

Week 1: You or You

Acts 1:8 (NIV) "But 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."

Introduction:

In our culture today, individualism rules and it's with this framework we come to the Bible. Yet, the Bible was written in a time and culture that was soaked in family and community. When we consider Acts 1:8, the three references to 'you', are not actually 'You' the individual, but 'you' as a group. Jesus is setting a vision of His mission for His followers to be witnesses of the Good News to friends, neighbours, strangers and people in other cultures, each playing our role within rich community of the wider church.

The vision we see of the church throughout the New Testament is an intricate tapestry, where people are able to express their God shaped gifting to build up others. Mission, being the core work of the church, is no different. Often when we think of evangelism or 'witnessing', we envisage something that we either can or can't do – yet all should be doing.

By approaching the 'you' as the collective, we find freedom in being able be a true witness to the message of Jesus.

It's not about doing everything, but it is definitely about doing something. Something that is meaningful, prayerful and inclusive.

Insider Story

Ask someone in your congregation to share their story. Look for someone who:

- Is sharing their life and love of Jesus in a unique way.
- Can express how God has shaped them and how this has inspired their mission.

Story 1: Matthew 5:13-16 – You are salt and light

Matthew 5:15 (NIV) You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

- **Key point:** As the community of God we are to be salt and light, each person making their unique contribution within the community of God to share the message of Jesus.
- **Application:**
 - You (as a group of people who follow Jesus) can either add or detract the salt and light from the world by the way you interact. What ways are you as a community relating to the people around you?
 - We are called to be witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus. Not just as a historical fact, but the truth that Jesus is alive today. This changes our lives, both as an individual and as a community, and has the power to transform the world.
 - In transforming the world, there is not a one-size-fits all approach. God has gifted each of us to contribute meaningfully to his witness in all spaces of the world. For some it will be for those within our families, others it will be our neighbours, or some will be called into other cities and cultures.



Conclusions:

- For those who do not know Jesus, an invitation to experience the power of His life right here, right now.
- For those who are following Jesus, encouragement to spiritual practices and engagement with what Jesus is doing in and around you, so that you will be able to share all you see, hear and experience.
- For the church as a whole, what does it look like or us when we gather together to remind one another of what we have seen, heard and experienced, so that we can go out from this place each week and let that transform the way we interact with the whole world.

Reflection and Action

- Take time out to reflect how God has shaped you (as an individual)?
 - What things in your life can you affirm or have other affirmed in you?
 - What areas or spaces would you like to grow in?
 - How can 'you' be adding and growing the wider 'YOU' (community of believers), how might this affect your witness/mission?
- As a Jesus follower you are not only witnessing about Him but He in us. It is deeper than simply witnessing with our voice. It is a combination of everything about us.
 - You are a witness to something – what is your life saying about the one you we claim to follow?

