

Another View (Acts 1: 1-11)

Don't Just Stand There Looking Up

The Ascension of Christ is one of those moments in Scripture we often move past too quickly. Christmas gets presents. Easter gets baskets, eggs, flowers, and celebrations.

But Ascension Sunday?

You rarely see Ascension cupcakes or “He Ascended!” banners sitting on store shelves. And yet, the Ascension of Jesus Christ should give believers incredible confidence and comfort.

Because Jesus did not ascend into heaven because He ran out of things to do.

He ascended to the right hand of the Father for us.

Christ ascended to reign.

To intercede.

To continue His saving work.

To rule over all things.

To prepare a place for His people.

To sit on His throne as King.

That is why the Ascension matters. It reminds us that Christ is not absent.

He is reigning.

As Psalm 47 reminds us:

“God has gone up with a shout,
the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.”

The disciples stood there staring into the sky after Jesus disappeared from sight, and suddenly two angels asked them:

“Why do you stand looking into heaven?” — Acts 1:11

In other words: There is work to do.

The disciples could not remain standing on the mountaintop forever.

They needed to return to Jerusalem.

They needed to prepare for the mission ahead.

They needed to become the Church Christ was calling them to be.

Faith was never meant to stay on the mountaintop.

And maybe we need that reminder today more than ever.

Because it is easy for believers to slip into a mindset where we simply sit back waiting for Jesus to return — almost as if our role is to remain comfortable in our recliners with our feet up while waiting for God to do all the work.

But Scripture paints a very different picture. The Ascension was not Christ abandoning the world. It was Christ commissioning His people to move into it.

We are still His hands and feet.

We are still His vehicle for His purpose.

And unlike the disciples standing there in Acts 1, we already have something they did not yet have in that moment: the Holy Spirit. The disciples had to return to Jerusalem and wait for the Spirit to come. As believers today, God's Spirit already lives within us.

That means we are not waiting to be equipped. We already have what God promised. And honestly, right now that can be difficult to remember because the future feels uncertain for many people.

The world feels unsettled.

The culture feels divided.

Churches worry about the future.

Families carry burdens.

People feel exhausted.

On top of that, much of our culture constantly tries to pull our attention backward — replaying the past, dwelling on fear, or convincing us to simply sit and wait for someone else to fix things.

But Christians are called to be future-minded people.

Not because we ignore reality.

Not because life is always easy.

And certainly not because we pretend suffering does not exist.

I became a paramedic partly because of the old television show *Emergency!*
On television, most problems wrapped up neatly before the credits rolled.

Real life taught me something very different. Not everyone survives.
Not every situation turns out the way we hoped. But faith gives us something television
never could: we already know how the story ends.

God wins. Christ reigns.

The risen and ascended Savior is still on His throne.

That means we do not live frozen in fear. We do not stand still staring at the sky.
And we do not retreat from the work God has placed before us.

Instead, we live with hope by our actions.

We encourage people.

We proclaim the Gospel.

We care for neighbors.

We forgive.

We invite.

We serve.

We reach outward.

We keep building.

We keep loving.

Because if Christ truly will return one day to judge the living and the dead, then there is
still Good News to share and disciples still to be made.

So, we have work to do... just like the disciples did.

And yes, we step out into an uncertain future. But we do so with a certain promise.

Jesus Christ will return someday in glory. The risen and ascended Savior will one day
fully deliver His Kingdom to the Father, and we will be with Him forever.

That is our hope.

That is our confidence.

That is our future.

So, until that day comes, let us get to work.

To paraphrase the first chapter of Acts: Let us not become consumed trying to figure out the exact timing of God's plans, but instead go out into our daily lives, with our families, friends, neighbors, workplaces, communities, and even to the ends of the earth, living like people who truly belong to Christ.

Making disciples.

Sharing hope.

Serving others.

Encouraging the weary.

Living the Gospel through both our words and our actions.

And it is not only the mission of the Church as a whole, but also the calling of each believer. Christ did not stop working when He ascended into heaven.

Even now, He reigns for His people.

He intercedes for His people.

He continues His saving work for His people.

Every moment of every day, our risen Savior is still working on behalf of those who belong to Him.

And because of that, Christians are called to live faithfully and work faithfully for Him, not to earn salvation, but because salvation has already been lovingly secured through Christ's work on the cross and through His continuing reign.

Even our future hope rests not in our work for God, but ultimately in Christ's ongoing work for us. And now that mission has been placed into our hands.

May we live in a way that shows we truly believe Christ is on His throne. May we trust that God has already empowered His people for the future. And may our lives reflect how grateful, honored, and excited we are to be part of the Kingdom of God.

So let us stop standing still staring at the sky.

Just as the disciples eventually turned and headed back to Jerusalem, we too must head back into our homes, workplaces, communities, and daily lives, because that is where the real work of faith begins.

Walking it Out This Week

Where have I been “standing still looking at the sky” instead of taking the next faithful step God may already be calling me to take?

Sometimes we wait for perfect clarity while God is simply asking us to move forward faithfully.

Am I spending more time worrying about the future... or trusting the One who already holds the future?

Fear can freeze us.

Faith moves us forward even when all the answers are not visible yet.

What is one small action I can take this week to live out my faith in a practical way?

A phone call.

An invitation.

An apology.

An encouragement.

A quiet act of kindness.

Small faithful actions still matter greatly to God.

Have I slipped into waiting for “someone else” to do the work God may be placing in front of me?

The Church is not only pastors, leaders, or committees.

God works through ordinary believers every day.

Do my daily actions reflect that I truly believe Christ is reigning right now?

Hope is not only something we talk about.

It shapes how we live, speak, treat people, and face uncertainty.

Who around me may need hope, encouragement, or compassion this week?

The real work of faith often begins in ordinary places:

homes, workplaces, stores, schools, hospitals, conversations, and daily routines.

If someone watched the way I lived this week, would they see fear... or would they see hope?

Christians do not move through life pretending difficulties are not real.

But we do live knowing the final outcome already belongs to God.

The disciples eventually stopped staring into the sky.

Then they went back into the world.

That is still where the real work of faith begins today.

Faith Between Sundays

Faith in Motion

Monday

“Why do you stand looking into heaven?” — Acts 1:11

What is one thing God may already be calling you to step into instead of waiting for the “perfect” moment?

Tuesday

“Encourage one another and build each other up.” — 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Take a few minutes today to encourage someone who may be carrying more than you realize.

Wednesday

“Be still, and know that I am God.” — Psalm 46:10

Pause sometime today before rushing into the next task or conversation.

Ask yourself:

“Where is God already working around me right now?”

Thursday

“Let your speech always be gracious.” — Colossians 4:6

Bring calm, hope, or kindness into a conversation today.

The world already has enough anger and fear.

Friday

“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.” — Matthew 20:26

Do one act of kindness today without expecting recognition or thanks.

Saturday

“Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith.” — 2 Corinthians 13:5

Before Sunday arrives, spend a few quiet moments reflecting:

Where did I see God working this week?

Where did I struggle?

Where did I grow?

Closing Thought

Faith was never meant to stay inside church walls.

The real work often begins Monday morning

out in the ordinary places

where God sends His people every day.

Prayers for the Week

Monday — Taking the First Step

Lord, sometimes I spend more time waiting than moving. Give me courage today to take the next faithful step instead of standing still in fear or uncertainty.

Amen.

Tuesday — Encouraging Others

Lord, help me notice the people around me who may need encouragement today. Let my words bring kindness, hope, and comfort to someone who may be struggling quietly.

Amen.

Wednesday — Remembering Who Reigns

Lord, when the world feels uncertain, remind me that You are still on Your throne. Help me trust Your presence more than my fears.

Amen.

Thursday — Bringing Calm into the Noise

Lord, help me speak with patience and grace today. In a world filled with frustration and anger, let me become a source of peace instead of more noise.

Amen.

Friday — Serving Quietly

Lord, remind me that small acts of kindness still matter. Help me serve others today without needing recognition or praise.

Amen.

Saturday — Resting Before a New Week

Lord, before another busy week begins, help me slow down and place my worries into Your hands. Thank You for walking with me through every ordinary moment of life.

Amen.

Sunday — Sent Into the Week

Lord, thank You for the hope we have in the risen and ascended Christ. As we leave worship and step back into everyday life, remind us that You are still reigning, still working, and still walking with Your people. Help us carry Your love, hope, and truth into the places You send us this week.

Amen.

Closing Thought

Faith grows not only in big moments, but in small daily choices to trust God, love people, and keep moving forward with hope

From the Pew

Staring at the Fire

I was still a probie firefighter, maybe on the department for two months.

At that point, I thought I had things pretty well figured out. I had already been to a few small fires: dumpster fires, a shed fire, little things like that.

I could put my bunker gear on in record-breaking time. I could jump on the truck fast. And like most young firefighters, I was secretly hoping for “the big one.”

You know, the kind of fire seasoned firefighters sit around talking about afterward. The stories about facing the “fire monster,” putting the wet stuff on the red stuff, and walking out of the smoke looking like heroes.

Then one afternoon the alarm tones dropped for a multiple-alarm fire. The pumper I was assigned to was dispatched immediately. I had my gear on in seconds and was on the truck before the engine was fully backing out of the station.

As we got closer, we could already see dark smoke rising in the distance. The veteran firefighter I was assigned to looked over and said something like: “That’s a good smoke column. This one’s gonna be a worker.”

Now I was really excited. There was only one problem. The firefighter assigned to train me hated probies. Not personally. He just believed inexperienced firefighters were dangerous.

He thought our department should hire already-trained firefighters from other departments and let somebody else train the rookies. So needless to say, he was not thrilled about being assigned to babysit me.

When we arrived on scene, it was a large four-plex apartment building with heavy smoke and fire showing from the second-floor windows. Command was established, and my veteran firefighter and I were assigned to interior attack.

I was ecstatic. This was it. My first real fire. I grabbed the crosslay hose, masked up, and followed him inside. Everything up to that point felt just like training at the burn tower.

Then we kicked the apartment door open and entered the room.

And suddenly, everything changed.

The entire room was fully involved.

Flames rolled across the ceiling.
Smoke banked down over our heads.
The fire twisted, moved, and danced around the room.

And for the first time in my life, I met the fire monster face to face.
Honestly, it was mesmerizing. The fire almost seemed alive.

It teased you to watch it.
To focus on it.
To stand there staring at everything happening around you.

And that is exactly what I did. I forgot everything else around me.

Completely overwhelmed.
Completely distracted.
Completely frozen.

I had the nozzle in my hands the entire time, and I was not doing a thing.

I do not know how long I stood there. Probably only seconds.
But in a fire, seconds matter.

Finally, my veteran firefighter grabbed me by the facepiece of my SCBA mask, spun me toward him, and yelled:
“Are you gonna stand there looking at the fire, or are you gonna do your job and put the darn thing out before we all burn to death?” (He actually used stronger language than that.)

That snapped me back into reality pretty quickly. And yes, we did eventually get the fire out, although the building itself was already too far gone by the time crews arrived.

But I never forgot that moment.

Because looking back now, that scene reminds me a lot of the disciples in the first chapter of Acts. Jesus ascended into heaven right in front of them, and Scripture says they stood there staring up into the clouds.

Honestly, who could blame them? Can you imagine witnessing something like that?
I am sure they were overwhelmed.
Confused.
Mesmerized.
Trying to process what they had just seen.

And then the angels suddenly asked them: “Why do you stand looking into heaven?”

In other words: There is work to do.

Sometimes life does the same thing to us.

Fear.

Uncertainty.

Pressure.

Grief.

Unexpected situations.

They overwhelm us so much that we freeze. We stand there staring at the problem instead of moving forward.

The truth is, during that fire, I already had the tools I needed in my hands.

I just forgot to use them because I became so focused on what was happening in front of me.

And sometimes as Christians, we do the same thing.

Life overwhelms us.

Fear gets loud.

The future feels uncertain.

Problems seem bigger than we expected.

And before we know it, we find ourselves frozen, staring at the smoke instead of moving forward in faith.

But the good news is this: Christ does not abandon His people in those moments.

Sometimes God uses other people to steady us.

Sometimes He uses Scripture.

Sometimes prayer.

Sometimes a quiet reminder that we are not facing the fire alone.

And just like that veteran firefighter snapped me back into reality that day, God has a way of reminding us: “You are not alone.

Keep going. I have already given you what you need for this moment.”

When we finally returned back to the fire station after that call, I had a lot of explaining to do about why I stood there staring at the fire instead of putting it out.

But thankfully, God does not deal with us only through embarrassment or failure.

He teaches us, strengthens us, equips us.
And prepares us for the next fire life places in front of us.

And honestly, I never claimed to be the world's greatest firefighter.
I just managed to get the fire out. In many ways, my faith journey has felt the same way. I know I am not the greatest Christian either.

But I believe God continues to walk with us through the fires of life, teaching us, strengthening us, and making us better prepared for whatever comes next.

Eventually, the disciples stopped looking into the sky and headed back to Jerusalem. And just like them, we eventually have to head back into our homes, workplaces, communities, and everyday lives.

Because that is where the fires are and the real work of faith begins.

Church Calendar Minute

The Waiting Between Ascension and Pentecost *(When God Seems Quiet)*

Ascension marks the moment Jesus returned to heaven forty days after Easter as told in Acts 1:9–11. Pentecost follows ten days later and celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit. This 10-day period between Ascension and Pentecost is one of the most overlooked moments in the Church Calendar.

Jesus had ascended into heaven. The disciples watched Him leave. And then they waited. No rushing wind yet, No tongues of fire, No bold preaching, No clear roadmap.

Just waiting. Imagine what that must have felt like. The disciples had spent years walking beside Jesus. Now suddenly, He was gone from their sight, and they were left wondering what came next.

And maybe that is why this part of the Church Calendar matters so much. Because most of life is lived in the “in-between” moments.

The time between:

- prayer and answer,
- diagnosis and healing,
- loss and recovery,
- uncertainty and direction,
- fear and courage.

We often want God to move immediately. But scripture reminds us that sometimes growth happens in the waiting.

Acts tells us the disciples devoted themselves to prayer during that time. They stayed together. They trusted even without fully understanding. (Acts 1:12–14)

That may be one of the hardest kinds of faith:
not mountain-moving faith ... but waiting faith.

The kind of faith that keeps praying when answers seem delayed.
The kind that keeps showing up.
The kind that trusts God is still working even when heaven feels quiet.

And then Pentecost came. Not because the disciples forced it.
Not because they had everything figured out.
But because God was already at work in the waiting.

Maybe that is still true for us today. Sometimes the waiting season is not God abandoning us. Sometimes it is God preparing us.

A Small Reminder from God

Slow down for a moment. Take a breath. You do not have to carry every burden alone.

God has not forgotten you just because life feels busy, uncertain, or overwhelming right now. The same God who walked with people through storms, deserts, prisons, grief, and waiting seasons still walks beside us today.

Sometimes we look for giant signs while God is quietly working through ordinary moments:

- a phone call from a friend,
- a kind word,
- a peaceful moment,
- strength to get through one more day,
- or simply the reminder that we are not alone.

Faith is not about having every answer.
Sometimes it is simply trusting that God is still present even when life feels unclear.

And maybe today, that is the reminder we need most:

God is still working.
Still listening.
Still guiding.
Still loving.
And still walking with us one step at a time.