

## Impossible Possible Mission

### Acts 1:3-8

Online Sermon: [http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page\\_id=3567](http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567)

### Impossible Mission

The Mission Impossible movies start off with an iconic decision that must be made by the leading operative of the IMF team, Tom Cruise. There is a taped message from headquarters contacting Cruise on a common everyday item such as a phone, sunglasses, camera, iPad, or

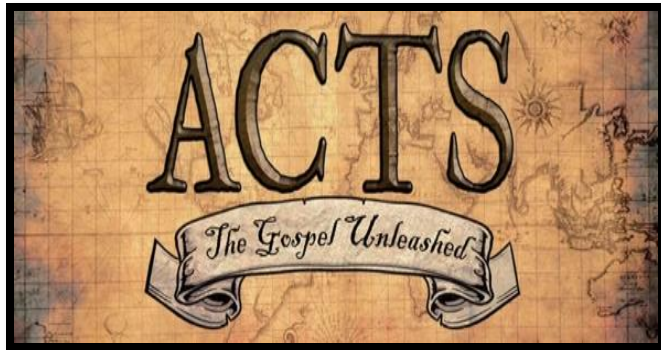


other device that gives the details of the mission that is so fraught with danger and unbelievable challenges that no regular joe or highly trained person would ever stand a chance of surviving much less succeeding! At his point in the movie, you are sitting on the edge of your seat for you know after having watched Cruise in other missions that what is being asked will require him to enter a fully armed, state of the art video surveillance, impenetrable fortress undetected to secure some object or person and somehow escape without being captured or lose his

very life! To make sure Cruise knows the severity of the danger he faces the person from headquarters calmly but curtly states “should any member of his team be killed or caught the secretary will disavow any knowledge of his/her actions.” The tape then warns Cruise that it will self destruct in 5 seconds. The opening of the movie is done masterfully for it invites the viewer to ponder the question: would they ever consider saying YES to such an impossible, dangerous mission or would their involvement dissipate with the smoke of the self-destructing message?

The book of Acts outlines the mission of the church as being to witness to the world the Good News concerning the resurrected Christ. Without the aid of God this is an impossible and dangerous task! To convince those given over to their reprobate minds (Romans 1:28) that the cross is anything, but mere foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18) is an exercise in futility especially considering that so many of them believe that truth is individually created and maintained in the figments of one’s own mind! Yes as Christ’s ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20) we can plant and water the seeds of truth in another’s heart but without the Spirit of God to convict and convert

them our efforts are mere “dust building upon dust” (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).<sup>1</sup> Who of the lost would ever accept with pure joy even the suggestion that they ought to dethrone the god of self



and submit to their Creator when their heart’s desire is to indulge in the sinful cravings of their own hearts (James 1:14)? And even if one were to let one’s Light shine (Matthew 5:16) does this not invite hatred towards oneself from those hate having our Light expose their evil deeds (John 3:20)? While it is somewhat frightening and painful to be persecuted for righteousness’s sake by flesh and blood, the moment we chose to witness

to the world do we not enter the worldly arena in which our struggle also becomes against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms? Whom of us could ever stand against demons without the Spirit and the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6)? After reading the book of Acts the reader is left to ponder the question: would one say YES to such an impossible, dangerous mission of spreading the Good News to the lost of this world or would one choose to hide one’s light under a bushel (Matthew 5:15)?

### The Fields are Ripe but Few Workers

Before you answer this life defining question let me remind us of the urgency of the mission call in the book of Acts. The current world population in 2021 is approximately 7.9



billion people.<sup>2</sup> Each person has been given but one life to live (Genesis 3:19) and the freewill to either choose or reject God’s gracious gift of salvation. Those who believe in His Son’s atoning sacrifice (1 John 2:2) are born again (John 3:1-21), adopted into His family (Romans 8:14-26), sealed by His Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14), and will spend an eternity in heaven (John 3:16) whereas those who reject God will be forever separated from Him and

sentenced to a lake of fire to eternally experience wailing and gnashing of their teeth (Matthew 13:40-43)! And yet despite the severe contrast of rewards verses punishments for this life

<sup>1</sup> A. W. Tozer. *The Pursuit of God: The Human Thirst for the Divine*. Camp Hill (PA: Wing Spread Publishers, 1993), 11.

<sup>2</sup> Taken from the following website: [World Population Clock: 7.9 Billion People \(2021\) - Worldometer \(worldometers.info\)](https://worldometers.info)

altering decision only 30 percent of population state they are Christian.<sup>3</sup> Even if one assumes they are truly believers, which is unlikely for many who say “Lord, Lord” do not have a relationship with Him (Matthew 7:22-23), this still leaves a staggering 5.5 billion souls living with a reprobate mind that will earn them eternity in hell unless someone boldly, bravely and Spirit led tells them about Jesus! With such urgency and ripe fields surely the workers must be plentiful (Matthew 9:37-38)? And yet the Joshua Project estimates about 7,400 people groups or about 42 % of the world’s population has less than a 2 % Christian witness available to tell the Gospel message<sup>4</sup> and Lifeway Research found that over 55 % of believers never tell a single lost soul about Jesus!<sup>5</sup> Are you telling the lost about Jesus?



One of the main reasons there are so few workers is to due confusion over one of the main functions of the Holy Spirit! In Acts 1:4-5 the Apostles are told to wait in Jerusalem until they are baptized by the Spirit of God. Upon hearing of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit the Apostles mistakenly assumed that the final consummation of the kingdom of God<sup>6</sup> was about to occur and it would be politically, ethnically, and geographically focused on Israel as the one light unto the nations.<sup>7</sup> In verse seven and eight Jesus told them not only was it “not for them to know the date of the end time” but also that God’s kingdom was spiritual in nature, not physical!<sup>8</sup> Entrance into the kingdom was not based on nationality, genealogy or geography but belief in and submission to a risen Savior! The primary reason that they were to wait in

Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit was so that they would be empowered to “work miracles and

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<sup>3</sup> Taken from the following website: [Most Christian Countries 2021 \(worldpopulationreview.com\)](http://worldpopulationreview.com)

<sup>4</sup> Taken from the following website: [Has Everyone Heard? | Joshua Project](http://Joshua Project)

<sup>5</sup> Taken from the following website: [Evangelism More Prayed for Than Practiced by Churchgoers - Lifeway Research](http://Lifeway Research)

<sup>6</sup> Ajith Fernando, [Acts](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 51.

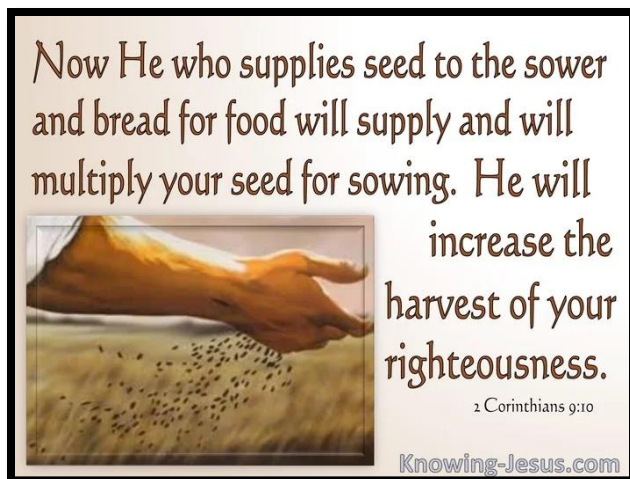
<sup>7</sup> James Montgomery Boice, [Acts: An Expositional Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 23.

<sup>8</sup> James Montgomery Boice, [Acts: An Expositional Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 24.

preach effectively” (Acts 4:7-10, 31, 33)<sup>9</sup> to the people of Jerusalem, then Judea and Samaria and then to the ends of the earth! The Spirit is essential for conversion but also for “witnessing that God’s overarching purpose from beginning to end has been to glorify Himself in the whole world”<sup>10</sup> and to give everyone a chance to be saved (2 Peter 3:9)! While the Apostles who met and were trained by the Master Himself were in a unique position to start the Great Commission,<sup>11</sup> today’s Christian must not forget that being the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16) we too are qualified and expected to witness to the Good News concerning Christ!<sup>12</sup> Too many Christians mistakenly believe witnessing is the evangelists role exclusively (Ephesians 4:11) but every member of God’s family are called to give the reason why we believe (1 Peter 3:15) and witness to truth concerning God’s gracious gift of salvation to all who believe in the atoning sacrifice of the Son (14:2–3; 22:15–18, 20).<sup>13</sup>

### The Mission is not Impossible

Another reason why there are so few workers in the field of missions is that many



Christians believe they do not have what it takes to plant and water seeds in a world that is so very wicked! While the fiery darts of Satan and his fallen angels are powerful (Ephesians 6:16) and the poisoned lips (Romans 3:13) and social ostracizing strategies of unbelievers often makes relational ministry exceptionally difficult, remember greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4)! In Acts verse 8 the Apostles are told they would “receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them.” The Greek word for power is “dynamis” which means

“possession of controlling influence, often understood as manifesting influence over reality in a

<sup>9</sup> William J. Larkin Jr., [Acts](#), vol. 5, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Westmont, IL: IVP Academic, 1995), Ac 1:6–11.

<sup>10</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

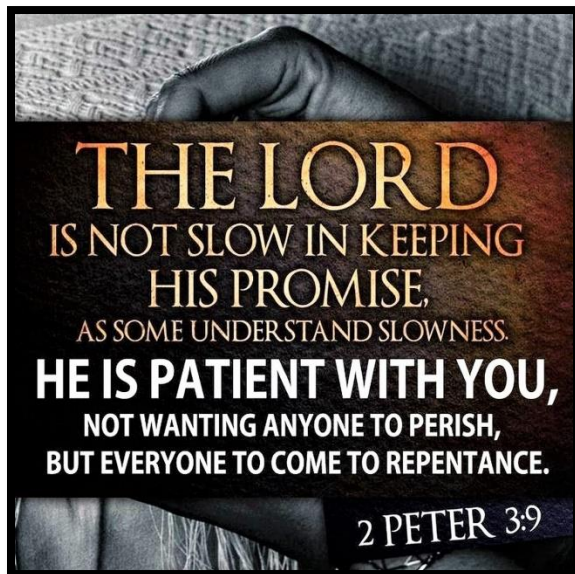
<sup>11</sup> Ajith Fernando, [Acts](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 54.

<sup>12</sup> William J. Larkin Jr., [Acts](#), vol. 5, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Westmont, IL: IVP Academic, 1995), Ac 1:6–11.

<sup>13</sup> William J. Larkin Jr., [Acts](#), vol. 5, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Westmont, IL: IVP Academic, 1995), Ac 1:6–11.

supernatural manner.”<sup>14</sup> The same sound of the blowing wind from heaven and the tongues of fire of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost that converted and freed those of a Roman culture steeped in the many gods (Acts 2)<sup>15</sup> lives inside of us believers today! We need not worry about what to say (Matthew 10:19) to the lost for the Spirit of truth (John 16:13) will reveal to them what used to be foolish as the absolute, gracious, and loving truth of atonement by a risen Savior (John 3:16)! To believe oneself incapable of witnessing is to believe He who raised Christ from the dead (Romans 8:11-13) has no power over the world in which He participated in Creating (Genesis 1:1) ... and we simply know that is far from the truth! Fulfilling the Great Commission is only impossible for those then that do not believe in the promise “I will build the church” (Matthew 16:18)!

The final reason why there are so few workers in the mission field is that we cannot see the eyes of Christ in the lost of this world. How easy it truly is to write off as swine (Matthew 7:6) those who choose to ridicule, persecute, and become our enemies simply because our Light



shines on their sinful desire to roll in the muck of the sifting sands of today’s culture of self gratification! But are the gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, without love and mercy (Romans 1:30) unredeemable and therefore doomed to spend an eternity in hell wailing and gnashing their teeth? If this were true then would not Apostle Paul have been exceptionally foolish to go through the beatings, the pelting of stones (2 Corinthians 11:25-29) and the constant risk of bodily harm by preaching to those who were lost? Also, why did Jesus die once and for all, even His enemies if He had written off the lost as being unredeemable (1 Peter 3:18)? Is not the Lord slow in fulfilling His promise to return because

He wants none to perish (2 Peter 3:9)? If the vilest of persons were to believe Jesus is the way, truth and life (John 14:6) will they be denied the living waters (John 4:10) or a mere crumb from the Master’s table that they seek (Matthew 15:27)? If we could only see the eyes of the Creator in the lost, then we would only shake the dust off our feet after witnessing and having the

<sup>14</sup> Taken from the Bible Sense Lexicon in Logos Bible Software.

<sup>15</sup> James Montgomery Boice, [Acts: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 25.

unbeliever say NO to the pearl and treasure God graciously has offered them<sup>16</sup> and even then, we would never stop praying that they will one day turn from the darkness to the light (Acts 26:18)!

## Conclusion

In conclusion Jesus is calling upon us, His born-again children, to decide whether to join in spreading the Good News to the lost of this world. While it is somewhat frightening and painful to be persecuted for righteousness's sake by flesh and blood and worse yet by Satan and



the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms, though we are in some ways like sheep sent into the wolves of a self-absorbed society, we must never forget greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world! While reaching the foolish who believe truth is a figment and creation of their own minds might seem impossible it is not for the same sound of the blowing wind from heaven and the tongues of fire of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost that converted and freed those of a Roman culture steeped in many gods lives inside of us believers today! There is a sense of urgency to answer

the call of the Great Commission for we through the power of the Spirit we can and must plant and water seed of righteousness amongst those who are dying in their sins and destined to spend an eternity in hell where there will forever be wailing and gnashing of teeth. And yet despite this truth 42 percent of the world has a mere 2 % Christian witness telling them about the saving power of Jesus! The fields are truly ripe, but the workers are few! Surely, we as Christ's ambassadors can see the image of God in the people of this world, weep and witness that like us who were once wretches, they too can be saved! Have you said YES to the Great Commission?

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<sup>16</sup> Leon Morris, [\*The Gospel according to Matthew\*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 168.

