

# *Unstoppable Gospel*





## ***Nothing stops our God. Nothing stops His gospel.***

Don't write off the church.

Some people already have. They say they like Jesus, but there's no point to the church. As far as they're concerned, the church is a failed institution.

I disagree.

The church is far from a lost cause! In reality, the church is unstoppable because the followers of Christ have been given an unstoppable power—the very Spirit of God. Even more, they've been given an unstoppable mission and message.

Come with me on a journey through the exciting early days of the church. We'll discover what made the early church so powerful—so unstoppable. As the Book of Acts opens, we'll see a room full of huddled, scared disciples who were completely powerless and uncertain of the future. But we'll also see these same followers become empowered and effective men and women advancing throughout the world, proclaiming the unstoppable gospel that turned the world upside down.

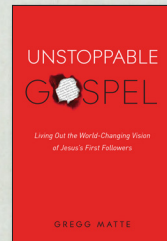
The story of the unstoppable gospel continues today. It is our story as members of the church.

In Christ, we are unstoppable.



*Gregg Matte*

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## **Unstoppable Gospel**

Session 1 ***Unstoppable Mission*** Acts 1:4-8,12-14

Session 2 ***Unstoppable Message*** Acts 2:22-24,32-33,36-38

Session 3 ***Unstoppable Love*** Acts 2:41-47

Session 4 ***Unstoppable Opportunities*** Acts 3:1-10

Session 5 ***Unstoppable Courage*** Acts 4:1-3,8-12,19-20

Session 6 ***Unstoppable Impact*** Acts 17:16-18,22-23,30-31



# *Unstoppable Mission*



*When has something definitely  
been worth the wait?*

**QUESTION 1**

#BSFLunstoppable



*The Holy Spirit empowers us  
to spread the gospel.*



## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

We don't like to wait.

Chalk it up to impatience or maybe it's because we live in a world of instant gratification, but we want what we want when we want it.

- » Two minutes waiting behind another customer at the fast-food drive-thru? Too long.
- » Sixty seconds to heat up food in a microwave? Too long.
- » Fifteen seconds waiting for a movie to stream to your TV? Way too long!

At the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus told His disciples to wait. He was going to give them—and us—an incredible gift: the presence and power of His Holy Spirit. The disciples couldn't have fully appreciated what all that meant, but they waited nonetheless.

When the Holy Spirit came, He empowered Jesus' followers for a mission that was unstoppable. From that single location, their mission spread across the world—and continues today.



# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

## **Acts 1:4-5 (HCSB)**

**<sup>4</sup> While He was together with them, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise. "This," He said, "is what you heard from Me; <sup>5</sup> for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."**

The life of a Christian isn't hard—it's impossible. Following Jesus means:

- » Loving people—even people who hate you.
- » Doing the ethical thing at work even if it means putting your career on the line.
- » Forgiving people who don't deserve to be forgiven.

The One who called us to this impossible life never sugarcoated how difficult it would be. Jesus said: "If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23). He also went on to say, "You will have suffering in this world" (John 16:33).

Jesus, the Son of God, never expected us to live this impossible life in our own power. Jesus Himself lived His life on earth in union with and empowered by God's Holy Spirit. That same Spirit is the secret to the power we need to live and follow Jesus. Living the Christian life is only possible with the power of the Holy Spirit living through us.

In Acts 1:4-5, Jesus reminded His followers they soon would receive the gift He had promised earlier: the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, the Spirit would descend on believers to empower them to preach the gospel. From that moment forward, God's people would be forever changed in how they related with Him.

Apart from the power of the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing. But once we receive His power at salvation, we can do *anything* He calls us to do.

***What do you find difficult about waiting on the Lord?***

## **QUESTION 2**



**Acts 1:6-8 (HCSB)**

**<sup>6</sup> So when they had come together, they asked Him, “Lord, are You restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?” <sup>7</sup> He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by His own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

God sent the Holy Spirit to work through us to continue the work of sharing the gospel. In verse 8, Jesus laid out God’s agenda succinctly. His mandate in this verse laid the foundation for the rest of the Book of Acts, which recounts how the early believers carried out this mission.

Jesus told His followers to remain in Jerusalem and wait because they would soon receive the power the Father had promised (v. 4). When they were filled with the Spirit, they would be His “witnesses” telling what they had experienced with Jesus. How would they accomplish this task? With His power—the power imparted by the Holy Spirit.

The Greek word for power is *dunamis*, from which we get our English words “dynamo,” “dynamite,” and “dynamic.” The Spirit empowers His church to do amazing things. By the power of the Holy Spirit, a tiny handful of believers turned the world upside down as the “gospel earthquake” rumbled from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

***What do these verses teach us about God’s mission?***

**QUESTION 3**



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"Jerusalem ... Judea and Samaria, and ... the ends of the earth." Jesus laid out a deliberate plan of expansion that begins at home and moves outward geographically to include all people. The same Spirit who descended on believers at Pentecost and turned the world upside down for Jesus is alive today in every person who has placed faith in Jesus Christ. He is sending you and me out on a mission. In Acts 1:8, Jesus commissioned us to go—to be His messengers locally, nationally, and globally.

- » We can obey Acts 1:8 by hopping on a jet plane, delivering us to the ends of the earth in a matter of hours.
- » We can carry out Acts 1:8 by sending the good news out to the ends of the earth with just an internet connection.
- » We can fulfill Acts 1:8 in our own neighborhood, because the world is literally coming to our cities. Whenever you go to work, school, the store, or anywhere else in your town, you are likely to hear unfamiliar languages being spoken. We can carry the Lord's message to the ends of the earth in our own neighborhoods.

**The Holy Spirit empowers us to take the gospel to our city, our nation, and the world.**



mission



"I used to ask God to help me.  
Then I asked if I might help Him.  
I ended up by asking Him  
to do His work through me!"

HUDSON TAYLOR

*What are some of the  
benefits of praying  
together as a group?*

### QUESTION 4

## ONE PURPOSE



*Describe the mission Jesus gave to the disciples and to us in your own words.*

*What's your initial reaction to this assignment? Check one.*

- ☐ *I'm in! Where do we start?*
- ☐ *I'm interested but unsure of where and how God could use me.*
- ☐ *I don't know many people who aren't believers.*
- ☐ *I'm still new to following Christ; Someone else could do a better job.*
- ☐ *Other: \_\_\_\_\_*



## Acts 1:12-14 (HCSB)

<sup>12</sup> Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem—a Sabbath day's journey away. <sup>13</sup> When they arrived, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. <sup>14</sup> All these were continually united in prayer, along with the women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers.

What do you do when you find yourself waiting on the next thing God has for you? So many of us just try to stay busy. We fill the waiting with activity. Not these disciples. They went to a single upstairs room and *prayed*. And they didn't just pray for an hour or two. They "were continually united in prayer" (v. 14). They waited and prayed for 10 days, until the day of Pentecost when the promised gift of the Holy Spirit finally arrived.

Let me share what I see in the disciples' 10-day prayer meeting:

- » **Prayer is primary.** For these early believers, prayer was not the first item to open the agenda; it was the main agenda.
- » **Fear can be a great motivator.** For all the disciples knew, the same people who crucified their Lord might come for them as well. It was fear, not piety that drove the early church to its knees. Prayer is your life when you're scared to death.
- » **Prayer unites us.** The disciples "were continually united in prayer." They were single-minded, joined together as one. Why? Because prayer unites us.

When we pray and seek God's will together, He will unify us and keep us focused on our common center: Jesus.

Praying together with a unified mind and purpose says, in effect, "Lord, we want Your power. We want Your plan. We want You to do Your work through us."

Pray—and wait for God to work.



*What common mission can our group pray for together?*

### QUESTION 5



## LIVE IT OUT

Acts 1:8 is our mandate. It's mine, and it's yours.

- » **Accept the mission.** Recognize Jesus has commanded you to be His witness wherever you go and wherever He sends you. It may sound simple, but this acknowledgement shifts how you view your purpose and your circumstances.
- » **Get equipped.** The Holy Spirit is the source of your strength to be the witness God has called you to be. Use a concordance or Bible dictionary to learn more about what Scripture teaches us of the third Person of the Trinity.
- » **Be a friend who will pray.** We're not meant to live out Acts 1:8 on our own; we need friends who will be faithful to pray with and for us. Identify two or three dependable friends and commit to be steadfast in praying for each other.

God's mission is unstoppable—and so is the Spirit He's placed within you. **So, where do you begin? Prayer.**



*My thoughts*