

## ACTS 1:12-26

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### [INTRODUCTION]: What are you waiting for today?

**State:** Are you in one of those seasons? You know the ones—life is going on, you might even be busy, and everyone around you seems to be getting on with things, but something in your life feels like it's on pause. You might even feel a little stuck—because you're waiting for something to happen.

- Waiting for **results**—Did you pass the exam? Is the chemo working? Will this be the month you finally get pregnant?
- Waiting for a **call back**—From a job interview, the adoption agency, or a wayward child.
- Waiting for the **future**—What will you do after college? Will you ever get married? What will you do when you retire?
- Waiting for **something to change**—In your marriage, your finances, or your health.

It turns out, waiting is part of life. And it's important that we learn to wait well.

- For our health in the present moment—emotionally, spiritually, physically.
- But also so we don't mess things up.
  - We humans find it hard to wait, so sometimes we jump at any kind of certainty because it feels better than uncertainty.
  - We'll pick a path, even if it's the wrong one.

**Illustrate:** I compare this to the quarterback in the pocket. You all know the scene: The ball is snapped, the quarterback steps up, chaos erupts, and a handful of musclebound savages close in. As they do so, the temptation kicks in—rush the play, force a throw, or panic and toss it out of bounds. But the best ones have the courage to wait—the steely nerve to hang in. If they let things develop, the play will be on. That's how championships are won.

**Apply:** The disciples understood how hard it is to wait. In **Acts 1:4** Jesus **ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait...** He promised the Spirit was coming, but not when. Then he ascended to heaven. They were left waiting—in that awkward in-between.

Fortunately, they didn't **waste their waiting**. Luke tells us what they did with their in-between. And in so doing, he gives us a handful of tools that we might wait well, hang in the pocket—and win.

**[Transition]:** So here's the question we're asking today: *How do we wait well?*

- Our passage gives us 5 tools...
- As we work through them, consider which one you might need to practice today.

## 1. We Wait Well When We... OBEY (V12)

### State:

- In **V4**, Jesus told them **not to depart from Jerusalem**. So in **V12**, what do they do? **They returned to Jerusalem**.
- Don't you love the simplicity of this?
  - They don't know what's coming next, or what God will do...
  - But they do know one thing—and they do it.
- There may be some things they don't yet know, but that doesn't stop them from being obedient with what they do know.

### Illustrate: I remember a mentor of mine telling me a similar thing about marriage:

- *"You won't always know what to do to love your wife well, but you'll be amazed how far not doing stupid things will take you."*
- (The fact he felt the need to give me this advice tells you more about me than I'd prefer.)
- But I understood what he was saying:
  - You might not know exactly what to say when she's upset, but it's safe to say that leaving dishes in the sink won't help.
  - When you don't know what to do—start with the things you do know.

### Apply: It's the same in the Christian life.

- We all face seasons where we don't know what God is doing or what's coming next.
- But even then:
  - God's will for most of our lives has already been revealed.
  - There may be something you don't know—but there's a lot more you do know.
    - We know the kind of people he calls us to be: People of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.
    - And very often, we know the next right step.
      - Small steps: Like staying on top of your daily responsibilities or getting an early night.
      - Big steps: Like asking someone's forgiveness or scheduling a counseling appointment.
- Here's the point: What's the next right thing? Do that. Go to Jerusalem.
  - Offer God your obedience—take the next step...
  - And trust that he'll show you what to do next.

### [Transition]: We wait well when we **obey**, and...

## 2. We Wait Well When We... CONNECT (VV13–14)

### State:

- Notice that when the disciples get to Jerusalem—they don't wait alone.
- Instead, they all gather in the same house.
  - In **V13**, Luke lists all 11 disciples by name.
  - Then in **V14**, he tells us **the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers** are there as well.
- They all joined together and waited as a family.
  - Waiting alone is lonely. Waiting together is powerful.
  - Connection strengthens us, encourages us, and carries us through.
  - It enables us to keep going when we might not make it on our own.

### Illustrate:

- A friend of mine recently had a granddaughter born with several very serious health complications.
  - At first, it didn't look like she'd make it—which left the whole family in an agonizing period of waiting.
  - They didn't know whether their wee one would live or die.
- In those moments, my friend messaged our group and said this: *"Sometimes you're too weak to pray on your own, so you ask others to help."*

### Application:

- Waiting well is a team sport.
  - If you're tempted to keep things to yourself or isolate—please don't.
  - Find your people. Lean on them. Let them be there for you, as you are there for them.
- If you're not in a community yet, this season of waiting might be God's invitation to step in—to go deeper with new or existing friends.
  - Join a Sunday school class, go to a young adult event, show up to a men's or women's study, or something else.
  - God has given us the church, so we don't need to navigate life—or wait—alone.
- Who could you connect with this week to join you in the waiting?

**[Transition]:** We wait well when we **obey**, when we **connect**, and...

### 3. We Wait Well When We... PRAY (V14)

#### State:

- Notice that Luke doesn't just tell us *that* the disciples got together—he also tells us *what* they did when they were together.
- In **V14**, we read: **All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer.**
  - They weren't pacing, cleaning floors, or trying to keep busy.
  - Instead, they did the most productive thing any of us can do—they prayed.
- Prayer is the heartbeat of waiting—the thing you need to survive and thrive.

#### Illustrate:

- Consider **Monica**, the mother of Augustine of Hippo.
- In his youth Augustine lived a wild, wayward, prodigal life—ignoring the faith his mother tried to instill.
- But Monica refused to give up.
  - Until one day, in a place of desperation that only our children can evoke, she sought the counsel of a Bishop.
  - He told her: *“Speak less to Augustine about God, and more to God about Augustine.”*
- She did—and God answered.
  - Augustine went on to become the most influential theologian in all of church history.
  - And he called himself a **“son of tears”** —because he was reborn through his mother's anguished prayers.
- Their story reminds us: God hears our hearts and answers prayer.

#### Apply:

- Will we follow the disciples' example—and Monica's example—in our waiting?
  - Instead of filling the silence with noise or busyness, activity or anxiety—fill it with prayer.
  - Pour out your heart to the Father—for your infertility, your job, your future, and more.
- Follow the Bishop's counsel: *Speak less to others about your problem, and more about your problem to God.*
- Dear ones: In your waiting—pray.

**[Transition]:** We wait well when we **obey**, when we **connect**, when we **pray**, and...

#### 4. We Wait Well When We... STUDY (VV15–20)

##### State:

- In **V15** and following, we see that Peter has been spending time in God's word.
- Remember earlier when we got a list of the disciples?
  - Did you notice there's only 11?
  - Judas is not with them—after betraying, he died.
- This must have brought a unique grief to the disciples:
  - *How could someone who walked with Jesus, who shared his life with us, who was part of our ministry, turn on Jesus and on us?*
  - *How do we make sense of that?*
- Peter has been wrestling with this, and to understand it, he turned to God's word.
  - In **Psalm 69** he found God's perspective.
  - This had to happen bc, **V16: the Scripture had to be fulfilled.**
- In other words:
  - It wasn't random—they're not at the mercy of chance or fate...
  - Instead, they're secure in God's sovereign plan.
- In the middle of this suffering—Peter discovers that God is at work in it all.

##### Illustrate: I remember when one of my daughters had a cancer scare...

- She was still in college, and, for a moment, we feared her story would end there.
- I remember trying to be strong—for her and my loved ones.
- But one night, I broke—and called a mentor in tears.
- He said: *"Jesus is calling you to deep waters—go to him."*
- So I went to **Romans 8: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?**
  - I thought: *No, Lord, nothing can separate us.*
  - And to that list, I can add cancer as well.
- In that season of waiting, God's word taught me a deeper trust in Jesus—and a deeper rest in his love as well.

##### Apply: What about you?

- In your waiting, be curious—What is God's perspective? What is he up to?
  - Don't just focus on what you're waiting *for*—what is he inviting you to *now*?
  - In the very situation you're facing, how is he at work?
- Take these questions to the Bible:
  - Open his word till you see his hand.
  - Open his word till you're secure in his plan.
- You'll discover new depths of trust and rest—even here, even now.

**[Transition]:** We wait well when we **obey**, when we **connect**, when we **pray**, when we **study**, and...

## 5. We Wait Well When We... PREPARE (VV21-26)

**State:** Waiting isn't passive—it's active. Peter shows us this.

- As he reflects on Judas's betrayal, he notices something else in God's word.
  - **Ps 109: Let another take his office**—they're to replace him.
  - So they act: They **pick two men** who meet the qualifications. They **pray** to the Lord who knows our hearts. Then they **cast lots** to discover his choice.
- To us, casting lots might seem strange—rolling the dice to pick an apostle?
  - But it was normal in the OT—not as a superstition but as an act of surrender.
  - This naturally raises the question—Should we the same today?
    - The Bible would say no.
    - This is the last time it happens in Scripture. WHY?
    - Bc in the very next chapter the Spirit descends—now he leads and guides God's people.
    - From then on, discernment is Spirit-led, not dice-led.
- The main point is this:
  - The disciples are in a season of waiting, but they don't sit still—they prepare.
  - Sometimes waiting is like that: God uses it to ready us for what's ahead.

**Illustrate:** Think of Noah.

- God told him it would rain, but he didn't tell him when.
- Instead, he told him to get ready—build the ark *before* the rain comes.
- In his waiting, Noah prepared—if he hadn't, he'd have drowned!

**Apply:** I find this a helpful way to think about my waiting...

- God's timing is perfect—I can trust him with it. In the meantime, I'm not to be passive—I'm to prepare.
- Who knows?
  - Maybe God is shaping you—so that when the day comes, you'll be ready.
  - Maybe he's preparing circumstances or other people in ways you can't see?
- Either way: Don't force the play. Instead, ask: What can I do today so I'm ready for what God has tomorrow?
  - If waiting on a **relationship**, how is God growing you into the person he wants you to be?
  - If waiting on a **job**, how can you be faithful where you are and sharpen your skills for tomorrow?
  - If waiting on **healing**, how is God calling you into deeper trust/rest in him?
- Hear me on this:
  - We're not saying God's timing is conditioned on your performance—like he's withholding blessings until you improve!
  - What we're saying is that your waiting is part of God's timing, he has good things for you in it—so don't wish it away!
  - Waiting might be the very place God has you to prepare you for what's next.

## [CONCLUSION]

- So—What are you waiting for today?
  - Maybe it's **results**.
  - Maybe it's a **call**.
  - Maybe it's your **future**.
  - Maybe it's a **change** you long for.
- Whatever it is, Acts 1 reminds: Don't waste your waiting.
- And we don't need to—bc God has given us tools for the in-between:
  - We wait well when we **obey**—do the next right thing.
  - We wait well when we **connect**—lean on the strength of God's people.
  - We wait well when we **pray**—pour out your heart to the Father.
  - We wait well when we **study**—finding God's perspective on our lives.
  - We wait well when we **prepare**—getting ready for whatever comes next.

## [THE CLOSE]

- Is there one of those tools you need to use today?
- Here's the great hope:
  - We're not just waiting on circumstances—we're waiting on a Person.
  - He loves us, he died for us on that cross, he hung in the pocket until salvation was accomplished—so we can trust him with our lives.
- In your waiting:
  - Stand strong...
  - And in the end—now or in eternity—we'll win.

## RESOURCES AND ENDNOTES

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### Resources

This list contains some of the resources that were used to prepare this sermon series. Check them out if you want to dig a little deeper.

- John Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles*.
- Ray Cortese, *The Mission: Clarified, Mobilized, Empowered*.
- Alan Thompson, *Acts: A Commentary*.