

EQUIPPED FOR SERVICE

TEXT: Luke 24:49

Have you ever been faced with a job you did not feel equipped to do? It is said that only 10% of Christians have the gift of evangelism, that is that they find it easy to witness, and yet we are all called to be witnesses.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus tells us just how important the testimonies of our lives are when He said, ■ "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:14-16 (NKJ) ■ And Paul said in Philippians 2:15 & 16 "That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain." (NKJ)

If we, as Spirit filled believers, expect to see this world we live in impacted for Christ, if we expect to see souls saved and people brought out of spiritual darkness, we must expose them to the "glorious light of the gospel." And God has equipped us to do just that!

Through the power of the Holy Spirit our mission, our calling is possible. "All things are possible" because HE strengthens us. He equips us! Note the *assurances* in the Word of God.

I. WE ARE EQUIPPED TO FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION.

A. The Great Commission is our call to action.

Our command is found in Matt. 28:18-20. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. (NKJ)

It is not a request or an invitation, no options are offered.

B. The emphasis in the command is on "go."

We are asked to "go" those of the world are not expected to "come" on their own. We seek the lost. The lost are not responsible to seek us.

C. The purpose for our going is to teach them about Christ.

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR MOTIVATOR.

A. Through His love in our hearts.

Romans 5:5 "...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

The love of God is contagious, self-denying, self-sacrificing, one that reaches out and burns in the heart of the believer.

B. We are motivated by the Spirit Himself.

■ Someone said, "witnessing is the outflow and overflow of the inflow of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Spirit-filled believer."

C. We are also motivated by the soon return of Christ.

The early church looked for "that blessed hope of his glorious appearing" -- the rapture. It is still our blessed hope! And all the more reason to try and win the lost.

III. WE ARE EQUIPPED WITH POWER TO SUCCEED.

The success of the NT Church was not dependent upon their wealth - they had very little. Nor was it dependent upon social standing - they were outcast. It was not their buildings because they had none. Their success was due to their Pentecostal experience!

A. They had power to witness

■ Ray Hughes said "Prior to Pentecost the disciples were commissioned but not equipped; they were enthusiastic but not power filled; they were zealous but not dynamic. They had been thoroughly taught and inbred with the truth and vision of world needs. They had witnessed the miracles of Jesus. They had seen Him in His resurrected body. They were fired with truth and zeal, but Jesus knew that was not enough. They would need more than knowledge, vision, and enthusiasm. They must have the power of God."

It is this promise of power that assures us that we can do the job.

B. They had divine ability

■ "The Amplified New Testament translates the word *power* in Acts 1:8 as ability, efficiency, and might." (Hughes)

We need divine ability more than ever. Peter's life before and after Pentecost is a great example of this need.

C. The N. T. church was efficient in their service.

■ "The word *power* in Acts 1:8 also means efficiency – peak performance, maximum productivity for time and energy expended.

It is believed that by the end of the first 7 years the church at Jerusalem had at least 25,000 members. How? They had a simple message with incredible power!

D. They had spiritual might.

The outpouring of the Spirit comes with force and strength. It causes believers to be more than conquerors.

■ Romans 8:37-39 tells us, "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
(NKJ)

CONCLUSION

■ At age twelve, Robert Louis Stevenson was looking out into the dark from his upstairs window watching a man light the streetlamps. Stevenson's governess came into the room and asked what he was doing. He replied, "I am watching a man cut holes in the darkness." I see this as a marvelous picture of what our task should be as sharers of God's light - people who are busy cutting holes in the spiritual darkness of our world.