

Sermon for Sunday 17 May 2026

St Luke's & Golden Grove Bari Congregation SA

By Rev. Samuel Yengi

Theme: The Promise of the Holy Spirit

Text: Acts 1:1–11

Grace and peace to you all in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Today we reflect on a powerful and hopeful passage from the Book of Acts the promise of the Holy Spirit and the ascension of Jesus Christ. This passage reminds us that although Jesus returned to heaven, He did not leave His followers alone. Instead, He promised them power, guidance, comfort, and mission through the Holy Spirit.

Luke begins by reminding Theophilus that Jesus continued teaching His disciples even after His resurrection. For forty days Jesus appeared to them with "many convincing proofs" that He was alive. Imagine the joy and amazement of the disciples. They had seen Jesus crucified and buried, but now He stood before them alive again. This was not a dream or imagination. Christ had truly conquered death.

This truth is very important for us today. Christianity is built on the living Christ. We do not follow a dead leader. We follow the risen Lord who is alive forevermore. Because Jesus lives, we also have hope in every circumstance whether in suffering, uncertainty, sickness, family struggles, or fear about the future.

But after spending time with the disciples, Jesus gave them an unexpected command. He told them not to rush into ministry immediately. He said, "Wait for the promise of the Father." The disciples needed the Holy Spirit before they could fulfil God's mission.

This teaches us an important lesson: human strength alone is not enough for God's work. Education, experience, money, or talent cannot replace the power of the Holy Spirit. The disciples had walked with Jesus for three years. They had seen miracles and heard His teaching directly. Yet Jesus still told them to wait for the Holy Spirit.

Many times, we try to live the Christian life using only our own strength. We try to solve every problem ourselves. We become discouraged when things are difficult. But Jesus reminds us today that spiritual work requires spiritual power.

Jesus says in verse 8:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses."

The Holy Spirit gives believers power.

Not power for pride.

Not power to control others.

But power to witness, to endure, to pray, to forgive, to love, and to remain faithful.

The disciples were ordinary people. Some were fishermen. One had been a tax collector. They were not powerful leaders in society. In fact, after Jesus' death they were afraid and hiding behind closed doors. But after receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, these same fearful disciples became bold witnesses for Christ.

Peter, who once denied Jesus three times, stood before crowds and preached fearlessly. The apostles carried the gospel across nations despite persecution and suffering. What changed them? The Holy Spirit.

Brothers and sisters, the same Holy Spirit is still at work today.

The Spirit strengthens believers when life becomes heavy.

The Spirit comforts us in grief.

The Spirit convicts us when we sin.

The Spirit helps us pray when words fail.

The Spirit unites the church.

And the Spirit empowers us to testify about Jesus.

As members of St Luke's and Golden Grove Bari Congregation, we also need the Holy Spirit in our community. We live in a busy and challenging world. Many families face pressure, stress, cultural struggles, and spiritual distractions.

Young people face temptation and confusion. Some people feel spiritually tired or distant from God. But the promise of Jesus still stands today: **"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you."**

We must not try to walk alone. God has given us His Spirit to guide and strengthen us daily.

Another important point in this passage is the mission Jesus gives His followers. He says:

"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Notice that Jesus did not say "you might be my witnesses." **He said "you will be."** Every believer is called to witness for Christ.

Witnessing is not only preaching from the pulpit. Witnessing happens through our daily lives.

We witness when we forgive others.

We witness when we help those in need.

We witness when we remain honest and faithful.

We witness when we pray with our families.

We witness when we show the love of Christ in our workplaces, schools, and communities.

Sometimes people may never read the Bible, but they will read our lives.

Jesus also expands the mission outward:

Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

The gospel is for everyone every tribe, language, and nation. This message is especially meaningful for us as a multicultural congregation. God's kingdom includes all people. The Holy Spirit breaks barriers of tribe, race, language, and background. In Christ we become one family.

Then we come to the ascension of Jesus. As the disciples watched, Jesus was lifted up into heaven and a cloud took Him from their sight. Imagine how emotional that moment must have been. The disciples stood looking into the sky.

But suddenly two men in white robes appeared and asked:

"Why do you stand looking up toward heaven?"

In other words, the disciples could not remain standing there forever. There was work to do. Jesus had ascended, but their mission was beginning.

This also speaks to us today. As Christians, we are called not only to wait for heaven but also to serve faithfully on earth. We are called to pray, worship, evangelize, encourage one another, and care for those around us while we wait for Christ's return.

The angels also gave a wonderful promise:

"This Jesus... will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Jesus will come again.

This is our Christian hope. History is moving toward the return of Christ. One day suffering, injustice, war, death, and pain will end forever. Christ will return in glory.

Therefore, we should live ready and faithful lives.

My dear brothers and sisters, today's passage gives us three important encouragements:

First, trust in the risen Jesus.

He is alive and reigns forever.

Second, depend on the Holy Spirit.

Do not rely only on your own strength.

Third, continue Christ's mission faithfully.

Be witnesses wherever God has placed you.

May our congregation be filled with the power, unity, courage, and joy of the Holy Spirit. May our families grow stronger in faith. May our young people walk closely with God. And may we continue to shine the light of Christ in this community and beyond. **Amen.**

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ,

Thank You for Your promise of the Holy Spirit. Fill us with Your power and help us to be faithful witnesses in our homes, church, and community. Strengthen those who are weak, comfort those who are suffering, and guide us daily by Your Spirit. Keep our eyes fixed on You as we await Your glorious return. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.