

HERO MAKING

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Acts 1.1-8 | September 9, 2018

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I. Introduction to this Series and Study

This week we begin a six-week series called Hero Making – because it’s one thing to *be* a hero, it’s quite another to be a hero *maker*. We see this tension throughout gospels: Everyone wanted Jesus to be the hero (which in one sense, of course, he was!), but He spent inordinate amounts of time on other people, making *them* the heroes!

This week we engage Acts 1, just before the descent of the Holy Spirit and subsequent birth of the church, where the Risen Jesus introduces a whole new way of thinking to his disciples – *multiplication* thinking.

II. Connecting with One Another

Share about a time when asking the wrong question got you into trouble (extra points if it’s humorous).

III. Study the Text

a. Read Acts 1.1-3.

At the outset of Acts, it’s author, Luke, refers to his “former book” which detailed all Jesus “began to do and teach.” This theme of Jesus continuing to act and teach continues in Acts 2.47, 9.34, 14.3, 16.14, and 18.10.

In Luke 1.1-4, the author of this “two volume set” shares his reason for writing. What do you learn about his research methods? Why is that important?

b. Verse 3 tells us that the Risen Jesus taught his disciples about the Kingdom of God for forty days, similar to Moses on the mountain. How would you explain the “Kingdom of God”?

c. Read Acts 1.4-5.

Similar to Luke 24.49, Jesus instructs his disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. But in Matthew 3.11-17, Luke 1.26-45, John 14.15-27, and 16.12-15 the Holy Spirit is already at work in Jesus’ ministry.

Why then do you think Jesus instructs his closest friends to wait in Jerusalem to receive the Spirit?

d. Read Acts 1.6.

What do you think of the disciples’ question?

- e. John Calvin once commented on their question, saying “There are as many errors in this question as words.” John Stott explains, “The verb, the noun and the adverb of their sentence all betray doctrinal confusion about the kingdom. For the verb *restore* shows that they were expecting a political and territorial kingdom; the noun *Israel* that they were expecting a national kingdom; and the adverbial clause *at this time* that they were expecting its immediate establishment.”

Why are these perspectives problematic?

How have you seen Christians make these three same mistakes today? Put in other words, how can we envision the Kingdom of God in a political, nationalistic, and/or instantaneous manner?

- f. Read Acts 1.7-8.

How did the disciples’ assumptions need to change in order for them to understand Jesus’ response? How is Jesus pointing them toward “multiplication thinking”?

- g. In verse 8, Jesus assures his earliest followers they would “receive power” from the Holy Spirit? How do you understand that phrase?

Can we still “receive power” in the same way? Why or why not?

- h. Immediately after discussing the power they’d receive from the Holy Spirit, Jesus tells them “you will be my witnesses.” It prompts images of courtrooms, and for good reason; Jesus apostles were to go into the world, telling all they knew of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. One author writes, “To be a witness is to speak from personal knowledge of facts and their significance. The apostles, as eyewitnesses of the saving events, were witnesses in a unique sense.”

You may know that the Greek word for *witnesses* is “*martus*,” where we get our word for “martyr.” In other words, these witnesses were called to not only share the facts of what they knew, they were called to give themselves entirely for the sake of the Kingdom.

How are you a *martus*, witnessing and giving your life for the Kingdom of God?

How is that connected with multiplication thinking?

IV. Pray

- a. Confess to God the ways you have tried to be the hero, and ask Him to open your eyes to the ways you can increasingly be a hero maker,
- b. Pray that the Holy Spirit would empower new leaders to continue the mission of Good Shepherd for the next 56 years.

V. Digging Deeper

- a. Turn to Luke 24.21, Isaiah 2.2-3, and Matthew 24.14 for examples of a political/territorial kingdom, national kingdom, and immediately established kingdom.

