

The Church on the Move: Left Behind

Acts 1:1-11 || Pastor Paul Hahn || 29 May 2022

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: What is the most remote place you have ever been? What did it feel like being there?

Worship: [Psalm 84](#) (*Remain a few moments in worship with this passage. What is God's invitation?*)

Sermon Summary for [Acts 1:1-11](#) (*Read aloud before reading the sermon summary.*)

Ascension Sunday is the day on the church calendar when we remember and celebrate Christ ascending into Heaven. This is where Luke begins the book of Acts, revealing to us the church now on the move. Jesus – having proven the reality of His resurrection – has left us for heavenly realms. But He told us this would happen, and that it would be a blessing to us ([John 16:5-7](#)). “*I must go away from you... but it will be better for you when I do.*” But how does the Ascension bless us? How is our being left behind by Jesus to our advantage?

The Ascension and Victory // Heaven is God’s reality – not some place “up there”, but a reality not tainted or stained by sin and brokenness; it is behind and over and under our reality. Therefore, Jesus was lifted up to exalt Him. Christ has won the great victory, just as Daniel prophesied that our Savior would ascend to the Ancient of Days and be given His rightful dominion and glory. He has moved into God’s presence, experiencing the wholeness of His royalty and power. But what does this victory celebration mean and do for us? After witnessing the Ascension, the disciples returned to Jerusalem and gave themselves over to **worship**, based on what they had seen. This is what we can and should do as our hearts fill with the joy of Christ’s honor and victory. Our Lord is lifted up so that He can rightly be the object of universal worship ([Ps 121](#)). Any other thing or person or experience we try to elevate in this way will only come crashing down on us from above.

The Ascension and Waiting // This is perhaps the most difficult part of the Christian life. Much of church history was waiting. But after Christ’s incarnation, after passion and death and resurrection... the apostles didn’t want to wait anymore. We see this when they ask, “*Is now the time?*” (Acts 1:6). But the Ascension means a different and difficult kind of waiting. We still are waiting for the fulness of the Kingdom, meaning we know our God is victorious, yet must continue to wait in the middle of the world’s brokenness and pain. But this waiting is not hopeless. Far from it. The Ascension assures our hope and gives it purpose. Christian **hope** is certainty of a blessed future, a destiny secured in and by Jesus. Because there is humanity in Heaven now through the Ascension, which means there is a sure place for us there. What we await is perfection: perfection of body and soul, in a perfected new Heaven and earth, with a perfect object of worship ever before us.

The Ascension and Partnering // There is certainty about the fullness of Jesus’ kingdom. The Ascension proves to us that the kingdom of God cannot fit on any map. God’s Kingdom is in the world, fully engaged in all aspects of life, but not of it. Christ ascends, but offers hope and empowers His disciples (and us) to be witnesses through the power of His Spirit. Christ is ascended over all, reigns over all; His Spirit touches into all. And so we are called to spread the Gospel of peace to the world. Jesus says as much when He makes the startling claim that after He is gone, His followers would do greater works than He had done. In truth, Acts is still the Jesus story (just as the Gospel of Luke was), but from the perspective of His ascended Lordship. In it, we see His ongoing actions from His ascended seat of glory. We become His church on the move!

Discussion Questions (You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussions.)

The Ascension and Victory

- Why does Luke bring up Christ's works and teachings to begin Acts?
 - Why do you think that might be important to what Luke is going to say?
 - Luke also makes the point that in the Gospel of Luke he wrote about "*all that Jesus began to do and teach.*" What does that phrase imply about the content of Acts?
- What is the "promise of the Father" ([1:4](#))? What were the disciples to do until God fulfills this promise?
 - What would finally open the spiritual eyes of the disciples?
 - What else would they receive when the promise was fulfilled? To do what?

The Ascension and Waiting

- How do you think the followers of Jesus were affected by the promise that He would return?
 - How are you affected by that promise?
- How is being "left behind" by Jesus to our advantage?
 - How should these last words of Jesus shape our world perspective? Explain.
- How does this passage often mobilize Christians in missions?

The Ascension and Partnering

- When the disciples ask, "*Is now the time?*" Jesus responds that it isn't for them to know God's timing, but rather, "*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*" ([Acts 1:8](#)). How does Jesus' response challenge and expand the disciples' thinking and understanding of the Gospel?
 - How might Acts 1:8 provide a structural and thematic template for the rest of the book?
- What is an area of life where you need the Holy Spirit's power?
 - How can Christians experience the power of the Spirit in areas where they feel stuck?
- How is God using you and/or your CG to be a witness to those who don't yet know Jesus?

Prayer

For this week's Prayer Guide for personal or group use, click [HERE](#).

Engage & Experience: Prayer & Gratitude

As we start a new sermon series in the Book of Acts titled The Church on the Move, read through the entire book of Acts in one sitting, if possible. Acts records the history of the church's first three decades but is written in a fast paced manner. In the motif of our Prayer focus for 2022: as you read, mark or jot down whenever you see the church praying together. What did you learn about prayer? The Church? God? How can you apply this to your life?