

**“How Jesus Turned Forty Days Into Two Thousand Years of Ministry”**  
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Empowerment is the theme of the month. Jesus had real power; we read about how He turned water into wine, he took a few fishes and some bread and fed 4,000... Great power multiplied it all.

*Joshua 24:15 ...choose you this day whom ye will serve...*

Joshua was not a big man. When he was with the spies that had searched out the promised land, they said that they were as grasshoppers in their own eyes (Numbers 13:33). In spite of that, Joshua said that they were well able to take the land, because he believed that God would give them the victory. We have a great victory in Jesus today.

*Luke 20:13-18 ...let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours...*

Joshua gave them a choice; we have the same choice now: Choose you this day whom you will serve; He made up his mind. Empowerment comes from having a made-up mind. Once you make up your mind, you can do so much more than you think you can.

*Romans 1:16 ...the power of God unto everyone that believeth...*

If you have problems, go to the Word of God. Just as in Biblical times, people followed by faith, even so we also need to have faith and follow as we are instructed by the Word of God. Just as people shared the Gospel message with us, we need to share it with others. There are people that try to stop this work; there always have been.

I remember one time on the Andy Griffith Show, Barney Fife was a new deputy, and Barney tried to handle a situation on his own ability, and people didn't pay much attention to him. Andy sat down and talked with him, and told him that the badge on his chest was more than just a piece of metal, and encouraged him to do what he knew was right. Barney went back, and put himself aside, and he said, look, this is the law, and you may not like it, but that's what the law says. This time, the people listened. We have to go forth with official authority. The Bible says, if God be for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31)

There was a time when Elisha called on God to open his servant's eyes, because Gehazi thought that they were badly outnumbered (2 Kings 6:15-17). When the young man's eyes were opened, he saw that the enemy was outnumbered. We are surrounded by God's messengers. For every battle of the warrior *is* with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but *this* shall be with burning *and* fuel of fire (Isaiah 9:5). We may get confused, and snap the ball too quick, but if we follow God's game plan, we will be victorious. If we live godly, and soberly (Titus 2:11-12), we will have victory in good times and in bad. Our success will empower others to go forward.

We have to delight ourselves in the Lord. Who encourages the encourager? God does. We come to worship, and leave to serve.

*Matthew 28:16-20 ...All power is given unto me...*

Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, but soon He and His disciples were baptizing more people than John was. John's disciples asked, "Who is this man?" and John told them. He had a growing following. What empowered Him? the Spirit of God. For three years he had mounting favor, a mounting following, and mounting persecution. Eventually they crucified Him, but he didn't stay in the grave. When the women went to the grave after three days, they found the empty tomb, and they went and told the disciples, who ran to the grave. Six Flags doesn't have a ride like this. He was with them for forty days after the resurrection. There are some other things that lasted for forty days. In Noah's day, it rained for forty days (Genesis 7:17). Jesus fasted for forty days and then was tempted by Satan (Matthew 4:1-11)—you notice Satan didn't come around after the resurrection, though. Moses fasted for forty days when God gave him the commandments (Exodus 34:28). You can get some things established in forty days.

*Mark 16:15-20 ...He was received up into Heaven...*

After forty days, Jesus had proven the reality of His resurrection to His selected witnesses. There had to be great joy in this victory over death. They knew that the truth of eternal life was REAL. They had first-hand proof that Jesus was real in all His eternal glory. No one could make them doubt anymore. They had all the proof they needed—forty days of it—and now they had a job to do: Lift up Jesus, and go, teach, baptize.

We just read that Jesus was received up into Heaven. Now he was gone; this time for good (this was better than the last time he was taken away from them—by the cruelty of man), but, Jesus was gone again, and they would have to fulfill Jesus' mission by themselves (or so it seemed). There would be no more physical contact.

*Luke 24:44-53 ...endued with power from on high...*

This time Jesus gave His disciples a bit of knowledge that would prove immense: He would give them power from on high. They weren't alone; in fact, He would be in them in His Spirit to lead and guide them unto all truth.

*Acts 1:1-11 ...ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you...*

The forty day party was over. This time, Peter did not go a-fishing, no, he went to Jerusalem and got him some POWER.

*Acts 2:1-4 ...they were all filled with the Holy Ghost...*

Peter, that day by the power of the Holy Ghost, shared the great salvation message, the same message that faithful believers must share today to see others saved.

*Acts 2:37-42 ...ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost...*

In conclusion, we are the believers today who are empowered to share the great Gospel of Jesus Christ. Let us believe it with the same certainty that the early church did. Let us go forward, knowing that we are empowered by Jesus Christ to complete this

mission. Forty days turned into a two-thousand year old and counting—and growing—and thriving—ministry.

