

**Sermon – Rev. Bruce Stanley**  
**Acts 1 : 1-14 ; Acts 2 : 1-13 – “waiting, wanting, working.”**  
[www.waitara.anglican.asn.au](http://www.waitara.anglican.asn.au)

**\* Intro III** – I hate waiting. Last week I spent some time in the emergency ward at the hospital when Jonah was sick. About 8 hours to begin with before they moved us into a room. All the sickness aside, I just hate waiting! I actually don't mind doing the grocery shopping, but I hate having to wait in line at the checkout. You have to just stand there! And every other line seems to go faster than yours. And if you change lanes, you end up moving to an even slower lane. I really don't like waiting. But I love the start of the book of Acts.

Acts 1. What are the disciples doing? Waiting!

Remember first of all what's just happened. Jesus led his disciples around for 3 years. Then he was arrested and crucified. Dead and buried. Then raised to life. Then, Acts 1:1-3 tells us that for forty days he appeared to lots of people proving that he is alive. Then he ascended into heaven.

But in verse 4, before he ascends, he tells the disciples: “Wait here!...”

\* *“Do not leave Jerusalem, but **wait** for the gift my Father promised.”*

The gift he's promising is the Holy Spirit. And they're told to wait, for 10 days actually, for the Holy Spirit to come.

Don't leave. Wait. Don't do anything/ No speaking. No teaching. No healing. Just wait. And they wait. They appoint Matthias as a 12<sup>th</sup> apostle to replace Judas. And in verse 14, we're told *“they joined together constantly in prayer”*. Apart from that, they wait.

I hate waiting. So why do I love this part of Acts? Because we don't have to! And that's our first lesson today. Don't wait. Think about it: the disciples had to wait for the Spirit to come. But we don't! Because the Holy Spirit has already come! The apostles had to wait 10 days before they began God's mission on earth. But we don't!

If you are waiting... no, if **WE** as a church, are waiting to start God's mission, we've got it wrong! This is it! We are in mission time! The mission to go out with God's word began in Acts 2. It was called Pentecost. So **why** do we find so many reasons to wait when it comes to mission?

For example, on Sundays, why do we wait until the starting time of the service to turn up? Why don't we come earlier and talk to each other – maybe even meet a visitor? That's part of the mission! Why do we wait until we have a pay rise before we give more for our missions work? Do we have time to wait when there is a need for that mission work **now**?

Why do we wait until we have enough time to read the Bible? Can we afford to wait to have that deeper relationship with God?

Why do we wait until we have more energy to begin a new ministry that we **know** is needed? Why is it so easy to wait for someone else to do it? ... Why is it so easy to wait?

The Holy Spirit is with us now. And he's not waiting. But are we? As individuals serving God, AND as a church, let's learn this from the disciples as we read through the book of Acts. Let's learn this every week! There's no more time for waiting to do God's mission. As soon as the apostles received the Holy Spirit, they started. Lesson 1. Don't wait.

\* Here's the second lesson we can learn from the disciples in Acts: **Expectation**. Expectation.

Look at verse 6 – they ask Jesus:

\* *“Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom of heaven?”*

Now, they were a bit confused. They were still expecting some sort of national comeback for the Jews. They were waiting for an Israelite revival. A new government and a new land for Israel. Of course, the

Kingdom Jesus was bringing was much bigger than the national revival they were hoping for. In fact Jesus doesn't promise a new nation. He promises a whole new heaven and earth!

But the disciples did get one thing right with this statement. They *were* expecting **more**. They knew that Jesus' death and resurrection was not the end! And they're asking: "Are we going to see the big finale now?"

Don't they have a great sense of anticipation? They've seen Jesus die and come back to life and they still expect to see more!

**III** – Do you remember the build up to Christmas as a child? Remember the anticipation of the presents?

The disciples had huge expectations! They were expecting **big** things from a **big** God. ***What do you expect?*** You see, I think we can often have greater expectations when the mail arrives or the junk mail catalogues fill our letterboxes, than we do when we rock up to church or Bible study. Do you expect to see great things from God when you turn up to work, or talk to the hairdresser? Do you expect to see God doing amazing work? I want to suggest to you that you cannot read the book of Acts and walk away not expecting God to do amazing things today! Some of the things in Acts were very much only for that time. Pentecost was a very special event. A massive outpouring of God's Spirit upon the world at that time, in a very special way, for a very special purpose.

But we certainly can't say "God doesn't do those sorts of things anymore"! This time in church history may have been a very unique and outstanding time, but God still works in amazing ways through his Spirit today. The question is: Do we expect it? I want us to ask the question: Do we expect to see miracles? Do we expect to see amazing things? Because if the answer is "no", then you've got to ask "**why not?!**" Why don't we expect to see God do great things?

I expect God to do amazing things here at All Saints. He could double this congregation in 2 weeks if he wanted to. He could bring a thousand people through the doors. He's a big God! With big power! God is not small. God isn't limited in what he is able to do. God is already doing amazing things, so why not expect that he will **keep** doing amazing things?!

What I mean to say is this: We ***can*** expect great things from God! Like the kid's song says: "Our God is a great Big God". And he holds us in his hands.

\* So let's not **wait**. And let's **expect** amazing things from an amazing God. But one more thing.

\* And it's perhaps the hardest thing: **Work**.

**III** – In Armenia, in 1989, an earthquake killed thirty thousand people in 4 minutes. One story emerged about a father who raced to the school his son attended. The school has been flattened. When this father arrived, other parents were standing around the stones and rubble crying and sobbing. They all said "It's too late". But this Father starts digging. He digs for 8 hours, removing boulders and bricks and dirt. Nothing. Then 16 hours. Then 32 hours. Still nothing. Then 36 hours. Hands raw. Bleeding. Exhausted. 38 hours. He pulls back another boulder. And finally hears his son's voice. And the voices of many other children.

That father worked hard, with every ounce of energy he had left, because he wanted to save a life.

In verse 8, Jesus makes a big statement to his disciples, about what they can expect from ***him***, and what he expects from ***them***:

*\* 8But 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."*

They will be given the Holy Spirit. He will be their power. And they will WITNESS. From their home town, to the rest of the country, to the ends of the earth. And that's where we come in!

For us today, that means work. Hard work. The sort of work where you spend 38 straight hours moving boulders to save a life. We need to be people who are prepared to work with God's Spirit, committed to hours of prayer a week. Committed with our time, committed with our gifts, committed with our wallets, committed personally, committed 100%. And no matter who you are, or what your gifts are, you CANNOT underestimate the impact YOU can have.

\* **III** – the butterfly effect. (two golf balls needed)

Have you heard the term “*The Butterfly effect*”? It's basically the idea that a small change in one thing can mean a large change somewhere else.

\* – Like if you drop a ball here, it can land in a completely different place than if you drop it from here.

The term came about when [Edward Lorenz](#), in 1961, was using a computer to work out a weather prediction. As a shortcut, he entered one of the numbers as 0.506, instead of entering the full 0.506127. The result was a ***completely different weather scenario***. Lorenz published a paper that talked about how one little change in a system can completely change the whole system. Someone else put it this way: *Does the flap of a butterfly's wings in [Brazil](#) set off a tornado in [Texas](#)?*

You could say Acts 2 is a dramatic example of the Butterfly Effect. One person, Jesus, changed history. But it doesn't end there. He impacts 12 apostles, which turn into 120 disciples, which turns into a church of a few thousand within a few weeks, which turns into the biggest faith movement the world has ever known. Because people witnessed. And because the Holy Spirit empowered them.

People often say: “I'm not really someone who can talk about my faith. I wouldn't know where to start. I'm too shy.” I even said that once. Here's my challenge to you today: Say to one person every week the simple words “I'm a Christian” and see what butterfly effect it has. Or say “I went to church this weekend.” Or be a bit bolder and ask someone “Have you ever read the Bible?” And if you're still saying “But I couldn't answer their questions, I wouldn't know what to say, I wouldn't know where to start.” Then just look back to Acts 1:8 “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes”. It is the Spirit who will speak. The same Spirit who spoke through the apostle Peter speaks through us. With the same gospel message. Perhaps with slightly different words. But the same Spirit.

Just look at Acts 2 and the way the Spirit works there. We could spend another half hour talking about it. Asking technical questions. But **can we** just appreciate what happened here? 120 people stepped out and started the biggest ripple in the history of humanity. More like a tidal wave. They stepped up to the call of Jesus and, verse 4:

\* “*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak...*”

Yes, they spoke in other tongues, and yes, people were amazed that these men could suddenly speak languages they had never learned. But don't miss the most amazing thing here – “*they began to speak.*”

God's most amazing work of salvation begins when we begin to speak.

When we stop **waiting** to do mission.

When we start **expecting** amazing things from God.

And when we start **working**, speaking words that lift boulders off people who are dying.

I pray we can do that.