**You Will Be My Witnesses**

Acts 1:1–14

Key Verse: 8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Happy New Year! The anticipated year 2025 is approaching. At the start of the New Year, many people go to watch the sunrise. In Korea, the sunrise at Jeongdongjin is especially famous. Nearby New Jersey, Montauk in Long Island, New York, is a well-known sunrise spot. Have you ever been there? People watch the rising sun, set plans for the New Year, and make new resolutions. What are your plans for the New Year? But here, we have to think about what God wants to accomplish through us in the New Year. It is more important than making new plans.

Let’s take this time to think about what God wants us to do in the New Year and what kind of people we should be.

**I. You Will Be My Witnesses (1–8)**

Look at verse 1-2. In Luke’s gospel, the author carefully investigated everything he had heard from eyewitnesses and servants of the Word. Then, he recorded Jesus’ birth, ministry, teachings, especially his death and resurrection. Look at verse 3: “After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.” When I preach the gospel, I often meet Muslim students on campus. They claim that Jesus only pretended to die on the cross and did not actually die. Their conclusion is that Jesus' resurrection is a lie.

However, Jesus’ death and resurrection are historical facts. Jesus died on the cross but he was raised from the dead by defeating the power of sin and death. Then, he appeared to his disciples. In addition, he appeared to more than five hundreds of the brothers at the same time. They were all eyewitnesses. Before His ascension, the Risen Jesus stayed on earth for forty days, and proclaimed the kingdom of God. Could there be any greater evidence of Jesus’ resurrection than this? The central message of Jesus was the kingdom of God. Jesus came to the world to save us from eternal condemnation and bring us into the kingdom of God. For this, Jesus died on the cross and rose again. We have the living hope for the kingdom of God, because he lives.

Look at verse 4-5. While he stayed in the world, Jesus gave this command to His disciples.

Let’s read verses 4 and 5 together. “On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’” To the disciples, Jerusalem was a city of failure and tragedy. They had left everything behind to follow Jesus. Because they believed that Jesus would become the king of Israel. But, their dreams were shattered by His death. They lost all their hopes and wanted to flee from Jerusalem, the city of tragedy. However, Jesus told them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for the gift that God had promised. This gift was the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” By giving his disciples the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus wanted them to overcome their weaknesses and carry out the mission he gave them.

What mission did Jesus give to His disciples? Let us read verse 8 together: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Being a witness of Jesus—this was the final mission Jesus entrusted to His disciples. The disciples were eyewitnesses who had been with Jesus from the beginning of His Messianic ministry. They witnessed Jesus proclaiming the kingdom of God, casting out demons, healing the sick, and raising the dead. And they also witnessed Jesus die on the cross, be buried, and resurrect on the third day. Their mission was to testify of what they had seen and heard, starting from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

Today, Jesus has called us to be his witnesses. As witnesses of Christ, what must we testify about? **First, we must testify that Jesus is the Son of God.** There are so many students on campus. Among them, only a few believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Most of them deny it.

Recently, I met a Jewish student on campus. He said Jesus was a blasphemer, since he claimed that he was the Son of God. But, Jesus is the true Son of God. In John 5:36–40, Jesus says that God himself, His Messianic ministry, and the Scriptures testify that He is the Son of God.

In Matthew 3 and 17, when Jesus began his Messianic ministry by being baptized by John the Baptist and also when He went up the Mount of Transfiguration with His disciples, God directly declared: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." God Himself clearly affirmed that Jesus is His beloved Son. Jesus is the Son of God, and the Almighty Creator. Look at John 1:1-3. I replaced "the Word" with "Jesus" to clarify: "In the beginning was Jesus, and Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God. Jesus was with God in the beginning. Through Jesus all things were made; without Jesus nothing was made that has been made." This passage clearly shows that Jesus is the Son of God and the Almighty Creator. On campus, let us boldly proclaim that Jesus is the Son of God. (Who is Jesus?)

Second, as witnesses, we must testify that **Jesus is the promised Messiah.** Jesus is the Son of God. However, He gave up all His glory in heaven and came to save the world. A few weeks ago, we celebrated the birth of Jesus: "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." Jesus’ birth brings great joy to all mankind, since He is the Messiah who came to save the world. We were once slaves to sin, destined for eternal destruction. However, Jesus paid for all our sins by shedding his blood on the cross. Through the blood of Jesus, we are forgiven of all our dirty sins and receive eternal salvation. Is there anything more precious than eternal salvation? Absolutely nothing. Jesus’ death was not the end. By resurrecting from the dead, Jesus crushed Satan's head and won the final victory. On our campus, we must proclaim that Jesus is the promised Messiah who saves us from the power of sin and death and brings us into the kingdom of God. Those who have ears to hear will listen and receive eternal salvation.

Third, we must testify to **the Kingdom of God.** When Jesus began His public ministry, he proclaimed, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." As we saw in verse 3, before ascending into heaven, Jesus proclaimed about the kingdom of God for forty days. Throughout His ministry, the core of Jesus' message was the kingdom of God. Why did Jesus focus on preaching the kingdom of God? It was because His kingdom did not belong to this world but to heaven. By accepting Jesus, we received eternal life and became kingdom people. Now, we are heading towards the kingdom of God, the New Jerusalem. That is our eternal destination. Let us put our hope into the kingdom of God and devotedly proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of God is near.”

Being a witness of Christ is a great privilege. Through the blood of Jesus, we have received forgiveness of sins and salvation. What should we do after receiving this grace?

Should we remain silent? Absolutely not. We must testify that Jesus, the Son of God, died for our sins and rose again. Campus students are young, energetic and have lots of potential. Yet, many are perishing in their sins. What they need most is the Gospel. Among the countless people in this world, God has called us to be witnesses of Christ, especially for Rutgers students.

Personally, God has called me to be a witness of Christ and entrusted me with the mission to share the Gospel on campus. Two years ago, God moved me from a night shift to a day shift.

In this way, He provided me with the time and opportunity to preach the gospel on campus.

The time and opportunity to share the Gospel was incredibly precious to me. Because this was evidence that God had chosen me as a witness for Jesus Christ. Knowing the will of God, I dedicated myself to sharing the gospel with campus students with all my heart. Do you know how precious the time and opportunity to share the gospel is? And do you know that being chosen and used by God as witnesses of Christ is a great privilege? Yes, this is truly a profound grace and privilege. Through Jesus, we have been granted forgiveness of sins and salvation, and we are used as his witnesses.

What attitude should we have as witnesses? In Acts 20:24, apostle Paul said, “I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.” Jesus called Paul to be a witness to the Gentiles, sharing the Gospel with them. Paul was deeply moved by the grace of Jesus, who called a sinner like him to be an apostle and witness to the Gentiles. In response to this grace, Paul considered his life worth nothing and devoted his life to spreading the gospel as a witness of Christ. We must know the grace of Jesus, who saved us from the power of sin and made us His witnesses. At that time, we can also dedicate our lives to carrying out campus fishing and disciple-making ministry with all our hearts. There are many things we have to do in the New Year. Among them, preaching the gospel and making disciples must be our top priority.

Maybe, some coworkers do not agree with it. They can say, “I need to study first. Or I need to take care of my children first”. But here, we must think about why Jesus called us to be his witnesses. Jesus called us to testify to him as the Son of God and His death and resurrection.

For this, Jesus gave us Rutgers as our mission field. Rutgers is like our Jerusalem. We must begin preaching the gospel on Rutgers campus and spread it to the ends of the earth.

With gratitude, let us devotedly testify that Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah on campus. When we proclaim Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah on campus, God is so pleased and Jesus is so happy. Let’s make God and Jesus happy.

Thank God for giving us clear direction for the New Year through this passage. Let’s be witnesses of Christ and devote ourselves to preaching the gospel and making disciples in the New Year.

**II. You will receive Power (8a)**

The disciples were called to be witnesses of Christ. But they were weak and could not carry out their mission by their own strength. They needed the power of the Holy Spirit. That’s why Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to them: “John baptized with a water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” (5) Here are some Bible passages where Jesus speaks about sending the Holy Spirit to His disciples (Jn 14:16-17; Jn 14:26; Jn 15:26; Jn 16:7; Lk 24:49). These passages show Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit as a helper, teacher, and source of power for His disciples to carry out their mission. Here, we can see that the Holy Spirit works in every area of our lives. Even though we received salvation, we still face many limitations. We may continue to struggle with the power of sin, and live lazy lives. How can we crucify our sinful nature on the cross and be renewed? How can we overcome our limitations and bear the fruit of discipleship? To overcome our limitations and be renewed, we need the power of the Holy Spirit. Also to bear the fruit of discipleship, we need the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is not far from us. The Holy Spirit is always with us and works among us. This year, 7 new Bible students have started one-to-one Bible studies. Our 12 next generation confessed Jesus as the Son of God through a baptism ceremony. Second gen Daniel Gates delivered the powerful message. Our next generation are growing as world mission coworkers.

Our mission spirits were renewed through GLEF and Bible conferences, and more. All of these are the works of the Holy Spirit. We should be sensitive to the presence and works of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in our ministry.

Here, let us think about how we can receive the Holy Spirit. This is a very important matter. **First, the Holy Spirit comes on us when we repent.** Repentance begins with confession, but it does not end with confession alone. True repentance requires us to break away from sin and live a holy life. When we do not repent, our inner self is no different from a dirty dog bowl. God will never pour out His Holy Spirit into such an unclean vessel. To receive the Holy Spirit, we must repent of all our dirty sins and purify our inner self. Next, imagine that our mind is like a room full of junk. Can God send the Holy Spirit into such a heart? No way. If our mind is full of worldly things such as smartphones, the internet, and games, God cannot send the Holy Spirit to us. Let’s take this moment to examine our hearts. What is your heart like? You heart is like a dirty vessel? Or a room full of junk? Or a clean and empty vessel? To receive the Holy Spirit, we must cleanse and empty our inner selves through repentance. Through this New Year Conference, let us repent and make our hearts like that clean and empty vessel. In doing so, we will be ready to receive the Holy Spirit.

Second, to receive the Holy Spirit, **we must seek the Holy Spirit with all our hearts through prayer.** In Luke 11:9, Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit is not reserved for special people, but is given to those who ask and seek it. When we earnestly ask for the Holy Spirit, Jesus will definitely give the Holy Spirit to us. To receive the Holy Spirit, we must especially devote ourselves to united prayer. The disciples are a good example. Look at verse 12-14. After returning to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, about 120 disciples gathered together and prayed with all their hearts and all their might. Their prayer topic was only one: to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit that Jesus had promised. In Acts 2, when they earnestly prayed together, the baptism of the Holy Spirit came upon them on the day of Pentecost. In this way, the disciples received power.

Do you want to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the New Year? If we want to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we must pray with all our hearts like the disciples.

Let’s earnestly pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit with all our might. Then, the Holy Spirit comes upon us and we will receive power. Through this, we will carry out campus mission and disciple-making ministry with the power of the Holy Spirit and bear much fruit in the New Year.

2024, my New Year’s verse was Acts 1:8. I held on to these words and devoted myself to preaching the gospel on campus. At that time, God greatly blessed my campus fishing and disciple-making ministry and allowed me to feed five sheep with one-to-one Bible study. However, I did not pay attention to personally walking with the Holy Spirit or cultivating a relationship with Him. I only focused on using the power of the Holy Spirit for discipleship.

I treated the Holy Spirit like a generator that gives me power. My New Year key verse is Acts 1:8. This key verse is the same as in 2024. I will hold on to Acts 1:8 and challenge myself to raise one powerful disciple who can feed other campus students with one-to-one Bible study. But my bigger goal is to be a man of the Holy Spirit in the New Year. For this, I will listen carefully to the voice of the Holy Spirit and learn to obey His guidance absolutely. I will also strive to purify myself and remove all selfish desires, passions, and impurities within me. Being a man and woman of the Holy Spirit is more important than bearing visible fruits of discipleship.

Through this passage, thank God for giving us clear direction for 2025. Jesus called us to be his witnesses and gave us the mission to preach the gospel to campus students. Let’s devote ourselves to preaching the gospel and making disciples of Jesus on campus. And also, let’s be a man or woman of the Holy Spirit in the year 2025.