



Empowered Witnesses

Living the call,
divinely enabled.
by **Joseph Robinson**

Jerusalem, AD 33.
The fledgling church had been given a mission, a call that would challenge social norms, upend religious traditions, and identify her members as a group of radicals.

It was a call they ran from.

Yes, the disciples had seen Jesus resurrected. They had heard Him speak and watched Him ascend. But that wasn't enough to keep them from seeking shelter behind closed doors

(John 20:19) and praying that the Holy City would not become their tomb.

Then Pentecost came — and nothing would be the same again.

What enabled terrified men and women to become a living echo of the Lion of Judah's roar? What gave them the boldness, the passion, and the fervent desire to see Christ glorified, even at the cost of their own lives?

It was neither confidence in their theological brilliance nor trust in their philosophical eloquence. Frankly, the Scripture records that many of the disciples were "unlearned and ignorant" (Acts 4:13, KJV). Yet

their conduct, miracles, and unprecedented fraternal love forced even their adversaries to admit that they had been with Jesus.

The difference was the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. Peter and the 120 other believers were living proof that Joel's prophecy of a spiritual outpouring was accurate (Joel 2:28). Here we see one of the most compelling aspects of God's divine plan: preparation. God doesn't just call us to service; He equips us. Christ hadn't abandoned His fledgling church. He was operating with those believers, and in them, just as He promised. Against all odds, they — the empowered witnesses — changed the world.

Divine methods

God's pattern of preparing His children before service has not changed (Acts 2:39), but His methods of equipping us are often unexpected and, sometimes, unseen.

In 2010, I found myself unanimously elected as the pastor of a small rural congregation. Like the believers of old, I felt daunted by the work God had called me to do. I was only 25 and, although I had been in ministry for about eight years, many of my congregational members were older than I and came from various ethnic backgrounds. The church had little money and no building of its own, and it had recently undergone a series of devastating losses.

While I felt unprepared, I realized later that unbeknownst to me, God had been molding my life for this moment. The strength and leadership I needed were already there, but it took this seemingly overwhelming situation for

God to demonstrate what He can do if we are willing to step out in obedience to His call.

Lesson

Fast-forward ten years. That same church is flourishing with a strong focus on both local outreach and global missions. We nurture Christian marriages across the nation. We've fed the hungry, reached out to those in prison, and offered hope to the abused and fatherless. To me, it is nothing short of a miracle, but it is a miracle with a lesson behind it.

So often we limit God by focusing on our weaknesses instead of on His strength. Like Moses, we list our inabilities without realizing that, through Him, our ability to carry out His commission is unlimited. We are His witnesses, empowered by His Spirit and molded by experience.

Let us recall the words spoken to Joshua when he received his commission: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9, ESV). In a time where fear and social unrest claim the hearts of many, the need for empowered witnesses has never been greater.

Like the believers of old, let us step forward boldly, recognizing that we have God. And that means we can change the world.

BA



The screenshot shows the Bible Advocate website interface. At the top, there are social media icons, the Bible Advocate logo, and navigation links for ABOUT, MAGAZINE, SECTIONS, SUBSCRIBE, DONATE, and ESPAÑOL. The main content area features a large article titled "A LIFE WELL LIVED: AN INTERVIEW WITH MARTHA KEIM" with a photo of an elderly woman holding a magazine. Below this are sections for "LEADERSHIP" with articles like "3 AREAS EVERYDAY CHRISTIAN LEADERS PRACTICE CONTENTMENT" and "WHY WE KEEP SINGING TOGETHER: EXAMINING OUR APPROACH". There is also a "THIS ISSUE" section for the May-June 2019 issue titled "All Authority". The "MEDIA4U" section includes articles like "NOAH" and "UNPLANNED". A "POPULAR TOPICS" section lists various subjects like APOCALYPSE, BIBLE-BASED, BIBLE STUDY, etc. The text "An Online Facelift" is overlaid on the screenshot.

For years you have enjoyed the convenience of the BA Online – accessing the archive, reading “extras,” and exploring other content. Now the all-new BA Online features not just the current and past issues but new sections as well: **Lead Up** (articles from Artios), **Now What?** (stories on life’s problems), and **Media4U** (the latest in Christian media and events). With one click of a button, the whole website can convert to Spanish.

We’re still working on the site, but feel free to visit. You’ll like what you see!

baonline.org

Don’t miss these online-only articles for the September-October BA:

- “Protecting the Commandments”
- “Learning to Love the Church”