

Acts 1:1-14

Life Built Better Builds a Mission

05/28/17

Does anything leave us speechless anymore? Everything seems to get commentary. We are a society that likes to talk about everything. Everyone has an opinion and many people that their opinion ought to be heard because it is just as valid as anyone else opinion. We live in a time where that is possible. In a time where your voice, or your words or your opinion can be transmitted and dispersed almost instantaneously almost anywhere. And many are. And we listen to those voices. Many times we are more interested in the reactions of people to major problems that happen in this world than the actual problems themselves. Political pundits, sports talk radio, new whatever it is spends their time commenting on peoples comments. Remarking on others remarks. What would it take to leave everyone speechless? What would it take to have no words to explain what you just saw or heard.

How about watching a man who was crucified, and then came back to life, who is your friend, and your Lord and your Savior talk to you and then float up into the sky like a balloon higher and higher until he has gone beyond the clouds and you can no longer see him. What do you say after that? Maybe an oo or an ah, but what could you say.

I don't know what the disciples said or didn't say as Jesus was ascending into heaven. Luke says that at Jesus's ascension While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵²Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.... But the ascension. This is a major event in the church. This begins a new chapter. You could say that there is the Old Testament the time until Jesus. Preparing the world for Jesus with prophecies and shadows of the things to come. And then there was the brief period of time that Jesus was on the earth, that is incredibly special, and that we have Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, four books that tell us about events in Jesus' life, but Acts is about the church that exists after Jesus has ascended into heaven. And this is what the church is built on: You are my witnesses. Tell people about me. They were not supposed to remain speechless.

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The portion of our lesson that we want to focus on today is verses 5-9

On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. **5** For John baptized with[a] water, but in a few days you will be baptized with[b] the Holy Spirit.”

6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

7 He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

For the past 6 weeks we have been talking about a life built better. We have a better life because of Jesus. That has been the entire message hasn't it? Life built better breaks death, because on Easter Sunday Jesus broke death. He shattered it, he destroyed it beyond repair. He rose from the dead and so will you. You no longer have to be afraid of the wages of your sins because Jesus has paid the penalty that you deserve. Death is broken.

Life Built better breaks unbelief, and it break doubt, because just as Jesus truly rose from the dead so will you. Just as he has conquered sin and death, so will you. Just as he is in heaven forever so will you be too. That's what easter means, the worst that this world can throw at us, fear, doubt, and pain are all destroyed by Easter. We have nothing to fear. Because God is with us. We have nothing to doubt, because God has shown how great and how awesome his love for us is. And then we talked about how life built better builds, it builds guidance from the Lord that shows us the way to go, It builds a future that sees beyond the evil in this world and looks to what we have in story, it builds love that sees God for who he really is not someone that we need to convince to love us, but as someone who is constantly showing his love to us.

That's special. That's different than anything that you could make up or guess at. That is better than fiction. It's the truth. That God so loved the world that he sent his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall have eternal life. This is the Gospel. This is the good news. If knowing that,

knowing that you have nothing to fear because he takes care of you, no debt to pay because he has paid for it, no regretful action that is not covered by the blood of Jesus- If you know that your God loves you and wants you to be in eternal paradise forever not because of what you do or don't do but because of what he did and that doesn't make you feel good. I don't know what will. This is the promise that our God has for us. This is why the story of Easter is the high point of our church year. This is why we worship on Sunday, a little easter Sunday every week. It's because this is what our church is all about.

Those disciples saw that first hand. They were taught by Jesus. They watched him suffer. They watched him die. They talked with him and ate with him after he rose from the dead. They had the scriptures explained to them by Jesus himself. And Jesus' message was, don't keep this to yourself. You will be my witnesses. Tell the world what you have seen. They had a better life. They had a better eternity because of Jesus. They were going to be in heaven because they had faith in Jesus. Because they knew Jesus. And they knew what Jesus did meant for their life and eternal life.

So they testified about that.

Now to us. What does it really mean. If you have the secret to eternal life. If you have the peace that passes understanding. If you have the Joy Joy Joy down in your heart and your so happy! Why do we keep it to ourself. Why do we put our own discomfort, or embarrassment, or awkwardness, in front of the ever lasting salvation of those people in this world that we say we love. And we do.

We keep our mouth shut when people are advocating ideas that are clearly against what the Bible teaches. Because well, we are afraid of what people will think of us. We remain silent when friends or family members decide to start living a life that is not according to what he commands. We stop encouraging, because it is uncomfortable. We talk about faith as a personal thing. We fall into the trap of society thinking well you know what ever gets them through the day is alright for them I guess. We avoid thinking about the truth that God teaches, that whoever does not believe will be condemned. Because that is heartbreaking. That is painful. That does not feel good. Those who do not know about Jesus, those who do not believe in Jesus as their Savior, will not be in heaven but will be condemned. Somehow we convince ourselves that we are being kind by

not confronting them. Somehow we convince ourselves that we are being loving by not warning them what the Bible says about those who reject Jesus.

Knowing what the Bible says is a blessing, it builds a better life for us, but it also builds a mission for us to tell this news to others. Because others need to know. Everyone needs to know. Everyone spends an eternity somewhere... and the only thing that decides where that where is, is faith in our Savior. And the only thing that creates faith is the word of God. Its not a perfectly laid out logical argument that makes someone believe in Jesus. It's not your incredible intellect that is able to answer every probing question that someone has about the Bible. It is the simple message that the Bible has for all people, all are sinners, all sin is punished by death, Jesus was punished with death for all our sin. Or "The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus." A gift that was given to you and a gift that you can give to others.

This was the mission of the disciples, and to all of us who live after Jesus. You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and to the ends of the earth. There is not a soul that doesn't need to hear this message. It doesn't matter what they look like, it doesn't matter what sin they are caught in, it doesn't matter how anti-Christian we think someone is going to be. Be Christ's witness. That is our mission.

It just so happens that this weekend is memorial day. A day when we honor all of the brave women and men who have fought for our country and for the safety and freedoms that we have. All those men and women who have died for this country died in service. They served their country, and by serving their country they served you who are members of this country. Allowing you to have the rights, and freedoms, and advantages that you receive because you are here today.

As Christians we serve the Lord. And many people throughout the history of this world have suffered and died because they believed this Gospel message. Because they knew that they were not serving themselves, but they were serving their God. They were carrying out this mission given to the disciples to be witnesses to the ends of the earth. That mission has not gone away. It is the same mission that we have here at GVELC in the year 2017. It is the question that we as a church body are trying to answer in our group meetings. How are we going to serve the Lord

here. How are we going to carry out the mission to be his witnesses. How are we going to build up witnesses within this church and give the the gifts and tools to stand firm in the face of the battle that this world will bring against them. And how are we going to witness about the knowledge we know to be true?

That is the mission of the church. To stand up for the Bible. To be his witnesses. To tell what he has done. To tell what the Bible says. To let people know how much better their life can be with Jesus, not just the life here on earth, but an eternity with God forever in heaven. That is what we need to do. That is our mission. Don't give up on it . Don't give in to it. Don't remain speechless. You have seen what your God has done for you. You know how that love is not just for you but for the entire world. Spread word tell his story. Be his witness. A life built better buds a mission. Amen.