

May 17, 2026

Waiting in Expectation

Acts 1:6–14; John 17:1–11

*“And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you.  
Holy Father, protect them in your name” (John 17:11)*

*“This same Jesus...will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”  
(Acts 1:11)*

The Ascension of Jesus doesn't receive the same level of celebration as other major Christian events. This is partly because it doesn't directly influence Jesus Christ's salvific work, and partly because it usually happens on a weekday. Nevertheless, the Ascension is just as important as Good Friday and the Resurrection, as it marks the completion of Jesus' redemptive mission.

After his resurrection, Jesus returned to heaven to present an account of his work to God the Father. In John 14:2-3, Jesus states, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." Following his forty-day appearance to his disciples, he ascended to heaven as promised.

Recognizing his disciples' emotional state after his crucifixion and resurrection, he reassured them by saying he would send the Holy Spirit to be with them forever, guiding them in their upcoming tasks. However, he instructed them to wait for the arrival of the Holy Spirit.

How many of us truly enjoy waiting? We often find ourselves waiting—whether it's in traffic, at the doctor's office, or for phone calls, results, answers, and breakthroughs. However, the Bible reveals something surprising: God frequently does His most profound work during times of waiting. In Acts 1 and John 17, the disciples find themselves in a transitional moment. Jesus has risen, but He has not yet ascended. The Holy Spirit has been promised, but Pentecost has yet to arrive. The mission lies ahead, but the power has not yet been bestowed. They are waiting—not in hopelessness, but in hopeful expectation.

During his last conversation with them, the disciples asked Jesus a question that every believer who feels the tension between what God has promised and what they have not seen. *“Lord, is this the time...?”* **Why did they ask it?** They had seen the resurrection. They had walked with the risen Christ. They heard the promise of the kingdom and believed the kingdom was coming. They were ready for fulfillment. Yet Jesus doesn't give them a timeline. He gives them **a calling**.

**We also experience this tension when we ask the Lord.**

- “Lord, is this the time my family will heal?” “Is this the time the breakthrough comes?”
- “Is this the time the church grows?” “Is this the time the burden lifts?”

Waiting exposes our desire for control. But Jesus redirects their focus from **when** to **what**—from **timing** to **mission**. Jesus doesn't answer their question, but He gives them something better: **a promise that fills the waiting with purpose**. Jesus says, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” This is not: “You might receive power.” “You should receive

power.” “You’ll receive power if you get everything right.” It is **you will**. And the purpose: “You will be my witnesses...” Jesus doesn’t instruct them to wait idly. He encourages them to wait with receptive hearts. **Waiting is not a mere interruption in God’s plan. Waiting is an integral part of God’s plan.**

Waiting is not wasted time. Waiting is **formation time**. God uses waiting to strengthen what is weak, purify what is divided, align what is distracted, and prepare what is called. **The disciples wanted a kingdom restored to Israel. Jesus wanted a kingdom that would be expanded to the ends of the earth.** Waiting enlarges our vision.

**The Ascension is a promise lifted before their eyes (vv. 9–11).** Jesus is taken up, and the disciples stand staring into the sky. **Why?** Because when God moves in ways we don’t expect, we freeze. We stare. We wonder what just happened. But the angels speak a word we still need today: “Why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This same Jesus... will come.”

### **The message**

- Don’t get stuck staring at what God *used* to do.
- Don’t get paralyzed by what you *don’t* understand.
- Don’t let the mystery of God’s timing stop the mission of God’s people.

Waiting is not a passive state; it involves taking steps forward in obedience while trusting God with the outcome. The disciples returned to Jerusalem and entered a season of expectant waiting. During this time, they acted with purpose: they obeyed, stayed together, prayed, prepared, organized, and waited for what God was about to do. Their waiting was a preparation for Pentecost (vv. 12–14).

Today, God is still working while you wait. Even when you don’t see any movement, God is shaping you for what comes next. Waiting is not a punishment; it’s a form of preparation. God delays to help us grow deeper, pauses to strengthen us, and waits to align our paths.

**Our expectations can change the way we wait. We should not wait with resignation; instead, we should wait with anticipation,** open hands, and open hearts.

The Spirit empowers us during this waiting period. We are not waiting for God to show up; we are waiting with the God who is already here.

We wait with confidence, our eyes lifted and our feet moving. The disciples waited, but they did so covered by Jesus’ prayer, anchored in His promise, united in His love, and empowered by His Spirit. When the Spirit came, they were ready.

We also wait—not with fear or frustration, but with expectation. The same Jesus who ascended is the one who empowers us, intercedes for us, lifts us up, and will one day return.