

## How to Handle Life's Interruptions

### Session 5

November 16, 2025

#### *When a Time of Inactivity Slows You Down*

**The Point:** Use unexpected downtime to prepare for what's next.

**Session Passages:** Acts 1:4-8, 12-14; 2:1-4

#### **Acts 1:4-8**

**Connection to the Point.** Jesus told His followers to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

**Context.** Acts is volume two of Luke's account of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and the beginning and spread of His church throughout the Roman Empire. The book begins with a prologue similar to the Gospel of Luke. In it, we get a glimpse of what transpired between Jesus's resurrection and ascension. Jesus appeared frequently to His disciples using "many convincing proofs" to show He was alive (Acts 1:3). During this time Jesus continued to teach concerning the kingdom of God. Verse 3 contains the only New Testament reference to the forty-day time period between the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

**Not to leave Jerusalem** (v. 4). Jesus's statement literally means, "stop departing from Jerusalem." Evidently the disciples were coming and going from Jerusalem during these interim days. Jesus instructed them to stay put and wait for that which was promised.

**The Father's promise** (v. 4) is the coming of the Holy Spirit. In His address to His disciples before His arrest (John 14-16), five different times Jesus spoke of the coming of the Holy Spirit (14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-11, 13-15). In those passages, Jesus revealed that the Spirit would come as their "Counselor" to be with them forever. This "Spirit of truth" would continue to teach and remind them of all Jesus taught. The Spirit also would convict the world of "sin, righteousness, and judgment" (16:8). The Holy Spirit would guide the disciples continually in their mission ahead to proclaim the gospel and make disciples (Matt. 28:18-20).

**Baptized with the Holy Spirit** (v. 5). These words might have been familiar since John the Baptist spoke of Jesus baptizing in the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16). However, most likely the disciples failed to understand what this meant. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came temporarily upon individuals to enable them to fulfill specific God-given purposes. This baptism of the Spirit that Jesus promised would be a permanent indwelling of the Spirit in believers.

This initial baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:2-4) would be unique to these disciples. While a later instance of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit would be manifested by signs in the book of Acts (10:44-46), generally the specific events surrounding the initial coming of the Holy Spirit were not repeated. Subsequent believers in Jesus also received the gift of the Holy Spirit in response to repentance and faith, but the audible and visible manifestations of the Spirit usually were not present (see 2:38-41).

**Restoring the kingdom of Israel** (v. 6). *Restoring* speaks of bringing back or putting something into its former place or state. The disciples had in mind Jewish national independence. The expected Messiah was often associated with this notion of independence. Since 63 BC the Jewish people had been under Roman rule. In addition, over six hundred years had passed since the nation was self-ruled. The prophecy in Joel 2:28-32 that spoke of the outpouring of God's Spirit was regularly interpreted in Judaism as speaking of the end times.

**Not for you to know** (v. 7). In response to His disciples' question, Jesus did not specifically address the issue of the restoration of the kingdom of Israel. Rather, He clarified that the nature and timing of all such events were under God's authority. The disciples needed to understand that their focus was to be on the spreading of the good news of the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ.

**Receive power** (v. 8). Verse 8 contains a promise and a command for all believers. The promise involved the *power* to carry out the command. Otherwise, they would fail. This *power* was for a specific purpose—bearing witness to Jesus Christ.

**You will be my witnesses** (v. 8). This is the command. The word *witness* (from which comes the English word *martyr*) speaks of one who affirms or attests to something. It is to speak of facts and witness to the truth. In both Luke and Acts the word took on a deeper meaning. *Witnesses* referred to not just knowing the facts concerning the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, but also understanding the significance of Jesus, and placing trust in Him as Savior. Thus, a Christ follower bears witness to the facts regarding Jesus and the personal significance of the facts—what it means to be redeemed and be a disciple of Jesus.

Acts 1:8 could be considered the theme verse for the entire book. The command to witness in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth form a perfect outline for the entire book of Acts: Jerusalem (Acts 1–7); Judea and Samaria (chaps. 8–12), and the ends of the earth (chaps. 13–28).

## **Acts 1:12-14**

**Connection to the Point.** While the disciples waited, they prayed.

**Context.** Luke 24:50-51 and Acts 1:9-11 are the main New Testament sources concerning the ascension. The other Gospel writers did not include the ascension in their accounts of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection. Furthermore, Luke's account mentions two angelic messengers who gave the disciples the assurance that Jesus will return in the same way He had left when "a cloud took him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). Jesus associated His return with clouds (Matt. 24:30; 26:64; see Dan. 7:13; Rev. 1:7).

**The Mount of Olives** (v. 12) was the location of Jesus's ascension. This is the central of three peaks that form a ridge running north and south to the east of Jerusalem. It is separated from Jerusalem by the Kidron Valley, and the Mount of Olive's name points to the fact that it was covered with olive trees.

The Mount of Olives played a significant role in Jesus's ministry during the week before His crucifixion. It is the area from which Jesus approached Jerusalem to make His triumphal entry (Mark 11:1-2) and was the location of the garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39; see Matt. 26:36). The Mount of Olives was "a Sabbath's day journey away" of Jerusalem (Acts 1:12). According to rabbinical tradition, this was the distance one could walk on the Sabbath day without violating the commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy. This distance was about three-fourths of a mile. In addition, there is a powerful link to the prophecy of Zechariah 14:4 which states that on the day of the Lord, the Lord will stand on the Mount of Olives and the mount will be split in two.

**The room upstairs** (v. 13). This was a large room on the upper floor of a house used for any number of purposes. Most likely it was reached by a set of stairs outside the house. The text clearly states that this was "the" room upstairs. Likely this was also the same room where the disciples gathered after the resurrection (Luke 24:33; John 20:19). This room would have been large enough for 120 people (Acts 1:15). It has also been suggested that this was the same room where Jesus had the last supper with His disciples (Luke 22:10-13), and that this may have been the room mentioned as belonging to the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12). However, neither of those suggestions can be known for certain. This room was located in Jerusalem within a Sabbath's day journey of the site of the ascension (1:12).

**Continually united in prayer** (v. 14). The Greek term for *prayer* relates to both the action (petition address to God) and the location (a place of or for prayer). *Continually united in prayer* meant that the disciples persevered in prayer. It was this constant attention to prayer that played a critical role in creating unity among the gathered Christian community. The Greek word for *united* speaks of them being in "one accord" or being of one mind and is used almost exclusively in Acts with the exception of Romans 15:6. Jesus's disciples were completely united in purpose and direction. The content of their prayers can only be speculated about. Most likely they were not praying for the coming of the Spirit. That had been promised to them. More likely they were praising their Savior and petitioning Him for the wisdom and power to fulfill their mission of spreading the gospel.

**Along with the women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers** (v. 14). Luke 8:2-3 identifies a group of women who followed Jesus. These *women* gathered with the other disciples in the upstairs room would have been many of the same women who were mentioned in connection with the crucifixion and resurrection (Luke 23:55; 24:10; John 19:25). This is the last New Testament reference to *Mary the mother of Jesus*. This verse also mentions the presence of his biological brothers (half-brothers, Mark 6:3). One theory is that the *brothers* of Jesus had been skeptical unbelievers, but at some point—perhaps through the resurrection—they became believers. Paul wrote that after His resurrection Jesus appeared to His brother James (1 Cor. 15:7). James later became a leader of the church in Jerusalem. Jesus's brothers James and Jude each wrote one of the letters in the General Epistles of the New Testament.

## Acts 2:1-4

**Connection to the Point.** The Holy Spirit came to the believers and empowered them to speak boldly.

**The day of Pentecost** (v. 1). *Pentecost* was one of the major annual Jewish feasts, and it celebrated the completion of the grain harvest. This festival went by several names in the Old Testament such as the Festival of Weeks (Ex. 34:22; Deut. 16:10,16; 2 Chron. 8:13), Festival of Harvest (Ex. 23:16), and the day of first fruits (Num. 28:26). In the New Testament the term *Pentecost* is primarily used (Acts 2:1; 20:16; 1 Cor. 16:8). This festival occurred seven complete weeks (fifty days) after Passover. Hence the name *Pentecost*, from a Greek word meaning “fifty.” This festival occurred in May or June depending on the date of that year’s Passover.

**All together in one place** (v. 1). Acts 1:15 indicates about 120 believers were gathered for prayer during this waiting period. The same group of people are most likely indicated by *all together in one place*. All those assembled were recipients of the coming of the Holy Spirit; not just the twelve disciples.

**Suddenly** (v. 2). The word conveys an element of surprise. Luke emphasized that those gathered were caught off guard by what happened. While they were anticipating the promised coming of the Holy Spirit, they were startled by the way in which the Spirit came audibly and visually.

**Sound . . . tongues like flames of fire** (vv. 2-3). In his description of this event, Luke noted three different phenomena that occurred at the coming of the Holy Spirit. The first was an auditory phenomenon that sounded “like that of a violent rushing wind.” The second unique accompaniment of the Spirit’s coming was the visible sign of “tongues like flames of fire” resting on each person, symbolic of the power of the Holy Spirit. Finally, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit also manifested in the ability of these believers to “speak in different tongues” (v. 4). Thus, the coming of the Holy Spirit was both audible and visible, and resulted in the unusual ability to speak languages that these disciples had never learned.

**Filled with the Holy Spirit** (v. 4). The Greek word for *filled* means to be filled with something so as to be under its influence; in this instance the disciples being *filled with the Holy Spirit*. The same word is used in Acts 5:17 of the Sadducees being “filled with jealousy.” It speaks of control. Thus, the followers of Christ were under the Holy Spirit’s influence and power. This was a crucial event in God’s plan of redemption.

Following this initial coming of the Holy Spirit on the followers of Christ, Scripture teaches that every believer receives the gift of the Holy Spirit to permanently indwell them the moment they place their faith in Jesus Christ (see 2:38). The New Testament uses a variety of terms to speak of this indwelling of God’s Spirit in the believer—being “baptized” with the Spirit (Acts 1:5); the Spirit being “poured out” on new converts (Acts 10:45); and having “received” the Holy Spirit (v. 47). In the epistles of Paul, the apostle stated that the Holy Spirit lives in every believer (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19).

This filling stands in contrast to Paul’s command in Ephesians 5:18 for believers to “be filled by the Spirit.” Here the apostle used the analogy of not being drunk with wine; instead, believers are to be filled by God’s Holy Spirit. Again, the basic meaning of *filled* is to be under the influence of something. Drunkenness is characterized by the actions of mind, body, and emotions being strongly influenced or

controlled by alcohol. In this context, being filled by the Holy Spirit refers not to the initial indwelling of the Holy Spirit that occurs in every Christian at the moment of conversion. Rather, it refers to the ongoing guidance and control of the believer by the Holy Spirit in the Christian's day-to-day life. It involves the believer's commitment to and cooperation with the Spirit's presence and work so as to be transformed more and more into the image of Christ.

**Different tongues** (v. 4) refers to known languages of people groups. In Acts 2:8-11 those present in Jerusalem testified to hearing all the various languages of the Mediterranean world. In fact, the Greek word translated "language" in Acts 2:6,8 is also translated "dialect." The gift of the ability to speak these unlearned languages by the disciples was a sign to the multitudes that something supernatural was taking place. The curiosity of the crowds was immediately peaked and provided the platform for Peter and the other disciples to proclaim salvation in the name of Jesus Christ.