



Walking with the Spirit through the Book of Acts

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Schedule

April 7	The Holy Spirit
April 14	Acts 1:1-9
April 21	Acts 1:10-26
April 28	Acts 2:1-13
May 5	Acts 2:14-47
May 12	BREAK (Mother's Day)
May 19	Acts 3:1-26
May 26	Acts 4:1-21
June 2	Acts 4:22-5:11
June 9	Acts 5:12-42
June 16	BREAK (Father's Day)



The Spirit Unbounded

The pre-conditions for the Spirit to work:

- All glory to him
- Men and women he can use (counterpoint, the fraud of Ananias and Sapphira)
- The outworking of his purposes, which is to draw people into the kingdom



The Spirit Unbounded

Impediments to the Spirit's work:

- Glory to something or someone else
- People who are frauds
- The outworking of *our* purposes—the goals of humans and not God



The Spirit Unbounded

1. The Spirit is unrestricted when conditions are right: Healing people and freeing them from the demonic (Acts 5:12-16).

The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by impure spirits, and all of them were healed. (Acts 5:12-16)

The Spirit Unbounded

What is a demon? What is demonization?

- Demons are fallen angels with definite but limited ability to affect human beings.

The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. (Rev 12:9)

“When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first.” (Luke 11:24-26)

The Spirit Unbounded

What is a demon? What is demonization?

- Demons are not a sickness, but bear some resemblance to sickness in that they occupy lives that are not spiritually healthy.

Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her. (Acts 16:16-18)

The Spirit Unbounded

What is a demon? What is demonization?

- Demons are a counterfeit to the work of the Holy Spirit, and appear (and are revealed) when the Spirit works.

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Cor 4:4)

And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve. (2 Cor 11:14-15)



The Spirit Unbounded

2. In connection with the Spirit's work is cultural pushback, but the Spirit's power is unrestricted in its response to culture (Acts 5:17-20).

Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people all about this new life." (Acts 5:17-20)



The Spirit Unbounded

The recurring agenda behind the Spirit's work is the message of new life (v. 20).

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"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10)



The Spirit Unbounded

3. The response of those through whom the Spirit works is unwavering and uncompromising (Acts 5:21-32). These are pre-existing characteristics which reflect the Spirit's heart and priorities.

At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people. When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin—the full assembly of the elders of Israel—and sent to the jail for the apostles. But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, “We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside.” On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were at a loss, wondering what this might lead to. (Acts 5:21-24)

The Spirit Unbounded

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Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people." At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them.

The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood." (Acts 5:25-28)

The Spirit Unbounded

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Peter and the other apostles replied: **“We must obey God rather than human beings!** The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.” (Acts 5:29-32)



The Spirit Unbounded

4. Gamaliel's wager (Acts 5:33-40) shows that God's action is rational and intended to be verified. The Spirit does validate his people and purposes throughout Acts. Nothing has changed to this day.

When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. Then he addressed the Sanhedrin: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered." (Acts 5:33-37)

The Spirit Unbounded

4. Gamaliel's wager (Acts 5:33-40) shows that God's action is rational and intended to be verified. The Spirit does validate his people and purposes throughout Acts. Nothing has changed to this day.

“Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.”

His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah. (Acts 5:38-42)