

MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK

Tuesday, September 11, 2018

The Biggest “But” in the Bible – Acts 1:11-11

Overview: Acts 1:8 is often used to talk about the expansive nature of taking the Good News – the Gospel – all around the world. It sets the stage for the book of Acts and how the church expanded from Jerusalem (*where they were*) to Judea (*the surrounding area*) to Samaria (*next region*) and finally the ends of the world. Yet there is another very important, albeit foundational, idea in this verse and surrounding passages. Something that turned the world upside down nearly 2000 years ago. Something that can rock our lives today.

Hearing Our Stories: Paul Konstanski

Segment Questions:

- Describe what you think some of the conversations may have been like between Jesus and the disciples during the forty days between his resurrection and ascension?
- How does Jesus answer the disciples question about restoring the kingdom?
- Since the flow of this passage works so well without verses 6 & 7, why do you think those verses are in there? What message does Jesus want us to get?
- What is the “but” contrasting?
- After receiving the “fantastic challenge,” how do you think they felt when Jesus immediately left them?

Action Questions:

- For a group of guys who never travelled more than a few miles from their homes, how do you think they understood this challenge that they would take the gospel to the ends of the earth?
- What type of anticipation does this build for the Holy Spirit?
- What is the “but” in your life? (*Something where you are asking the wrong question in light of what God really wants to do through your life.*)
- When you read through the rest of the book of Acts, it is filled with the story of the difference the Holy Spirit made in the disciples’ life. What difference has the Holy Spirit made in your life?
- How does or can the Holy Spirit help you be a better witness for the Kingdom?

Personal Prayer: Lord, there are so many times I do not see things as you desire. I am grateful for your patience with me. Help me to see things from your perspective, with your eternal purpose in mind. Thank you for your Holy Spirit and how my life has been changed by you.

Introduction

The biggest “but” in the Bible. Before you start thinking about King Ehud or Goliath, I’m taking about the word “but” with one “t” not two. (*By the way, King Ehud was a very fat king and Goliath was a giant.*)

My lesson comes from a passage that is preached about, and often quoted. You may be very familiar with this verse. It serves as the foundation for a lot of our evangelism and missions strategies. It is Acts 1:8. It is the passage that talks about taking the gospel to the ends of the earth.

How does this verse begin? It begins with the word “but.” The dictionary defines the word “but” as a conjunction that has three primary meanings, 1) on the contrary; yet: 2) except; save: 3) unless; if not. A conjunction is combining two thoughts or ideas together. And as these definitions show it joins two contrary or opposite ideas together.

What is the contrary thought of Acts 1:8. We know the second part well - the coming Holy Spirit and the challenge to take the Gospel to the world. But what about the first thought? What comes *before* the “but.” To get some ideas, let’s go to verse 1. But we are going to skip a portion.

¹In my first book I told you, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began to do and teach ²until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the Holy Spirit. ³During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God. ⁴Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, “Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. ⁵John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” (...) ⁸You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” ⁹After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him.

The missing part (...) is the word “but” from verse 8 and all of verses 6 & 7. It works doesn’t it? It reads smoothly and flows quite nicely. But that is not how it reads. Between being told about being baptized with the Holy Spirit and receiving power, we have this.

⁶So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?” ⁷He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. ⁸But

It flowed so nicely – this almost seems out of place. So why is this contrary conjunction in there? What are the two thoughts that are being contrasted.

As you look at the life of Jesus and His teaching, he often used dramatic statements to drive home a point. Or he used the settings and surroundings to help them see something from a different perspective. I believe this is a prime example of Jesus doing just that. The disciples had in mind a picture of what they thought was the next step for their resurrected leader – a restored Kingdom. That was not what Jesus had in mind. He had a totally different path for them to take.