

Home Group Series 2024

1. Witnessing with power.

If we want to get more out of our Bible reading, we need to start by trying to get inside the skins of the people involved. To do that completely, of course, we would need to reconstruct the world in which they were living as well as their circumstances, which can be a big job. However, at times it will involve imagination as much as additional information.

Take the group in our passage. They had been with Jesus for around 3 years – living with Him, listening to Him, asking Him questions, learning from him – although if we read the Gospel accounts, they were as good as us when it came to remembering what He said. In fact, at times they almost appear to be wilfully dumb! How much they took in of Jesus' *last* words is an open question. They knew He had died, that He had risen, that He had been with them – and that He was there before them as He gave them His last instructions, but from their question about 'the restoration of Israel', in the light of what happened next, show that they had a long way to go.

And then He had gone - wonderfully, but in practical terms, His presence, which they have taken for granted, was no longer there – and more, He was out of reach.

If I may, let me illustrate from my own recent experience. My wife Cherry died in May. It was expected, in that it didn't take me by surprise. All along we both knew that she would go to be with Christ which would be far better. However, if you live with someone for 60 years, you get into the habit of assuming that they are there, when, of course, they have not only gone for good – they are also out of reach. So it was no good asking her where she had kept something in the house or even if she wanted to go and have lunch at Lepe! It was a sort of personal desolation for me, which I am sure some of you must have experienced yourselves – and I can imagine that the disciples, in spite of all that Jesus had told them, felt a gaping hole had opened up in their lives.

It was no more, 'We have a problem, let's ask Jesus about it.' He had gone and, it seemed, left them on their own.

Whatever you do, don't forget that Bible characters, in their own ways and times, to start with, were ordinary men and women just like us. It was what God was going to do with them which would make all the difference – and that is how it should be with us.

If you are a committed Christian, you are already indwelt by God's Holy Spirit. Simply, when we put our trust in Jesus, His Spirit comes and makes His home within us – and gets to work! Without Him, we can carry on going our own way and doing our own things. But just stop and think of the potential of what *God* could do with you if you let Him.

That's really what 'Acts' is all about. The book has been called 'the Acts' – not just of Apostles, but 'of the Holy Spirit', that is, in the lives of otherwise ordinary men and women, used by God to lay the very foundations of the Church itself. Yes, people like us!

So with that in mind – read on!



Questions for Home Groups

Witnessing with Power

Acts 1 : 1-8

Jesus' instruction to his disciples: Luke 24 : 36-53, Matthew 28 : 16-20

The Holy Spirit's power: John 7 : 37-39, Ephesians 5 : 18

- What is a 'witness'?
- What does it mean to be a witness for Jesus?
- How important is it to you to be a witness for Jesus?
- Do you find it easy or difficult to be a witness for Jesus?
- What are some of the hindrances to being an effective witness?
- Share any memories you have of a Christian witnessing to you before you came to know Jesus yourself
- Share your own experiences of witnessing for Jesus to those who were not yet Christians
- What is your experience of the Holy Spirit?
- How has the Holy Spirit enabled you to share your faith with those who are not yet Christians?
- What does it mean for you to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
- What hindrances might there be to receiving the Holy Spirit in all his fulness?
- How may you be filled with the Holy Spirit now!!?