

I. Introduction

- A. Our Christian faith is centered on the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, his story is the scarlet thread running through all of Scripture. And through it all, God in Christ by the Spirit is the Great Chief Shepherd who seeks and saves the Lost. That scarlet thread runs from Genesis to revelation.
- B. But it doesn't stop with Revelation.
- C. The mission and work of Jesus keeps going on, even as the Person of Christ has gone to heaven. The mission and work of Jesus continues through you and me today. That's God's plan for us. That's God's plan for his church.
- D. There is a book in the Bible that actually talks about this. It is the Book of Acts. The formal name is the Acts of the Apostles.
- E. The Book of Acts tells the story of that brave and heroic generation of Christians right after the days of Jesus.
 - 1. But it doesn't just tell the story.
 - a) It promotes the truths of that story.
 - 2. And it doesn't just promote the truths of that story.
 - a) It promises that the same God who energized the story of Acts will energize your story today.
- F. So, for this summer, we will open together this amazing, powerful, inspiring book of Acts.
- G. I'm calling this series of messages: **OUR TURN....**
 - 1. Because Christianity didn't end when Jesus left earth. Now it's our turn. Now it's our turn to add our own pages to the marvelous story of Christ's Mission and Work.
 - 2. So Our Turn, that's going to be our series in this Book of Acts.
- H. And the title of my talk today is It's Our Turn **...TO BE SUPERNATURAL.**
 - 1. In this first section, Luke shines the spotlight on major events that transcend what nature alone can explain: the resurrection, the ascension, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. Right from the beginning, Luke establishes the very basis of church life and Christian life. He is saying that the Christian life is a supernatural life and the Christian mindset is a supernatural mindset and the Christian worldview is a supernatural worldview.
 - 3. Christian, your calling and your life are based on powers beyond yourself. Your calling and your life are based on forces far beyond this world, this realm, and this space-time continuum.
 - a) We are not *naturalists*, because we believe that nature cannot explain the deepest things of life. We are supernaturalists because we believe in a realm of God and the devil, angels and demons, heaven and hell, truth and deception.
 - b) We are not *materialists*, because we believe in "spirit"—a kind of matter that goes far behind molecules and atoms. The things that are seen are temporary, but the things that are not seen are eternal.
 - c) We are not *deists* because we believe that God answers prayer, provides our needs, guards our steps, and blesses our way. He is intimately involved. He is working and he is near. He is with us because he is for us, and he can't be for us and not be with us.
 - 4. You have God-given provision. Holy Spirit power. The same powers that gave Jesus such a remarkable life. These powers are yours for the taking and yours for the believing.
 - 5. And here in Acts, Luke records a time in the life of the church when these powers radically overflowed God's people.

II. Sermon

A. The Premise v. 1

- 1. *The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach. (Acts 1:1)*
 - a) **The PREMISE of the book of Acts is that Jesus fulfilled his mission on earth by the supernatural power of God. Now, it's our turn.**
- 2. The introduction tells us several important facts. First, the nature of this book is that it is part two of a two volume work. Cf Luke 1:3,4.
- 3. Second, the recipient of this book is someone named Theophilus. No one knows who this person is, but his name means Lover of God. In fact, it is quite possible that the name is symbolic, and Luke is addressing lovers of God everywhere. My hunch is that Theophilus was a real person — Luke's patron — who commissioned this book in two volumes.
- 4. And third, Luke writes of all that Jesus *began* to do and to teach...
 - a) And by using the word "*began*" Luke gives his first hint that the story keeps on going, so it's our turn.
 - (1) When Jesus died, the story didn't end.
 - (2) When Jesus rose again, the story didn't end.
 - (3) When Jesus walked the earth for 40 days after his resurrection, the story didn't end.
 - (4) Even when Jesus ascended to heaven, the story didn't end.
- 5. All that was just a beginning...
- 6. Because Jesus left his people behind to pick up where he left off. This is God's intention for you. And the only way this is possible is through divine provisions that transcend this natural order.
 - a) The Christian mindset is a supernatural one.
- 7. Today's philosophers make fun of this. Many scientists scoff. The secular person on the street has no room for this. They say you're a fool. You have no proof. Your faith is magical thinking.
- 8. Some even say you're deluded.
- 9. I say they're the ones trapped in a matrix of deception and they don't even know it.
 - a) The most important things in life have no explanation apart from the intervention and work of God.
- 10. Are you a believer? Have you been saved?
 - a) Then you are a living, breathing, three dimensional continuation of the Mission and Work of Jesus Christ.

11. There is a supernatural dimension, a dimension of mystery and transcendence in everything we do. There is a glory to even the most average Christian that dazzles even the angels. You are a continuation of the life and work of Christ... that's what a Christian is.
 - a) All that Jesus *began* both to do and to teach... has been handed over to us. Now it's our turn to carry on his mission.
12. That's the premise Dr. Luke lays out in the very first verse. Now, he's going to add some clarity to his premise.

B. The Prototype. vv. 2,3

1. *Until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:2-3)*
 - a) **The PROTOTYPE and model of our Christian lives is Jesus, and the same power that energized his supernatural life will energize yours today too.**
2. I am saying today, from Scripture, that the essence of our Christian faith is supernatural. I know this makes a lot of people jittery. It makes me jittery.
3. Does that mean we're supposed to heal the sick and raise the dead? Does that mean we're supposed to be out doing miracles and mind reading and prophecies and all that?
4. Does that mean that if we're not doing miracles there's something wrong?
5. No. No. And no. And Luke says so right here... stay with me. I'm going to show you.
6. Luke says right there in verse two that Jesus operated by the power of the Holy Spirit. He did four things through the Holy Spirit.
 - a) He ascended to heaven. He rose from the dead. He gave commandments to his apostles. He spoke to them about the kingdom of God.
7. Two of those four are miracles, and two are not miracles.
 - a) The technical definition of a miracle is this:
 - (1) **A Miracle is an intervention by God in which he temporarily and dramatically suspends the laws of physics (nature) to effect his purposes in the world.**
 - b) The Resurrection? That is a miracle.
 - c) The Ascension? That is a miracle.
 - d) Jesus issuing commands? That is not a miracle.
 - e) Jesus speaking and teaching? That is not a miracle.
 - (1) But all of these are done by the Holy Spirit's power, and so they are supernatural, but they are not all miracles.
8. If we were to make a diagram, we would draw two circles, one within the other.
 - a) **The larger circle is labeled: Supernatural. The smaller circle is labeled: Miracle.**
 - (1) All that is a miracle is supernatural, but in the biblical worldview, all that is supernatural is not necessarily a miracle. Not a suspension of the laws of nature.
 - (a) You loving your enemy is supernatural, but it's not a miracle.
 - (b) You forgiving someone who hurt you is supernatural, but it's not a miracle.
 - (c) You in the parking lot stopping and waiting to let someone back out is supernatural, and let's just admit it, it's a miracle too. Just kidding.
9. So many readers of Scripture miss this.
10. Right there in verse 2 it says that Jesus gave his apostles commandments. Down in verse three, it says he was speaking of things pertaining to the kingdom of God. He was teaching. He was preaching.
11. And by what power did he do this? Luke is very clear: "through the Holy Spirit."
12. When the Holy Spirit energized the life of Jesus Christ, he didn't just energize the miracle-moments, he energized the non-miracle-moments too.
 - a) Everything the Spirit of God does is supernatural. But not everything the Spirit does is a miracle. In fact most of what he does is NOT a miracle, but is supernatural nonetheless. And this is what so many Christians fail to understand.
13. So when I say that the Christian worldview is a supernatural worldview, I am not saying that we should be out raising the dead, healing the sick, walking on water, getting words of knowledge, or doing miracles.
 - a) Can God do miracles? Yes. Can he do them through us? Yes. Is that the normal Christian life? No, except for certain circumstances, which we will talk about over the coming weeks.
14. Because it wasn't like that for Jesus, and it wasn't like that for the apostles, and it's not like that for us.
15. If you're always looking for miracles, you're actually going to miss most of the supernatural work that God actually does... and you're heading for a disappointment.
16. Scripture is clear that Jesus is our prototype. We are picking up and doing all that he began to do. He is our role-model. And because he is our role-model, Jesus made a tremendous sacrifice that was very specific.
 - a) Jesus limited the use of his own powers. He was the Son of God. He possessed all the powers of deity. But he voluntarily chose not to use those Son of God powers which he always had.
 - b) So then, where did he get his powers?
 - c) In order to be our role model, Jesus limited himself to only using powers that would be available to us, and to believers of all ages.
 - d) Jesus tapped into two power sources...
 - (1) The Holy Spirit, The Word of God.

17. When Jesus loved, when Jesus resisted sin, when Jesus cast out demons, when Jesus walked on water, when Jesus did miracles, and when Jesus fulfilled the will of God, the source of his supernatural power was the Holy Spirit plus the Word of God.
18. This little factoid might have escaped your Sunday School teacher. Yet, God practically shouts it from the pages of Scripture. Here goes:
 - a) *His Conception: Mary was found with child of the Holy Spirit.* (Matthew 1:18). Supernatural? Yes. Miracle? Yes.
 - b) *His Baptism:* When He had been baptized He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. (Matthew 3:16). Supernatural? Yes. Miracle? Yes and No.
 - c) *His Temptation:* Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (Matthew 4:1). Supernatural? Yes. Miracle? No. All he did was quote Bible verses. The only one doing miracles in the temptation of Christ was the devil.
 - d) *His Ministry:* "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," Jesus said, as he listed all his ministry. (Luke 4:18, 19). Supernatural? Yes. Miracle? Some yes, so no.
 - e) *His Travels:* Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee. (Luke 4:14, NKJV). Supernatural? Yes. Miracle? No.
 - f) *Casting Out Demons:* "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. (Matthew 12:28, NKJV). Supernatural? Yes. Miracle? Yes.
 - g) *His Sacrificial Death:* Christ through the eternal Spirit offered Himself to God. (Hebrews 9:14). Supernatural? Yes. Miracle? No. He suffered and died as a man.
 - h) *His Resurrection:* Christ was put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, (1 Peter 3:18). Supernatural? Yes. Miracle? Yes.
 - i) *His Whole Mission:* For God's Spirit is upon him without measure or limit. (John 3:34, NLT). Supernatural? Yes. Miracle? Yes and no.
19. All of what Jesus did was supernatural, but relatively little of it was a miracle. Most of it was teaching. Most of it was loving. In fact, based on frequency, a lot of it was Jesus just eating with his believers, and that makes me happy.
20. And when Luke tells us that Jesus is our prototype and model, he is saying that our lives can tap into the same supernatural power he tapped into.
 - a) You have the Holy Spirit. You have the Word of God. That is all you need to live in the supernatural every day of your life, whether you ever see a miracle or not.
21. Now I did say that a miracle was a time when God intervened to suspend the laws of nature to effect his purposes in the world.
22. Do you want to know what is the greatest miracle of all?
 - a) It is that moment when God finds a sinner, and suspends their natural blindness, and suspends their natural appetite for evil, and suspends their natural arrogance and self-sufficiency, and makes them a new creation with a new nature and a new destiny, indwelt by the supernatural Holy Spirit and the mystery of Christ in you. When salvation happens human nature takes a holiday. That is the miracle that matters most.
 - b) That is what Jesus modeled.
 - c) And in the next paragraph that is the power Jesus offered and the commandment Jesus gave.

C. The Purpose. vv. 4-8

1. *And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* (Acts 1:4-8)
 - a) **The PURPOSE of the Spirit's supernatural power in your life is that you might be a witness to Christ and his gospel to a lost and dying world.**
2. Picture the scene. Jesus is closing out his last days on earth. He is with his disciples, and commands them to go to Jerusalem.
3. They ask why. Why Jesus? We live in Nazareth of Galilee. We want to go home. Why wait in Jerusalem of Judea... two states away?
4. Jesus explains... I want to you go to Jerusalem, and wait for "the promise of the Father" which he calls "the baptism of the HS." We will dive into all that in the next message.
5. But notice their question.
 - a) Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?
 - b) They still didn't get it. They still are thinking of a literal kingdom with Jesus as king reigning from Israel.
6. So Jesus corrects them. He tells that day is coming, it will be called the Millennium, but it's not for them, or us, or anybody do know when.
7. And then he says they're asking the wrong question. They ask a question... Jesus makes a statement.
8. Their question is all about the natural realm. But Christ's statement is all about the spiritual realm.
9. They make Jesus the subject. Jesus says... now it's your turn. You're the subject, and you will have all the power you need to be the actor here.
10. They are concerned with political and temporal times.
 - a) Jesus is concerned with a spiritual moment, when they are fully equipped, mature, and filled with the Spirit.
11. They are concerned with an earthly kingdom.

- a) Jesus wants them to focus on a heavenly mission, to bear witness to the shed blood of Calvary's Cross, and everything Jesus did to save them.
- 12. They are concerned with one nation, their own back yard.
 - a) Jesus says to pay attention to the whole wide world. For them, it's about the victory of Christ for one nation. For Jesus, it's about the gospel of Christ for the world.
- 13. The PURPOSE of the Spirit's supernatural power in your life is that you might be a witness to Christ and his gospel throughout all the world. Because people need the Lord. We have one more paragraph to go.

D. The Push. vv. 9-11

- 1. **Acts 1:9** *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*
 - a) **The PUSH is God pushing us out of the nest of familiarity into a realm of faith that we might bring the gospel of salvation to a lost and dying world.**
- 2. See what just happened in these verses? Jesus abandoned them. Jesus left them. Again.
- 3. He already did that once, when he died on the cross... dashing their hopes and swamping them in a sea of confusion.
- 4. But imagine their joy when he reversed that when he rose from the dead.
- 5. So now, they think he's back for good. Their grief is over. Their panic is over. Now, he'll feather the nest and make us feel good. But no. He does it again. He shoves them out of the nest again.
 - a) Jesus told them "it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Holy Spirit will not come to you." (John 16:7) Even so, sorrow filled their heart (v. 6) The disciples wanted Jesus to be there and stay with him.
 - b) On the mount of transfiguration, Peter wanted to move in and stay there, soaking in that golden experience forever. But Jesus made him move on and told him to quit talking about it.
 - c) After he rose from the dead, Mary Magdalene saw him. She clung to him, and wouldn't let go. Jesus had to say, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to my father" (John 20:17). The disciples didn't want to let him go.
- 6. But that is not the plan.
 - a) This makes so much sense to me. It makes so much sense of Christian behavior.
 - b) It's pretty likely we'd all be like Mary. We'd all be like those disciples. Jesus, don't leave. Jesus stay close. Jesus never go away.
 - c) I want to see Jesus. I want to feel Jesus. I want to feel that "God showed up." It would one amazing to have those tangible, feel-able tokens of his presence.
 - d) But no. Jesus trained his disciples, and shoved them out of the nest.
- 7. That's because a tangible sense his presence is not his Plan A for us. His Plan A is a plan of faith.
 - (1) This plan of not seeing, but believing anyway.
 - (2) It plan of not feeling, but believing anyway. Let's just be honest... NOBODY LIKES FAITH.
- 8. But that is exactly God's plan and God's will and God's greatest call on your life.
 - a) Not seeing Jesus. Not clinging, not touching, not encountering, not experiencing, but still believing anyway.
 - (1) We love experience. We chase after encounters. We pursue the emotion, the passion, then energy.
 - (a) But God has something better than that for us.
 - b) **Nobody likes faith, but God loves faith...**
 - (1) **and more than anything else, faith is what heaven will reward.**
 - (2) *"whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,"* (1 Peter 1:8)
 - (3) *"Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'"* (John 20:29)
- 9. So in a moment that is both supernatural and miracle, Jesus ascends to heaven, pushing them out of the nest once for all, while simultaneously reminding them of his ever-present supernatural power through the Holy Spirit.

III. Conclusion

- A. So Jesus ascended and a cloud received him out of their sight.
- B. We can only imagine that moment when the Son of God returned home. If the Father of the Prodigal Son threw a party for his return, how much more glory and joy erupted in heaven at the return of God's Son there.
- C. But from the disciples view, he is gone. And though he is gone, they still keep looking at the sky. Not heaven. The sky. The cloud. They kept gazing after gazing was useless.
- D. Because in the realm of nature, Jesus was gone. He had been received up into glory.
 - 1. He transitioned from this material realm to that hyper-material realm, beyond matter. He transitioned from earth to heaven. From the natural to the supernatural.
- E. Dear Christian... why do you stand pining after Jesus in the natural—in the emotional, the experiential, the tangible—when pining after Jesus in the natural is useless? It just gets in the way.
 - 1. It just locks you into what is physical and emotional, and distracts you from what is eternal and truly supernatural.
- F. He is with you. In a supernatural way. Feel him or not. Miracle or not. He is with you. The Holy Spirit is with you. God is with you. You won't see him again till you see him face to face in glory.
- G. And until that day, it's our turn to stretch out that scarlet thread. **It's our turn to continue our Savior's supernatural mission to seek and save the lost.**