

Waiting and Praying

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 25 May 2025

Preacher: Joe Dugger

[0 : 0 0] All right. Thank you, choir, for leading us in that time of praise through song. And, uh, Jennifer, thank you for holding the baby because it freed Audrey up to bring me a water.

! I think I was gonna die if I didn't have that, so I appreciate it. All right. Like I said, we were in the book of Acts, Acts chapter 1, and I want to give you kind of an overview, just a little bit of an overview of the book of Acts, because I think it helps us to understand the context of this passage and how it impacts the rest of the book of Acts, and really the rest of the church, the rest of the church of Jesus Christ.

So Acts is an interesting book. First of all, it is a sequel to the Gospel of Luke, okay? The Gospel of Luke starts off with a prologue where Luke explains to the person that he's writing, a man named Theophilus, what he's writing and why.

Luke chapter 1 says, And then Acts chapter 1 says, So Acts is a sequel to Luke's Gospel, and it has to be read as a sequel to Luke's Gospel, because what we're looking at here is the continuation of the ministry of Jesus.

Sure, Jesus is not physically on earth, but by ascending to the Father and sending his promised Holy Spirit, the church is empowered to accomplish the ministry of Christ here on earth.

[1 : 5 7] And so Acts is a sequel. And I did a little Google search, you know, best sequels of all time. Anybody ever prefer the sequel to the original?

Anyone? You know, sequel in a movie to the original? Maybe you like one of the Avengers movies better than the original Avengers. I don't know. But I did a little research here, and this is from IMDB, so you know it's, you know, solid.

This is the list of the best sequels. Top five. Number one is The Godfather 2. Is that, I mean, I've never actually seen The Godfather movies.

I tried it once, and I fell asleep. So, is that a good sequel? Anybody? Okay, all right. Number two, The Dark Knight. Now, that one I do know. That's Batman, the second Batman, Christian Bale, Dark Knight.

Number three, Star Wars Episode V, The Empire Strikes Back. Steven is adamantly opposed to that being included on the list. Okay. Okay, Star Wars Episode V.

[2 : 5 7] Remember, it actually came second. Okay, it is Episode V, but it was the second movie released. Terminator 2, Judgment Day. I've never gotten into the Terminator movies. I have no idea, but cool for them.

And then the fifth one is Mission Impossible Ghost Protocol, which is like the fourth movie, or fifth movie. So, I mean, it is technically a sequel, but it's not directly in sequence.

All right, but anyways, I do love the Mission Impossible movies, though. I'm not going to lie to you. I'm pretty excited about this new one that just came out. Anybody seen it yet? Anyone? All right, good.

You can't ruin anything for me. Okay. So, that list is obviously very subjective. Thanks to IMDB for putting it together. But it helps because there's a lot of good sequels out there. Well, Acts is a sequel, and it's a fantastic sequel to the Gospel of Luke because, again, Luke told us about the life of Jesus and the ministry of Jesus.

And then he continued that story by showing how Jesus is still involved through the work of his church. Jesus is still actively the one at work. And so, it's a beautiful sequel, and in part because the book of Acts, while the book is final, and it's in Scripture, and we have it here, at the same time, the content of the book of Acts is not finished being written yet.

[4 : 1 0] Because Acts describes the ministry of Christ through his church, and friends, you and I are still a part of the church of Jesus Christ. We're still a part of his ministry, actively and engaged

here in ministry on earth, right here in Lewisburg, Tennessee.

It's an amazing thing. The book of Acts is a beautiful sequel because it tells us about how we, as the church of Jesus Christ, are called to continue his mission and to teach the world about the kingdom of God.

And the launch point for this sequel is the ascension. The ascension of Jesus Christ is the launch point of this sequel. And the ascension is essential for a few reasons, and that's what we're going to talk about today.

First of all, it's the crowning proof of Jesus' resurrection. The ascension is the crowning proof of Jesus' resurrection because Jesus is still alive. Jesus came back, but he didn't go die again and be buried.

He rose to life and then is still alive today. This is the crowning proof of his resurrection. Number two, it ensures the Holy Spirit's presence and power in the lives of believers.

[5 : 20] Because Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father, he sent the promised Holy Spirit to earth to indwell believers. Number three, it secures our hope in the return of Jesus.

Because Jesus ascended, the Bible says here in Acts, he will return in the very same way. And number four, it gives purpose in our waiting. As we await the second coming of Christ, it gives us purpose.

The ascension of Jesus is essential to the life of the church. Let me pray for us, and we'll break this text down. Lord Jesus, thank you for who you are. Thank you that you rose to life.

And thank you that you stayed alive. That you ascended and are currently seated in power at the right hand of the Father. Lord Jesus, we praise you. We ask for your presence here today. We love you, and it's in your name that we pray.

Amen. So the first aspect of the ascension is that it is the crowning proof. The ascension is the crowning proof.

[6 : 16] Acts 1 and 2 is kind of a recapitulation of Luke's gospel. Acts 1, 1 and 2. And then in Acts 1, 3, Luke continues the story.

It says, After he had suffered, he also presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs. He appeared to them over a period of 40 days, and speaking about the kingdom of God.

So the ascension is the crowning proof. We've spent the last few weeks talking about the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. All right? So to name a few, we have Jesus with the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Remember, these two disciples left Jerusalem early in the morning. They were walking on their way back home, and Jesus appeared walking alongside them, and he began to ask them some questions, right?

What are you guys talking about? What's the fuss? Remember this? And Jesus is engaging, and they're like, Are you the only person in town who doesn't know what happened here? And he's like, Well, tell me what happened, you know?

[7 : 12] And they explained to him about how Jesus had died. Of course, they're explaining this to Jesus himself, about how he had died, and they were all distraught, and they thought for sure he would bring Israel back to prominence.

But now all that hope is lost. And then eventually Jesus opened their eyes and showed them who he was, and everything was changed. They realized in that moment Jesus is raised from the dead. It's the third day he's raised from the dead. We talked about Jesus appearing to the disciples in the upper room after that event. Remember this? They're standing there. Everybody's talking about how they've seen Jesus here, seen Jesus there, and then all of a sudden behind locked doors Jesus appears, and he's standing in the middle of them.

And they were freaked out, as I would be too. Somebody just showed up, right? They were freaked out, and he's like, Hey, peace be to you, right? Jesus said, Peace to you. And then he explained to them how he had come back from the dead.

We talked about Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene, very first person that Jesus appeared to in the post-resurrected life, right, of Christ. The post-resurrected, the resurrected body of Jesus, he appeared to a female, Mary Magdalene, very first, right there at the empty tomb.

[8 : 22] She mistook him for a gardener, and he appeared to her. He said her name, Mary. And she remembered, she heard his voice. She remembered, this is Jesus Christ. And so over a period of 40 days, Jesus had appeared to his disciples multiple times.

Later, after the first gathering in the upper room, a week later, he went back because Thomas, one of the disciples, wasn't there, and he didn't believe that they had actually seen Jesus.

So Jesus went back a week later, and he's like, Hey, Thomas, touch my hands, right? It's really me. Put your hand right here in my side. This is really me. I've risen to life. And so Jesus appeared to his disciples over a period of 40 days.

We talked last week about Jesus appearing to the disciples who were fishing at a lake in Galilee. Remember, he told them to cast the net out on the other side, and they caught this huge catch of fish, and they couldn't even bring it into the boat.

Jesus appeared to his disciples, and he ate with his disciples. He taught his disciples. The fact is, Jesus' resurrection was unmistakable, and it was completely convincing.

[9 : 27] This visit, this final appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, the 40th day, is the crown jewel. It's the crowning piece of evidence, right?

Because Jesus had come and visited, and then he'd gone away. And then he'd come and visit, and then he would go away. And so if the disciples were going to believe that Jesus was gone for good, there would have to be a dramatic and an emphatic statement of his departure, right?

Because so many times he'd come, and then he'd left. Then he'd come again, and then he'd leave.

And now here, this final appearance, there's this emphatic statement. The Father brings Jesus.

He's ascended. He was brought up, taken up into heaven. And in that moment, it's clear Jesus is not here anymore. He's not just gone for a couple days, and then he's coming back.

He's not going to come back in a week and show us his hands. Jesus is now gone. And the disciples have some instructions in that time period where they're waiting. But this ascension, it's confirmed by many witnesses, at least 120.

[10 : 32] Look at Acts 1.15. In those days, Peter stood up among the brothers and sisters. The number of who were together was about 120. So at least 120 people saw Jesus here this last day.

And then, in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul talks about the proof of the resurrection. And he says that Jesus appeared to up to 500 people at one time.

And 500 people might have seen Jesus here on the Mount of Olives before he ascended to be with the Father. It's the culmination of Jesus' mission. It's not the end of his mission, but Jesus' ministry on earth culminates in this moment where he ascends to the Father, and then it continues on through the life of his apostles, through those who have been sent by him.

And then the other aspect of the ascension is that this is the coronation of Christ. When a king is put on the throne, there's a coronation ceremony, a celebration for the coronation.

Jesus, when he ascended to heaven, alive and in power, he was coronated there on the throne. So Jesus, in the ascension, provided the final piece of evidence, the largest piece of evidence that he truly had been raised to life.

[11 : 48] So this is what we talk about when I say that the ascension is essential. There's a few reasons. There's a few reasons. One, it provided faith for a lot of people that this was witnessed by so many people.

In fact, Luke, the person who wrote this, wasn't present for the experience. But he believes with all conviction that Jesus truly had raised from the dead and also truly had ascended to be with the Father.

We can trust the eyewitness account. Now, the ascension is the most powerful evidence of the resurrection of Jesus. All of his ministry and his 40 days after he had been raised to life culminated in this event where Jesus was brought up in power, right?

It says there's a cloud there in verse 9, that a cloud took him out of their sight. This is kind of like the Shekinah glory of God from the Old Testament where the people of Israel, the Hebrews, were led by a pillar of fire at night and a pillar of cloud by day.

This is like the glory of God consuming Christ, bringing him up into his rightful place, replacing him in his preexistent glory right there in heaven at the right hand of the Father.

[13 : 03] But the ascension is not only the crowning proof, it also ensures the promise. It ensures the promise. So Acts 1, 4-8 says, While he was with them, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise, which he said, You have heard me speak about.

For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days. So when they had come together, they asked him, Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time? He said to them, The ascension of Jesus ensures the promises of the Father.

Jesus told his disciples, Go and wait in Jerusalem. They were told to wait, the command to wait. And I've mentioned this verse over the past few weeks, but John 16, 7, Jesus said, Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth.

It is for your benefit that I go away. Because if I don't go away, the counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you. The counselor is the Holy Spirit. And here's the thing.

[14:18] Jesus told his disciples, he told his now apostles, what they would be known as, to go to Jerusalem and sit tight and wait. And that had to be a pretty hard thing to do. You know how I know that?

Because I don't like to wait now. Right? We live in a world where, like, I don't have to wait. You know, if I want to eat something, I can put it in the microwave and heat it up in 15 seconds, probably like 30 seconds.

You know what I mean? Like, I can get things immediately. I don't have to wait. If I want to buy something, if something's, like, burning, you know, I'm like, oh, I've got to get this new, I don't know, pair of socks.

You know, whatever. And I can go on Amazon and buy that pair of socks right then. I don't even have to go to the store. I can wait in just a couple days. It's right there at my house. But I don't have to wait to buy it. You know what I mean? I can buy the things that, we don't have to wait very much. And because of that, I am an example of someone who's grown accustomed to not waiting and then not liking to wait. I'm not very patient. It's an area that I have to work on. I'm not very patient. I know a lot of people are like that.

[15:17] But the disciples, they were told, go to Jerusalem and wait. Go to Jerusalem and wait. And the waiting was for the fulfillment of this promise that he talked about.

He quoted from when John the Baptist, remember John the Baptist in his ministry, said that he came to baptize with water, but there's one who was coming after him who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.

So Jesus had obviously taught about this baptism of the Holy Spirit. He taught about the presence of the Spirit to his disciples. And so he tells his disciples, you guys go to Jerusalem and wait for what I've talked to you about.

Wait for what I've told you about. Wait for the presence of the Holy Spirit. Waiting isn't fun, but I believe there's a good things, there are good things that can happen while we wait.

I believe that God can teach us in our waiting. I believe that God can show us how we have to rely on him. See, if the apostles had gone out from this experience of seeing Jesus ascended without waiting, without being empowered by the Holy Spirit, and begun to attempt to do things in their own strength, then the church would have been built on their own glory and in their own power.

[16:23] But instead, they waited. They wouldn't have been able to accomplish all the things that the early church accomplished. It wouldn't have grown and flourished the way that the early church grew and flourished.

None of that would have been possible had they not waited. And so they waited. They were obedient. They went to Jerusalem and they waited. And there is this promise of power. You see, Jesus says that he's going to send them the Holy Spirit.

They'll be baptized with the Spirit in a few days. And then they took that to mean, okay, perfect, the Holy Spirit's coming. Probably now we'll see the redemption of Israel, right?

We'll finally have that national power that we hope for. But they kind of missed the point yet again. Remember, throughout Jesus' ministry, the disciples asked him, is now the time that Israel's coming back?

And then even here, right before Jesus leaves, think about this. This is the last question they got to ask Jesus before he left them. And this is what they asked. Is it now time for the kingdom to be restored?

[17:20] And Jesus said, look, it's not, don't even worry about that. The kingdom is restored in you receiving power and doing this ministry that I've called you to. And so there's this promise of power.

Verse 8, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you. The power, that word there in Greek, it's where we get our English word dynamite. All right? By the way, I'm going to tell you a quick story.

When I was a kid, I used to watch a lot of cartoons, Looney Tunes, you know, and the like. Just, I really thought that dynamite would be a bigger part of my life than it has turned out to be. You know

what I'm saying?

Like, I really thought I was going to hold a stick of dynamite at some point. I don't think I will. You know what I mean? But like, in the cartoons, I mean, it's all over the place. You know what I mean? But, that was just kind of funny.

But here's the thing. With dynamite, we know what it's capable of, right? The combustion, like the huge bang, the power in dynamite is, it's unmistakable. It's clear.

[18:15] It's impactful. Right? They take dynamite. In Tennessee, this is an interesting thing. In Tennessee, we drive on interstates, and sometimes you can look on the side of the road, and you're just driving through where a hill used to be.

You know what I mean? Like, they blew that out with dynamite, right? Or maybe other explosives. I don't know. But the point is, the impact of dynamite is very, very clear. It's very, very profound.

It's loud. It's big. And in the same way, the power that is inside believers is powerful. It's big. It's unmistakable. The Holy Spirit of God is the power that raised Jesus from the dead.

And that power that raised Jesus from the dead is alive in those who believe in Christ. So there's a promise of power. And then you have the purpose of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to accomplish God's mission, right? And then also empowers believers to be his witnesses. Now, these 12, in particular, were eyewitnesses.

[19:16] The apostles. The 11 at this point. Were apostles. They were specifically sent out to be witnesses for Jesus. But you and I, who believe in Christ, have the same power living within us.

And are similarly empowered to go out and be his witnesses. To tell people about Christ. To tell people about his death and his resurrection.

To tell people about the power of the ascension and the work of the Holy Spirit. And just as an aside, just so you know, in the book of Acts. Verse 1, Acts 1.8. Kind of serves as a map for the rest of the book.

It says, when you receive this power, you'll be my witnesses in Jerusalem. Right? Which is where the Holy Spirit would actually come and dwell believers for the first time there in Jerusalem. And then they would have a very successful ministry there.

The church would grow in Jerusalem. And then in Judea and Samaria, the surrounding areas. And then from that launch point, throughout the entire earth. And the book of Acts maps this out the same way.

[20:19] In fact, if you go ahead to Acts 8.1, you'll see that because of persecution, the church is forced out of Jerusalem. And this mission begins to spread across to the ends of the earth.

Through the apostle Paul, he's the minister to the apostle to the Gentiles. And it goes to the ends of the earth. Here's the thing. Waiting should not be avoided. When God calls us to wait, it's because he has something good that we have to learn from and then receive from him.

And he called the disciples, he called the apostles to go and to wait. To wait for that good promise. And in the same way, as spirit-filled believers, when we feel like we need to wait before we make a decision.

When we feel like we need to wait before we go. When we feel like we need to wait before we do something. Because we've prayed, we're studying, and we just haven't had a peace from God to go and to do what he's called.

Here's the thing. Waiting isn't a bad thing. Sometimes we have to sit down and wait. And as we wait, God reveals to us the way that he's going to use us. And empowers us to do what he's called us to do.

[21:27] But we have to wait the right way. We have to wait well. And we'll get into that here in just a minute. But the third aspect of the ascension is that it secures our hope.

The ascension secures our hope. In verse 9 it says, After he had said this, he was taken up as they were watching. And a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going, they were gazing into heaven.

And suddenly, two men in white clothes stood by them. They said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? The same Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven.

The ascension secures our hope. There's three things here. One, there is a visual departure. A visual departure. Jesus left them very clearly. Like I said before, very emphatically.

But then there's also this angelic message. These angels, they show up. And, you know, the apostles, they... Here's the thing. I don't fault them for staring into heaven. And I was listening to a sermon this week.

[22 : 27] And the pastor made a joke. He's like, you know, the apostles were like, Hey, angels, why are we standing here? Have you ever seen somebody ascend into heaven? You know? And he's like, well, actually, they probably have.

You know? They saw Elijah get taken up and so on and so forth. But for these apostles, for these disciples, when they saw Jesus taken up into heaven, that would have been a momentous occasion.

That would have been something to ponder. But they weren't told to wait there on the mountain. They weren't told to be inactive and idle there on the mountain, staring off into the distance and waiting for Jesus to reappear there in the clouds.

And instead, you get this promise from the angels of a visual return of Jesus. It says, This same Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven.

The message there is, don't wait here. Wait and be obedient while you wait. Go and do what he's called you to do. Be on mission for him. You've been commissioned by Christ to be his witnesses.

[23 : 31] And you can't be his witnesses if you're just standing here, staring off into heaven, waiting for him to come back. And here's the thing. We have this culture in the church. Okay?

And if this steps on some toes, I'm sorry. But we have this culture in the church where people are really, really obsessed with the end times. A lot of people are really obsessed with the end times. It's not a bad thing to be curious. It's not a bad thing to study the end times. It's not a bad thing to pray through this and form conclusions after you've studied scripture. That's not a bad thing at all. But there's obsession where people are just seemingly gathered together, staring off into heaven, expecting and waiting and prophesying of Jesus' imminent return and things like that.

It really kind of misses the point. The ascension of Jesus doesn't call us to look into the sky and wait. The ascension of Jesus charges us to get out into the streets and tell people about him before he returns.

[24 : 28] Because we have this certain promise that he will come back. So we shouldn't be lazy and idle and watching and waiting for Jesus to come back.

The worst thing in the world would be to say, I believe in Jesus. Now I'm going to sit on my couch and wait until I die or he returns. That is not the life that he's called his people to. We have a promise that he'll return.

We have a promise that in his return he'll restore all things. He'll redeem all things. He'll judge the living and the dead. He's going to return in power. All of those things will take place. But because they'll take place, we have to get out.

We have to tell people about Jesus. So we have this ascension promise that Jesus, who visually and clearly left to go to heaven, will visually and clearly return to this earth.

And that should motivate us to tell the world about Jesus before he returns. Because here's the thing. If Jesus returns and someone hasn't put faith in him, that judgment is not very fun.

[25 : 31] That judgment is very severe. If someone dies without having faith in Jesus Christ, the judgment is very severe. It's eternal separation. It's death apart from Christ.

In a physical place called hell. Here's the thing. Jesus is alive and he's in power and he's on his throne. And because of those things, we have to believe in him at his word, believe that he is truly the son of God, who's lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, that he calls us to repent. So we turn from our sin, we put faith in him and we live for him. That is waiting the right way. Not just obsessing over when Jesus might come back. We're not supposed to spend our time splitting hairs about when that's going to happen.

We can't stare off into the sky. We have to be obedient to Christ during this wait. The beautiful thing about Jesus is that in his ascension, in his resurrection and in his ascension, there's this already and not yet aspect of faith.

He's already accomplished everything needed to be accomplished for us to be saved from eternal separation, from eternal judgment and separation in hell. And we have not yet experienced that salvation, right?

[26 : 49] We haven't yet, we've been justified, right? We've been made right with God, but we haven't yet been spared from his wrath. But because he rose from the dead, because he's alive, because he ascended and is at the right hand of the Father, we have confidence in that salvation.

We already know that he will save us because he's able to. He's already defeated death himself. And that brings us to this last part here, verses 12 through 14, which is how do we live in light of the ascension?

How do we, as Christ followers, live in light of what Jesus has done? Verse 12, Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. What that means is, it was a location that was close enough to travel on the Sabbath without breaking Sabbath law. Okay? When they arrived, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James, the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas, the son of James.

They were all continually united in prayer along with the women, including Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. So how do we live in light of the ascension? Well, we can take from the apostles some beautiful lessons.

[28 : 06] One, we can wait obediently. Wait obediently. Jesus told them, wait in Jerusalem. And where did they go? They went to Jerusalem. Two, we can wait as a unified group.

It says that they were all continually united in prayer. What that means is, they were of the same mind. They were all totally committed to, and devoted to prayer.

Prayer is an aspect of ministry. And so that's the third thing, is prayer-filled waiting. They weren't being lazy while they waited for the power to come from on high, or for their specific mission in terms of where they would go to share the gospel with people.

They weren't being lazy. They were praying for God to give them, you know, insight into what he was going to use them to do. They were praying for insight into the will of God. They were seeking the Lord's face.

They spent time actively waiting, obediently waiting in prayer, so that when the Holy Spirit of God fell upon them, and they were empowered by the Spirit as had been promised, the next step of obedience was easy, because they had prepared in the waiting.

[29 : 16] They had spent time in prayer while they waited for this promise to be fulfilled, so that when it happened, they were ready to go, and ready to be used, as God would use them and send them.

And that's what we're called to do as Christ followers who are living in light of the ascension. We wait for Christ's return. We know the presence of the Holy Spirit is here on earth, and the Holy Spirit of God indwells believers.

And when we were saved, there's two things that happen. One, you're justified before God, and two, the Spirit of God indwells you. And as Spirit-filled believers, as we wait for Christ's return, one, we have to live with that in mind, and two, we have to be obedient, which means we're called to be Jesus' witnesses.

We're called to go out and to share this message of life and hope, of faith in the Son of God, to a lost and dying world, who, without this message, without faith in Christ, will die and be separated from God for eternity.

We have to be obedient. And then the other thing is, we talked about this when we went through the book of Philippians, as a church, and as the church, we have to be unified. We have to be on the same mind here.

[30 : 29] We have to be on the same team. We're unified together, called to a purpose, and that purpose is obedience to Christ's command, to be his witnesses. So, as a church, how are we unified in being his witnesses?

How are we together in seeking ways to show the lost the love of Christ? Because Jesus Christ is alive and on his throne, he is able to accomplish everything that was set before us in his atoning death, in his powerful resurrection.

He's able to justify us, which is to make us right with God, because he's alive and on his throne beside the Father. Because he defeated death, he's able to save us from his wrath, his judgment, and eternal separation in hell.

Because he lived, he came back, he defeated death himself. And because he's alive, because he's on his throne, he will return in power to judge the living and the dead.

Because here's the thing, Jesus' mission is not yet complete. He's still accomplishing his mission through his church, by the power of the Holy Spirit, until the day that he does return to judge the living and the dead.

[31 : 42] And here's the thing, that message sounds like, it's like, well, that's kind of scary. You know, that's intense. He's going to come back and judge, and it's going to be harsh, and it's going to be, well, here's the thing, God is a just God.

He will righteously and rightly judge unrighteousness. But the love of God is such that Jesus Christ left the glories of heaven, died on the cross, took a brutal, brutal death in your place and in mine, because we've sinned against God.

And now, because of his great love for us, Jesus rose from the dead, and if we believe on his name, if we put faith in him, that he truly is the son of God, that he really did live a perfect life, that he really did die the death that we deserve, if we put faith in Jesus Christ, he'll save us.

Life is available for those who have faith in Christ. So yeah, it's a scary message, I admit, without faith, there is judgment, without faith, there is wrath, but because God loves us so much, because God loves us more than we can ever comprehend, in his love, Jesus died for us.

And if we believe in him, who rose from the dead, who ascended, who's on his throne, in power, at the right hand of the Father, then we have life waiting for us.

[33 : 12] He offers it freely, because of his love. So if you're here today, and you're like, well, how do I live in light of the ascension? If you're a Christ follower, here's the thing, be obedient.

Be obedient to Christ. Join in the unified group, the church of Christ, that is seeking to be his witnesses, across Lewisburg, Marshall County, Tennessee, United States, the world.

Be unified in the mission of Christ. And then if you aren't a believer in Jesus Christ, I want you to understand something. Jesus Christ is a real historical person, the son of God, who entered our world.

And we are real historical sinful people. Because we've sinned, because we've lied, because we've stolen, because we've been angry, because we've done these things, because we've sinned against God, and his perfect glory, the only hope that we have in life, is faith in Jesus Christ.

The one who lived a perfect life, that we couldn't live, and died on the cross, and rose again. And his ascension, the fact that he's alive still today, is the greatest proof, it's the crowning evidence, of the validity, the reality of his resurrection.

[34 : 23] And that's our hope, is that if we put faith in Jesus, we too will be raised from the dead with him. So, today we're going to have a closing song, we're going to spend some time reflecting on his word, and you respond how you feel led, but I think in light of the ascension of Christ, and thinking about how we live, in light of the ascension of Christ, it's important that we take time to reflect, on if we are being obedient, to the life that God has called us to, as Christ followers.

And then secondly, if you haven't put faith in Jesus, you need to reflect, on if you are being called, to respond to him in faith, because today is the day. It's not something to put off, and delay, and say, well I have to really, let me talk to my wife first, no, no, if you feel led, and called, to respond in faith, to Jesus Christ, then let today be the day.

Respond in faith, respond in obedience, and then, in light of the fact, that Jesus is alive, and on his throne, live the life, that he has called us to live. Let's pray together. God, thank you for who you are.

Thank you Lord Jesus, for your word today, that you have opened our eyes, and our hearts to understand. I pray oh God, that you would continue, to work through your word, in the lives of all of us, who have heard it, who have studied, who have read it.

God, I pray that you would transform our hearts, to look more like Jesus, as we leave this place. We love you Lord, we thank you for who you are, and it's in Jesus name that we pray. Amen.