


**A Five-Day Devotional Journey**
**January 6-13, 2008**
**Acts 1:1-11**

# Ditching the Safe Life

## 1 Risking themselves totally

**Read.** Matthew 28:16-20 *Message*.

Meanwhile, the eleven disciples were on their way to Galilee, headed for the mountain Jesus had set for their reunion. The moment they saw him they worshiped him. Some, though, held back, not sure about worship, about risking themselves totally. Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge: "God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age."

**Think.**

- Having witnessed all the events of Jesus' ministry and now his death, burial and resurrection, what is the next step for Jesus' disciples? What is their response to the presence of Jesus?
- What are the action items in the "great commission" (Matthew 28:19)? How were they to make disciples? Of whom and with what help?
- How do you see this "great commission" applying to you? How have you been stirred to carry it out? In what new ways would you like to "risk yourself totally"?

**Pray.**

Lord, fill me with fresh passion to be a whole and holy instrument of your kingdom. Spread your good news through my life!

**Live.**

Share Jesus in a way that's out of your comfort zone.

The only adequate answer to an aggressively pagan world is for Christians to recover the New Testament power of spiritual aggression.

**Karl Barth**

"I'm going fishing."

That's what Peter had said to his fellow disciples. It seemed like a good idea to the other six disciples as well. Jesus had been crucified, had been resurrected, and had appeared to them all in a startling upper room experience. "Go to Galilee," had been the directive in that first encounter. So here Peter and his companions were. Waiting. And waiting. And waiting. It all seemed so surreal. They really had no grid for processing any of this. The kingdom seemed in limbo. None of this was turning out as they expected. Now they didn't know which way was up or which way to go. They still had no ground under their feet. And Peter still had personal clouds of guilt over his head from his own recent failure .

"I'm going fishing."

Some think this was more than a diversion to occupy them while they waited – that Peter had in mind to take up his old occupation. After all, it's what he knew. Fishing wasn't a great living, but at least he knew how to do that. It was a return to the familiar, the safe, the defined. There's a certain comfort in knowing what to expect each day. But then, as we read the rest of the story in John 21, Jesus shows up again in an all too familiar yet unexpected way. Another catch of a lifetime. 153 fish on the beach. Breakfast is served, hearts are stirred, guilt is swallowed up by thrice affirmed love – and the familiar and the routine are left behind for good, as Peter and the rest take up a new commission to "go into all the world."

And so Jesus comes to us all on our own beach, our own inner sanctum of security, of predictability, of "responsible" adulthood. And he invites us to risk ourselves totally, ditch the safe life and follow him.

## 2) He talked about the kingdom

**Read.** Acts 1:1-5 NLT

In my first book I told you, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the Holy Spirit. During the forty days after his crucifixion, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God.

Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, “Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

**Think.**

- Have you been convinced of the reality of Jesus? What are some of the “proofs” that have convinced you that Jesus actually lived, died, and rose again?
- Where are you when it comes to your own personal direction and mission from the Lord: Still waiting for instructions? Ready to go? On my way? In between calls? Not even in the game yet? Or what?

**Pray.**

Lord, teach me to be still and to wait for your voice, your presence instructing me, before I venture out. Give me a greater sense of what you are doing and how you would have me play.

**Live.**

Take time to be still before the Lord today.

## 4) You will be my witnesses

**Read.** Acts 1:6-8 NLT

So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?” He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

**Think.**

- What one question would you ask the Lord right now regarding the end times? Why?
- Define evangelism. What does it mean to be a witness for Christ?
- For you, what is the most challenging aspect of evangelism? When did you share Christ with someone most recently? What happened?
- In which setting would you like more “power” and confidence in sharing the good news of Jesus: with neighbors? At work? At school? With friends? With family members?

**Pray.**

Lord, lead me into a greater freedom to share your life with others in a naturally supernatural way.

**Live.**

Pray for a neighbor you haven’t really met yet, and for a way to naturally begin developing a friendship.

## 3) I’m giving you the same work

**Read.** John 14:11-17 Message

Believe me: I am in my Father and my Father is in me. If you can’t believe that, believe what you see—these works. The person who trusts me will not only do what I’m doing but even greater things, because I, on my way to the Father, am giving you the same work to do that I’ve been doing. You can count on it. From now on, whatever you request along the lines of who I am and what I am doing, I’ll do it. That’s how the Father will be seen for who he is in the Son.

I mean it. Whatever you request in this way, I’ll do. If you love me, show it by doing what I’ve told you. I will talk to the Father, and he’ll provide you another Friend so that you will always have someone with you. This Friend is the Spirit of Truth. The godless world can’t take him in because it doesn’t have eyes to see him, doesn’t know what to look for. But you know him already because he has been staying with you, and will even be in you!

**Think.**

- What best describes your relationship with the Holy Spirit:  
a. What Holy Spirit? b. Spooky c. Distant relative or  
d. Close friend? Why?
- How are you carrying forward the work of Jesus in your life? How have you experienced the Holy Spirit’s empowering presence in your walk and work for him?
- How would you like to experience him more?

**Pray.**

Spirit of God, open my heart to you as a “friend that sticks closer than a brother.” Flow through me!

**Live.**

Pray the above prayer throughout the day.

## 5) Taken up to heaven

**Read.** Acts 1:9-11 NLT

After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!”

**Mark 16:17-20** Message

“These are some of the signs that will accompany believers: They will throw out demons in my name, they will speak in new tongues, they will take snakes in their hands, they will drink poison and not be hurt, they will lay hands on the sick and make them well.” Then the Master Jesus, after briefing them, was taken up to heaven, and he sat down beside God in the place of honor. And the disciples went everywhere preaching, the Master working right with them, validating the Message with indisputable evidence

**Think.**

- Why do you think the disciples kept looking up? How do you think they felt about Jesus’ departure? Abandoned? Confused? Fearful? Excited? Why?
- What odds would you give these eleven disciples of changing the world? To what extent do you see yourself as a world-changer?
- What do you make of the various supernatural signs Jesus mentions in Mark 16? What is the point of such outward demonstrations?

**Pray.**

Lord, fill me with fresh excitement for your calling in my life. Let others experience your grace through me.

**Live.**

Watch for and follow divine promptings to share Jesus with others today in unexpected ways.