“Endings and New Beginnings”  
Acts 1:1-9

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. 4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” 6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 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.” 9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

The book of Acts occurs following the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the New Testament it is considered a book of history; the story of the founding of the church. The disciples have seen the risen Christ and now received instructions from him prior to His ascension. This marks the beginning of a new era for them (and the whole world). This book was written early 60’s- history of the early church after resurrection. It is written by the same author as the book a Luke and could be considered the second part of Luke covers:

- Explosive power of the Holy Spirit. The references to HS are too numerous to list.
- Signs/wonders/miracles -- about to go from a group of 11 disciples to 120 to 3000 to 5000
- Their lives about to experience wonderful new things like they never imagined
- Break down racial, cultural, economic, gender barriers- unbelievable
- Acts lays out the spread of the good news of Jesus spreading from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the Gentiles, then to Asia, Africa and Europe to Rome -- whole cities impacted!
- They will lead a church into a level of new community like never before.

Allowing endings and change and receiving new beginnings are some of the most important tasks in our spiritual lives. Transitions into the new always start with endings. Stages of a transition: Ending, Waiting, then New Beginning

**Ending** - Many people resist this part but it just delays the process of new beginnings. First there is an ending. Then the new beginning is possible. This ending prepares the ground, makes room, for the new growth to occur.

**Waiting** (time between the end and the new beginning). This is where the disciples were left in Acts 1. Jesus is planting seeds - teaching them, “I’m alive”. v.4 - Jesus has them waiting... The Holy Spirit is coming... Power is coming. God gives them glimpse of the future

**New Beginnings** - The Book of Acts, history, you and I today!! Who would have dreamed what would happen next: e.g. Thomas ends up in India and Phillip in Acts 9 ends up Ethiopia/Africa.

Parker Palmer “In the spiritual journey... each time a door closes, the rest of the world opens up. All we have to do is to stop pounding on the door that just closed, turn around - which puts the door behind us and welcome the largeness of life that now lies open to our souls.” The living Jesus has new beginnings for you!

**Discussion Questions:**
1. Read the passage from Acts and share how the Holy Spirit is coming to you in these verses.
2. Read verses 10-11. Why did the angel speak to them this way?
3. What do you imagine the life of the disciple was like before and after Jesus’ death and resurrection? His/her role in life, experiences, mission, etc.?
4. Had you been standing where the disciples were when they watched Jesus ascend, what might you have been thinking?
5. What is it time to let go of in your life right now?
6. What new thing might be standing backstage waiting to make its entrance?

You have been given something to do and to become - and will have the power to do it, if you receive it!