

*“The people who are on this earth” Acts 1:1-11 / Ephesians 1:15-23 / Luke 24:44-53 (6/1/25)*

When I was a child, I could not understand why my father always said, “Later or next time.” My father spent most of his young life when South Korea was developing. Most of my father’s age people really worked hard in this time. They worked from early morning to midnight. They only had a daybreak in a week. Even on this break day, they had to work in their workplaces.

My father was a good father to me when I was a child. Even though he had to work on break days and Holidays, he tried his best to spend time with me as much as he could. He took me to the theme park, zoo, museum, nature, etc. He gave me many opportunities to have many experiences.

However, as you know, a child is never satisfied. Even though my father spent a lot of time with me, I begged a lot him to take me to fun places more and more. Every time I asked him to take me to the fun place, every time the answer was, “Later” or “Next time.” He did not tell me any detailed time and day. So, I just should wait until he said, “We will go to the zoo next week.” The only thing that I had was the promise he said, “Later.” The times or dates were set by my father’s authority.

After I became a father, I could understand my father. Sometimes, it makes me sad when I understand my father’s heart. I try my best to spend more time with

my children. However, as you know, children are never satisfied. Sooho asks me a lot to take him to fun places. “Daddy, I want to see penguins!” “I want to go to Paw Patrol playground!” “I want to go and take the orange speed train again!” Even now, also Sua has grown up enough to ask for something she wants. She also asks me, “I want to go to Coco Melon Park!” Fortunately, they do not know about Disney Land yet.

One interesting thing is that they ask me to take them to fun places always when I am tired or busy. So, my answer to them is always, “Later.” Every time I say “Later” to them, I remember my father, and I respect him because his life was much busier than mine. In my children’s view, the times or dates were set by my authority.

Today is Ascension Sunday. Jesus was taken up to Heaven 40 days after he was risen. This Ascension story is one of the stories that is hard to believe that really happened. In human history, many groups of people misunderstood the Ascension, and they believed in rapture. This misunderstanding made many people suffer from their beliefs and brought much confusion into society. Therefore, it is very important for us to understand the Ascension of Jesus properly.

Then, why is Ascension important to us? How should we understand the meaning of Ascension?

Firstly, the Ascension of Jesus fulfilled God's words. Jesus's Ascension was mentioned in Psalm. Psalm 110:1 says, "The Lord says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." The Ascension not only showed that Jesus was taken up to Heaven, but it also showed everything was under the reign of Jesus. Through Ascension, Jesus was finally glorified, and he became the ruler of the world.

Secondly, without the Ascension of Jesus, we could not receive the gift of God, which is the Holy Spirit. If there was no Ascension and the event that people received the Holy Spirit, Jesus would be present in one place locally. It means that God could not be present in all places at one time. Of course, Jesus is almighty, so he may be able to copy him many times and show him in many places at the same time. However, if God is not present in us in the form of the Holy Spirit, we would not have the feelings and heart of God. Even though people see an event at the same time, each person has different thoughts and views about that event. When God is with us as the Holy Spirit, we all could have one heart that God gave us. We could feel the feeling of God. We could experience God's presence through the Holy Spirit at the same time.

In today's Acts Scripture, the disciples still asked God about the restoration

of Israel. They experienced Jesus's ministry for about three years. Jesus taught them about the Kingdom of God. They saw the death and resurrection of Jesus. They spent about 40 days of the time with the risen Jesus. But they still asked Jesus about the restoration of Israel. They still thought Jesus, who had the power to defeat death, would restore the glory of Israel from the enemy Roman Empire. They physically encountered the Son of God, but they could not understand the heart of God.

Even though we cannot see Jesus physically now, we can feel and experience living God through the Holy Spirit. And we can have the heart of God. All these things are possible because of the Ascension of Jesus.

Thirdly, we became people who have the calling of God because of the Ascension of Jesus. Before Jesus was taken up to Heaven, Jesus gave a mission to his disciples to be witnesses of Jesus in the world. The disciples expected Jesus to restore their country's glory from the oppression, but Jesus wanted his disciples to deliver the Gospel into the world. Even though the disciples could not understand the mission that Jesus gave them, Jesus still gave them the mission. After the Ascension of Jesus, the movement of the Gospel was continued by the Holy Spirit and his disciples.

Paul said in Ephesians, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened

in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people and his incomparably great power for us who believe.” Each Christians have the calling of God. God called each of us with his purpose. The main common purpose is to save a more soul and to expand the Kingdom of God in this world. To complete this purpose, God called us. God called each of us in each different part to complete God’s purpose in this world.

So, the Ascension of Jesus is so important to us. The words of God were fulfilled, and Jesus was glorified completely through the Ascension. We could receive the Holy Spirit, and we had the mission and the calling of God. Now, we live to fulfill one more God’s word that Jesus will come again.

At this point, we could have another question about the Ascension of Jesus. Why did Jesus not tell his disciples the exact time and date when he would come again? If we know the exact time and date of the second coming of Jesus, it will be really helpful. As I shared before, I thought a lot about the coming of Jesus at the due date of my assignment. I thought a lot, ‘If Jesus comes tomorrow, I do not have to do this assignment.’ If we think that Jesus will come again tomorrow or after this service, then the worries we have now and the suffering we are going through now will be meaningless. If we know the exact time and date, all our concerns and

suffering will be nothing. It will be really great if we know when Jesus comes again exactly. Then, why did Jesus not tell us the exact time and date? In my personal opinion, Jesus did not tell people the time because it is not important.

If we wish to know the exact time, we are the same people as the disciples who expected the restoration of Israel. The exact time is not important because Jesus is already with us. We are the people who live with Jesus and walk with Jesus on the journey of our lives every moment. So, it would not be shocking at all if Jesus came back right now. Christians are people who live as if they would not be surprised if Jesus came back today.

God is with us. This amazing grace was completed with the Ascension of Jesus. Jesus was finally glorified through the Ascension. After his Ascension, this world is in his reign. We are invited to join his reign as his disciples. Jesus showed his faithfulness throughout his entire life. Because of his faithfulness, we can believe Jesus's promise. Jesus kept his promise that he would send the Holy Spirit to us. And he promised to come again. Because of this promise of Jesus, we can live as the people of God who walk with Jesus every moment. Through this Ascension Sunday, I hope the grace of Jesus's Ascension is with us. I hope that God enlightens the eyes of our hearts to see that God is with us all the time. Amen.