Luke the writer of Acts says a lot in 11 verses here.

1. The disciples (and Luke himself) were convinced in the 40 days between Easter day and Pentecost that Jesus was alive, that he had risen from the dead. He appeared to them a lot, did various things which proved to them that He was alive and was who He said He was. I’ve always thought that the disciples must have been convinced, otherwise they would not have ‘been his witnesses in Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the Earth. Some of us have experienced moments when we have been convinced that Jesus is alive, some have visions, dreams, pictures, hear his voice. Others have seen evidence when they have prayed, for themselves or others. Some less so, but as Jesus said to Thomas, how great is the faith of those who have not seen, but have believed. That’s some of us. But others of us can think of moments when we’ve known beyond reasonable doubt, even for a moment that Jesus is alive. I pray for each of us that those moments of conviction would come again, and soon, in these days. Because it’s important for us that we believe Jesus is alive, that we don’t just follow a great moral leader, but we follow a risen and ascended mighty saviour, who came once, defeated death and is coming again. That is a great hope, of mercy, forgiveness, of a new order where everything begins again according to God’s design. Without that, our hope is not future-facing, and it needs to be.
2. In a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit. This was promised as a gift of God for the disciples, to give them the possibility of being connected to the love, power, guidance and glory of God wherever they went for the rest of their lives. They were told to stay in Jerusalem and to wait for the gift, which might have seemed strange since they were so frightened. But the gift did come, only a short time afterwards. We want everything now in our day. Sometimes it is good for us to wait for what is to come because, when it does, the gift is so much greater than we even imagined it could be in the first place. When I read the words in this part of the passage today, I was reminded of the 2 Chronicles passage we had as our first reading. One verse in that section is quite well known, verse 14 -**‘**if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.’ but there is so much else here which is so rich and exciting. God appears to Soloman because he has heard his prayer. He says that his eyes and ears will be open to the prayers of his people, that the temple has been chosen and made holy for God to be there. Soloman is reminded to live like his father David lived and to be faithful, not to turn away from God, just as the people are, because turning away from God has consequences, as I’m sure you’ll agree it should do. So my point is this, let’s not turn away from God in our day, let’s turn towards Him instead. You might remember that 1 Corinthians 6 we’re reminded’**19**Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; **20**you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies.’, so where once the Temple was a building, now the temple is us, the place where God lives, is worshipped and hears our prayers, *if* we are humble, turn away from the wrong things we do, trust Him and seek the things of the kingdom. As we pray, let’s be like that. Every great move forward in the history of Christianity has not come through power and influence, it has come because people prayed, confessed that they had done wrong and turned to trusting God.
3. Lastly, you will be my witnesses. We have the truth which sets people free. We have love which has the power to change lives, we have the good news which is the power to free any who would believe (as well as sounding like nonsense to some). We are the witnesses Jesus has today. We are the people who can tell the good news that Jesus has been, has gone - but sent the Spirit to guide us to be like Him in these times - and that he is coming again. The fact he is coming again, as the angels told Jesus’s friends as they looked up, not quite sure what had just happened (I expect) is crucial. One day He is coming back to claim his prize. People are his prize, People who have trusted, followed, prayed, welcomed God to sit upon His throne in our hearts and have shown by what we do and say that we believe that Jesus is the one who has saved creation. He is coming back to claim his prize. That gives me great comfort. I hope it does for you too. Keep faithful, keep trusting, keep praying and keep being honest about where we fall short and there is every chance for the Spirit to move among us and to add daily to our number those who are being saved and want to join us. Isn’t that exciting?!

Amen