

Ascension and Pentecost

Waiting in Prayer and Expectation

Text: Acts 1:4–14

Introduction

Today, we stand between two defining moments in the life of the Church:

- The Ascension of Jesus Christ
- The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

For the disciples, this was a season of waiting.

Jesus had ascended.

The Spirit had not yet been poured out.

Yet this waiting was not empty or hopeless. It was filled with:

- prayer
- obedience
- unity
- expectation

From a Nazarene perspective, this passage reminds us that God prepares His people before He empowers His people.

The Church of the Nazarene has always emphasized the transforming work of the Holy Spirit—not only to save us from sin, but to sanctify and empower believers for holy living and Christian service.

Key Doctrine Theme

Entire Sanctification and Spirit-Filled Living

The promise of Pentecost was not merely emotional experience.

It was the fulfillment of God’s promise to cleanse hearts and empower holy living through the Holy Spirit.

I. The Command to Wait

Acts 1:4–5

Jesus commanded the disciples:

“Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised.”

The disciples were instructed to wait upon God.

This waiting demonstrated:

- surrender
- dependence
- obedience

In Nazarene theology, we understand that spiritual preparation always precedes spiritual empowerment.

Before Pentecost came:

- there was repentance
- there was prayer
- there was unity
- there was surrender

Nazarene Doctrine Emphasis

The Church of the Nazarene teaches that God’s grace works in stages:

1. Prevenient Grace — God drawing us
2. Saving Grace — forgiveness through Christ
3. Sanctifying Grace — the Holy Spirit cleansing and empowering believers

The disciples in Acts 1 were already believers.

Yet Jesus told them there was still more God desired to do through the Holy Spirit.

Supporting Scripture

Luke 24:49

“Stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven.”

Application

Many believers today are saved, yet spiritually weary.

God does not only want us forgiven.

He wants us filled.

There is a deeper life of holiness and surrender available through the Holy Spirit.

II. The Promise of the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:6–8

Jesus declared:

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.”

The Meaning of Power

The Greek word is:

Dynamis

Meaning:

- divine power
- spiritual strength
- miraculous ability

\text{Power}=\textit{dynamis}

This power was not given for personal glory.

It was given for:

- holy living
 - victorious Christian life
 - evangelism
 - witness
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Nazarene Doctrine of Holiness

The Church of the Nazarene believes the Holy Spirit sanctifies believers wholly.

Entire sanctification is:

- a work of God's grace
- subsequent to salvation
- accomplished by faith
- cleansing the heart from inward sin
- filling believers with perfect love toward God and others

Pentecost was not simply about speaking.

Pentecost was about transformation.

The fearful disciples became bold witnesses because the Holy Spirit changed them from the inside out.

Supporting Scripture

John 14:16–17

Jesus promised:

- the Helper
- the Comforter
- the Spirit of Truth

The Holy Spirit is not merely a force.
He is the abiding presence of God.

Application

Holiness is not legalism.
Holiness is Christlikeness.

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to:

- love deeply
 - forgive freely
 - live purely
 - serve faithfully
 - witness boldly
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III. The Ascension Gives the Church Hope

Acts 1:9–11

Jesus ascended into heaven before the disciples' eyes.

The angels declared:

“This same Jesus... will return.”

Nazarene Hope

The Church of the Nazarene believes in the glorious return of Jesus Christ.

The Ascension reminds us:

- Christ reigns now
- Christ intercedes now
- Christ will return again

The Church lives between:

- Pentecost
and
- Christ's return

Therefore, we live:

- Watchfully
 - prayerfully
 - missionally
 - holy
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IV. Waiting Together in Prayer

Acts 1:12–14

The disciples were:

“Constantly united in prayer.”

Before revival came, there was united prayer.

Before the Spirit descended, hearts were surrendered.

Nazarene Emphasis on Prayer

Historically, Nazarene people have been people of:

- prayer meetings
- altar services
- revival gatherings
- Seeking holiness
- Spirit-filled worship

The altar has always represented:

- surrender
- cleansing

- consecration
- deeper commitment

Application Questions

- Are you seeking God wholeheartedly?
- Are you praying with expectation?
- Are you surrendered fully to Christ?
- Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to sanctify your heart?

V. The Gospel Is the Foundation

1 Corinthians 15:3–4

“Christ died for our sins... He was buried... and He was raised from the dead on the third day.”

The Gospel is central to Nazarene doctrine.

We believe:

- Humanity is fallen in sin
- Salvation comes only through Jesus Christ
- Grace is available to all
- Christ transforms lives completely

The Message of Holiness

Holiness is not self-improvement.

Holiness is the work of God’s grace through the Holy Spirit.

Jesus saves us from:

- The penalty of sin
 - The Power of sin
 - And one day the presence of sin
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Invitation

Today, perhaps God is calling you to:

- salvation
- deeper surrender
- entire sanctification
- renewed commitment
- Spirit-filled living

The same Holy Spirit poured out at Pentecost is still working today. Come to Christ. Trust Him fully. Yield your heart completely.

Conclusion

Waiting seasons are not wasted seasons.

God often prepares us in hidden places before He uses us publicly.

The disciples waited:

- prayerfully
- obediently
- expectantly
- together

And God fulfilled His promise.

The Holy Spirit came with power.

Today, God still desires a holy people empowered by His Spirit to proclaim the Gospel to the world.

Closing Challenge

As you wait on God:

- pray fervently
- seek holiness
- trust His promises
- walk in obedience
- live empowered by the Spirit

Do not settle for shallow Christianity.

God calls His Church to holy living and Spirit-filled witness.

Benediction

May the God of holiness sanctify you wholly.

May the Holy Spirit fill your life with power, purity, and peace.

May you walk faithfully as a witness of Jesus Christ until He comes again.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Amen.