DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. ***Enjoy discovering more about Him!***

"THE CONTINUING WORK OF JESUS" |ACTS 1: 1-11 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

- **What gives you confidence to go somewhere new or try something new?**

"Jesus is Alive: Our Confidence" Acts 1: 1-3

Jesus spent time with the apostles after His resurrection, proving He was alive. He also spoke more about the kingdom of God.

- **What kinds of proof do Christ followers use today to explain their belief that Jesus is alive?**
- **What would change if Christ followers had confidence that Jesus was present and at work in their lives?**

"Jesus Provides the Power: Our Dependence" Acts 1: 4-5

Jesus tells His followers to wait in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit before they start proclaiming the kingdom of God.

- **How does waiting show a dependence on God and His power?**

"Jesus Sends His Witnesses: Our Mission" Acts 1: 6-8

Jesus tells His followers to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the end of the earth.

- **What are ways to share about Jesus in your local community?**
- **What are ways to share about Jesus across cultural barriers?**

"Jesus Will Return: Our Hope" Acts 1: 9-11

Jesus leaves His followers with a mission to do and with a promise that He will return in power.

- **How does Jesus' promise to return impact how you approach your relationships and responsibilities?**

REFLECTION AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Jesus spent time with His followers after His resurrection to encourage them and teach them about the kingdom of God. He did that so that they would be His witnesses both locally and globally after they waited for the filling of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' promise to return gives all His followers purpose and hope.

- **Where in your life have you become so familiar or routine that you have stopped consciously depending on God?**
- **Who is in your life that needs to hear about Jesus and what barriers is God calling you to cross to share the gospel?**
- **Ask Jesus to fill you with His Spirit so that you can act on His call in your life this week.**

Acts 1:1-11 **11-15-26**

The Continuing Work of Jesus

I. Announce:

A. Welcome to those watching online.

B. Slide1-4 AP: TGE. Women's. FHC. Missions Prayer.

C. Slide5 At Risk: Mtg TODAY at 3pm in the Agape Room.
We will continue to ***discuss*** *and* ***pray*** *over* our 16th Annual Justice Matters Sunday.
Bring your ***ideas***, ***thoughts***, *and* ***hearts*** *ready to* ***pray***.

D. Slide6 Greece Trip: QR code is all you need.

E. Slide7 Prayer: Lord, You've given us ***a Global Size Task***! We can't do it w/o You!
As we go on this journey together, may we see this ***slow burning gospel fire***
continue to sweep across our known world.

II. Book INTRO:

A. Subtitle: *The continuing mission of Jesus through His Church*.

B. **The Movement of Acts**: (which is *the 1st* ***30 yr's*** *of the church*)

C. Acts follows roughly the first 30 yrs of the church. Acts 1:8 gives us the roadmap:
Jerusalem → Judea and Samaria → the ends of the earth.
Here's how we'll follow the story through the series:

1. **Unleashed** (Acts ch's 1-7) The Holy Spirit comes, *empowering* the church to bear witness in Jerusalem.
2. **Unhindered** (Acts ch's 8-20) The gospel spreads through *Judea and Samaria* and goes out among the nations, *crossing cultural barriers* and *advancing through persecution and opposition*.
3. **Unfinished** (Acts ch's 21-28 *and beyond*) **Paul** reaches Rome, and **Acts** ends with the gospel ***still advancing***. Today's church is called to continue the mission.

D. Slide8 **Themes to Trace**.

1. **Jesus remains the central actor.** Acts is not primarily about heroic apostles but about **the ascended Christ** continuing His work.
2. **The Holy Spirit empowers mission.** He *fills, guides, speaks, & sends.*
3. **The Word advances.** *Luke marks its progress* even as witnesses suffer for speaking it. Sometimes the very **opposition** meant to silence the church - carries the message into places *it hasn't reached yet*.
4. **The Church Prays.** *Watch how often prayer comes before a breakthrough.*
5. **The gospel crosses boundaries.** Listen to how the same good news is brought to *Jewish crowds, governing officials, rural pagans, and Athenian philosophers*.
6. **Conversion produces community.** Those who believe are *gathered into churches.*

E. Slide9a **Message INTRO:** ***The Continuing Work of Jesus*** **(1:1-11)**

F. Themes: *The **risen** Christ, the **kingdom**, the **Spirit**, and the **church's mission**.*

G. Most **biographies** end with the death of their subject. There may be an **epilogue** about their influence, or the people who carry on their memory. Their own work has ended.

1. Luke opens Acts with **a very different claim**. His first book described *"all that Jesus began to do and teach."* Acts 1:1.
   a) That word *began* helps us read **the whole book**. In **Acts** the risen Jesus continues His work from heaven *through the Holy Spirit* and His witnesses.
2. We will meet Peter, Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, and Paul. Watch what **Jesus** does through them. (He pours out the Spirit, directs His servants, opens hearts … and builds His church).
   a) And we belong to that same living Christ. That changes how we see ourselves. He calls us to **take part** in the work He's doing.

H. Slide9b Again, Acts 1:8 provides the roadmap for the book: *Jerusalem → Judea and Samaria → the ends of the earth.*

1. Over this series, we will watch the gospel cross *geographical, cultural, religious, and language barriers*. And we will ask: What does **faithful participation** in Jesus' mission look like for **us**?

III. Slide10 1. JESUS IS ALIVE: *OUR CONFIDENCE* (1:1-3)

A. 1 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to **do** and **teach**, 2 until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. 3 He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about *the kingdom of God*.

B. ***"Do and teach"*** - Don't you love that order? What Jesus **did** and what He **taught** belong together. As we follow Him, **our words** should explain the gospel, and **our lives** should reflect the Savior we proclaim.

C. Luke addresses Theophilus, the same person addressed in his Gospel.

1. He connects the 2 books through *Jesus' ministry, His instructions to the apostles, His suffering, and His resurrection.*

a) Before Jesus sends these men to speak, He establishes what they can be certain of: **He is alive!**

D. **Their confidence rested on the risen Jesus.** Kingdom

1. Luke addresses Theophilus again, linking Acts with his Gospel.
2. Before Jesus sends the apostles to speak, He gives them something they can be sure of. **He is alive!**
3. Over forty days Jesus appeared to them and gave them **many proofs** that He really was alive. When they went out to tell others, they could speak about what they had seen and heard for themselves. They would proclaim a Savior who had **conquered death**.

E. **Their message centered on God's kingdom.**

1. During these 40 days, Jesus spoke about **God's rule**. As Acts unfolds, people will be called to *turn from sin, trust Jesus, and live under His lordship*.

F. Slide11 Kingdom of God: think, 2 Words. 2 Timelines. 2 Worlds.

1. **2 Words** (king & allegiance). ***God*** *is our Creator and King - He deserves the* ***Allegiance*** *of every person.*
2. **2 Timelines** (Now & at His Return). *We experience something of His kingdom* ***now****. When Jesus* ***returns*** *and renews the world, we'll see His peace, righteousness, justice, and love in their fullness.*
   a) The kingdom Jesus taught about during those 40 days is already at work among us, even as we wait for Him to make all things new.
3. **2 Worlds** (church & kingdom). Jesus said, *My kingdom is not of this world* (it's a spiritual *not* a political reality). The church is *a missionary org*. His kingdom is **the result** of that mission's fulfillment.

G. For CM, our 1st question is: What would change this week if you approached your circumstances with confidence that Jesus is present and at work?

IV. Slide12 2. JESUS PROVIDES THE POWER: *OUR DEPENDENCE* (4-5)

A. 4 And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

B. Jesus gives a command that might seem ***surprising*** at the beginning of a missionary book: Wait!

1. These men had heard Jesus **teach**, watched Him **work miracles**, and seen Him **alive again**. They had **a world** to **reach!**
2. And Jesus tells them to stay in Jerusalem and **wait** for the Father's promised gift, *the Holy Spirit*. John had baptized with water. Jesus tells them they'll soon be baptized with the Holy Spirit. We'll see that promise fulfilled at Pentecost in Acts 2.

3. Yet Jesus tells them to remain in Jerusalem and **wait** for the Father's promise.

C. **Waiting can be Obedience.** (*ever think of that?* - we usually think of faithfulness as doing something.)

1. For the apostles, **staying put** was how they **obeyed**.
2. Jesus knew what lay ahead, and He knew what they needed *before* they took the first step. Sometimes trusting Jesus means staying where He's put us until He makes the next step clear.

D. **Illustration:** When I worked as an electrician, we could run the Romex, tighten every connection, and install every fixture in the house. Then if somebody flipped a switch … what does the whole house still need? **Power!**

E. Application: We can prepare a message, organize a ministry, or plan an outreach. That preparation matters, **and** we need the Spirit to work in us and through us.

1. Depending on Him shapes how we *prepare, pray, speak, and serve.*
2. Before we get into all the things the church does in Acts, *let's pay attention to what God **gives** His people so they can **do** them*.

F. We can ask: Where have we become so familiar with ministry or walking with Jesus that we have stopped consciously **depending on God**?

G. This passage also gives us a pattern for the series: *before we rush toward everything the church should **do**, we acknowledge our **need** for everything God must **supply!!!**

V. Slide13 3. JESUS SENDS HIS WITNESSES: *OUR MISSION* (6-8)

A. 6 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that **the Father** has fixed by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, **and** to the end of the earth."

B. **The Father holds the timetable**.

1. The disciples want to know *when the kingdom will be restored to Israel*.

2. Jesus tells them **who** sets the times and seasons, then gives them something to do.

   a) *They can **trust God** with what He has not disclosed and **obey** what **Jesus** has made clear.

C. **The Spirit gives power for witness**.

1. The promise of **power** has a **purpose**: they will be ***His*** witnesses. - Our witness centers on Jesus: *His life, His death for our sins, His resurrection, and His call to repent and believe*.

   a) **Illustration:** A **witness** in a courtroom tells the truth about about what they've seen and heard. **The apostles** could tell people about the risen Jesus they had **seen**. **We** pass on *their testimony* and we can *tell people how **His grace** has **changed our lives***.

D. **The mission crosses barriers**.

1. They'll start in Jerusalem, the city where Jesus was crucified. The gospel will spread through Judea and Samaria, crossing longstanding religious and cultural divisions, and go to the end of the earth, among the nations.
2. By the end of the book, Paul will be speaking about Jesus in Rome. And there will still be people who haven't heard.

E. Application: The word **and** matters. For CM, this means sharing Jesus with the people **we see every day and** taking part in missions that cross cultural and language barriers to bring the gospel where Christ ***is little known***.

1. Think about **who** has someone close by they can ask about Jesus, **and who** could go a lifetime *without* that opportunity.
   ***Both** belong in our **prayers** and **plans**.

F. Q: Who in your **everyday life** needs to hear about Jesus, and what step could you take toward a conversation? - What **cultural, language, or personal barrier** might God be calling you to cross for the sake of the gospel?

VI. Slide14a **4. JESUS WILL RETURN: *OUR HOPE* (9-11)**

A. 9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, 11 and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? **This Jesus**, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

B. **This Jesus.**

1. The One who *taught them, loved them, died, and rose again* **will** come again. For now, He's *beyond their sight*, and **Acts** will show just how active He remains *through the Spirit*.

C. **Illustration:** When parents leave their children with a sitter, they give instructions and say we'll be back. **The promise** reassures the kids. **The instructions** give them something to do in the meantime.

1. Slide14b Jesus has given His disciples **a commission** and **a promise** to return!

D. Application: The men in white draw the disciples' attention back to what Jesus has just entrusted to them. [When **the work** is difficult or **the results** seem slow, *we can keep going because we know* **Who** is coming back!]

E. Q: **How** is the promise of Jesus' return shaping the way **you** live now?
What has He already asked you **to do** that you can **act on** this week?

F. Our Lord is **alive**. His Spirit is **sufficient**. His mission is **clear**, *and* His return is **certain**! - If you've never trusted Jesus, the risen Savior invites you to turn from your sin and put your faith in Him. The forgiveness we'll hear proclaimed throughout **Acts** is offered to you.

G. Prayer: Lord Jesus, help us see where You're at work and teach us to depend on Your Spirit. Give us **courage** to speak about You, and **willingness** to cross barriers for Your name, and the faith to keep going until You return.
Lord, as we go thru Acts, we're not looking to experience something, but for the world to experience You!

H. Keywords: power, witnesses, continue.