to McClain.

The sisters sat on either side of Huggins as he shared a few of the items he came to deliver, including an 8x10 photograph of McClain in his uniform.

Winsett fought back tears as she looked at the pictures. Nearly 40 years ago, Winsett lost most of her personal items in a fire, and she said it was a true blessing to have new pictures of her brother..

Huggins said he wanted to share the circumstances of McClain's death with the family in private.

"Wouldn't Mack be proud of this day," Huggins said as McCain's family gathered around him for photographs.

"He's with us today, not in body, but he's here."

Huggins said he's kept a copy of McClain's photograph hung in his basement and every day when he goes downstairs he says "Good morning, Mack." Huggins also said he wrote a letter explaining his promise and mission and put it with McClain's personal items so that if he ever died, the person who found the items would know to carry on his search.

But now, the search is over. His mission is completed, and an entire family is thankful for his perseverance.

Eckart, who was a motherly figure for McClain, said in the years after the war, she and her sister would always ask veterans if they had known a Mack McClain, but none of them had.

"We have prayed ever since my brother was killed that we would meet someone who knew him," she said.

"This is something I never expected. When it comes down to it, it's really just a small world."

- Jesus final promise
  - let us keep our side
  - of the bargain.

### Next Sermon:

Preparation for the promise of the Spirit.

- The disciples were
  - somewhat unconverted.
- Yet, God did something in them
  - in only 50 days.
- Can we experience
  - the same transformation?