

The Importance of Serving – Week 8 of HHBC 3D

October 5

I. Review:

- Mission, Vision, and Values
- Importance of Corporate Worship in Our Spiritual Renewal
- Importance of Community Groups in Living Life Together
- Importance of Serving through Spiritual Gifts
- God-given natural abilities, experiences, and passions to serve God

II. Discussion and Application – Ways We Can Serve the Kingdom Internally, Locally and Globally:

As we have discussed previously, the Holy Spirit bestows spiritual gifts upon all believers, and exercising these spiritual gifts through serving is as an act of worship to God as well as an avenue to building up others. But, God also gives people natural abilities, experiences, and passions as they pursue opportunities to serve Him. So in every way, serving God is a reflection of the Holy Spirit's leading in our lives.

With that in mind, let's transition from **WHY** we should serve God and His Kingdom to looking at a text of Scripture that identifies **HOW** we can serve our church, our community, and our world.

Serving God within the Church, in our Community, and Around the World

Acts 1:4-11

4 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. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." 6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 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." 9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

1. The Initial Instructions Jesus Gave the Apostles – Acts 1:4-5

This section of Acts begins in verses 4 and 5 as the author, Luke, quotes Jesus speaking to His disciples before the Ascension. Jesus literally told these men to do 2 things: **To not depart from Jerusalem and to wait for God to give them the Holy Spirit** before they did anything or ministered to anyone in His name. **Jesus knew it was essential that they not leave Jerusalem and that they wait on the Holy Spirit to come upon them. In Jesus' promise to them that they would be His witnesses, their task was to be far too great to accomplish it alone.**

2. The Four Promises Jesus makes to the Apostles – Acts 1:8

First, within this verse Jesus promises the Apostles that they would receive **power through the Holy Spirit**.

Second, Jesus also promises the Apostles that **the Holy Spirit would actually come upon each of them**.

Third, Jesus promises the Apostles that **they would be His witnesses**.

Fourth, Jesus also promises the Apostles that **they would be His witnesses wherever they went – in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth**.

We would hopefully all agree that God is still fulfilling these promises today, but we might question how. For example, we might easily confess our belief that the Holy Spirit resides within us if we are believers in Christ.

3. The Encouragement Given to the Apostles – Acts 1:9-11

The apostles were gazing up at this sight as two angels ask, *"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."*

3 John 1-8

1 The elder, To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 2 Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. 3 It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. 5 Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. 6 They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. 7 It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. 8 We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth.

The Apostle John is writing to a personal friend named Gaius. We know absolutely nothing about this man except that the man had to deal with a troublemaker inside of the church (verse 9). John was apparently a good friend with Gaius, and this letter is encouraging, so we see in the next six verses there are a number of encouraging words and phrases for us as we go and serve God.

1. Walking in the Truth

In verses 3 and 4, John highlights that Gaius was “walking in the truth”. Nothing we do for God begins unless we walk in the truth first, and John understood that Gaius’ ministry was going to flourish only if he continued to live in this way.

2. Faithful, Efforts, Love, Send

In verses 5 and 6, he talks of the fact that Gaius was walking in the truth. Gaius had faithfully helped the traveling workers of the early church as they stopped where he lived. Gaius put out the effort to help them even though he didn’t know these people. John knew this took faithful effort on Gaius’ part to help these workers.

3. Gone Out for the Sake of the Name, Support, Fellow Workers for the Truth

Speaking of the traveling Christian workers, John says in verse 7, “*Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.*” This is our application and challenge: Support those who faithfully serve to join efforts for the truth of Jesus Christ and the glory of our Father.

Our prayer is that we live these words out together as we serve: **That we would walk in the truth, be faithful in our efforts, that we would love and send each other into the world, and that we would go out for the sake of Jesus’ name, support one another in this, and be fellow workers in the truth.**

III. Small Group Discussion:

- 1. How do we know that the promises of Verse 8 still apply to modern believers just as much as they did to the original apostles thousands of years ago?*
- 2. What do our lives look like having been infused with the power of the Holy Spirit?*
- 3. Discuss times in your life where you have been His witness?*
- 4. What is the implication in our lives that the apostles would be witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth?*
- 5. What are the angels saying to the disciples in Verse 11? What is the implication to our current lives about Jesus eventually returning to earth?*
- 6. What does 3 John tell us about what we should desire for each other that John’s greatest joy was hear that this good friend of his was walking in the truth?*
- 7. What is the idea behind sending someone in a manner worthy of God? What does that look like?*
- 8. In your life, what keeps you from going out for the sake of the name of Jesus? What holds you from living through this purpose in everything you do?*