

# Waiting Is Not Wasting

Slide 1

## Introduce myself

Slide 2

## Acts 1:12–26

Slide 3

Last week we started this series in Acts called *The Road Before Us*. And everything in this series flows from one verse: Acts 1:8 Jesus tells the disciples: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

This is a roadmap. Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria, Ends of the Earth. And for us: St. George/Manhattan/Wamego is our Jerusalem, Riley County is our Judea, Kansas is our Samaria, and then the world beyond.

So we see something interesting happens in Acts right after this. Before the movement begins, before the preaching, before the miracles, before thousands come to faith, the disciples wait. And honestly, I hate waiting. Does anybody else hate waiting? What is something you hate waiting for? (Pause for audience answers)

We hate: waiting in traffic, waiting for answers, waiting for healing, waiting for direction, waiting for life to change, and even waiting for God to do something

Our culture, us, me, tend to think waiting is wasted time.

We may think: “Nothing important is happening when we wait.” But Acts 1 shows us something different. The church was born while they waited. The church was born in a waiting room. And the waiting mattered, a lot.

## Let's read Acts 1:12–26 together:

Slides 4-8

<sup>12</sup> Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. <sup>13</sup> And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. <sup>14</sup> All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. <sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>15</sup>In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, <sup>16</sup>“Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. <sup>17</sup>For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” <sup>18</sup>(Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong<sup>[d]</sup> he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. <sup>19</sup>And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) <sup>20</sup>“For it is written in the Book of Psalms, “May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it’: and “Let another take his office. <sup>21</sup>So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, <sup>22</sup>beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” <sup>23</sup>And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup>And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup>to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” <sup>26</sup>And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

## They Wait Together

Slide 9

The first thing we notice is the disciples obey Jesus before they fully understand what comes next. Jesus told them: “Wait.” So they wait. They don’t fully understand Pentecost yet.

Speaking of Pentecost, what is it? Pentecost is the moment in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit comes upon the disciples with power, just as Jesus promised in Acts 1:8. While they are gathered together in prayer, a sound like a rushing wind fills the house, tongues of fire rest on them, and they begin speaking in different languages so people from many nations can hear the gospel. It marks the birth of the Church’s public mission, the waiting season ends, and the disciples are empowered to become witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

They don’t know how the Spirit will come. They don’t know what the future looks like. But they obey anyway. And notice what they do while they wait. They gather together.

Verse 14 says: “All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.”

That sentence matters. They were together!

## Crystal Gets Cancer

Slide 10

- Crystal has a miscarriage
- Dr finds lump on crystal's throat
- Crystal is diagnosed with thyroid cancer and it is the good cancer.
- Crystal has surgery and takes radiation pill
- I power through and remain stoic and positive and I am sure everything will be ok
- Crystal is not cancer free and has to have a second surgery
- Second surgery was hard on her
- No kids for now or ever?
- This is where I wish I leaned into community. Not what happened.
- Share that I isolated
- Share about running sound to avoid being in community
- Became angry at God and refused to speak to him
- I isolated
- I had no control of the situation

There are seasons where you realize very quickly how little control you actually have. I was afraid, uncertain, wanting answers, wanting immediate healing, and I was emotionally exhausted. And the hardest part was simply waiting. Waiting for those appointments, sitting in those waiting rooms unsure what would happen, unsure if we would ever have kids, unsure if I would lose Crystal or not.

Slide 11

But that is not what the disciples were doing, they were waiting together. But waiting has a way of isolating people.

When life gets hard, when things slow down, when we feel disappointed; my instinct is often to pull away. Have you ever felt that? Ever disconnected, ever disappeared, ever isolated yourselves? (Pause for people to ponder) If you answered yes, you would be in good company.

**But** the disciples stay together in their uncertainty, they remain connected while confused, and church, that is deeply important. Healthy waiting usually happens in community, not isolation. (repeat sentence twice)

Slide 12

## They prayed constantly

Let's move to the first activity that was done once they were gathered waiting, they prayed. They did not have a strategy meeting. They did move to how to introduce themselves to the world. They did not start putting events on their calendar. Prayer. They prayed.

Waiting can reveal what we trust. That means when we cannot control outcomes, we can either: panic, numb ourselves, grasp for control, OR we learn dependence. So how do we do that? Prayer. Prayer trains dependence. The disciples could not create Pentecost themselves. They could not force God's timing. They could only remain faithful. And that is really hard.

## **Learning to trust God again after Crystal wasn't healed**

Let's go back to me being angry. I was confused why God would leave my wife like this. Why he had not healed her. Why he would allow her to suffer. But I was not really telling him that, in fact I wasn't speaking to him at all. I meant that if he was (seemingly) abandoning us, I couldn't speak to him. I was hurt. He was not moving fast enough, he was not protecting our family, he was not showing up when we needed him most, or at least that is how I felt during this. I wanted healing for Crystal now, I wanted it fast.

Guys, we live in a culture addicted to speed. We want: instant answers, instant healing, instant growth, instant success, instant clarity. But God often works slower than we want Him to. Not because He is absent, but because, hear me when I say this: formation takes time. Integrity takes time to strengthen, character building is slow. Healing the body both physically and mentally can take ages. Slow, slow, slow. Slowing down is not optional for a Christ follower if you want to see change. Slowing down is where the good stuff comes from, even if it sucks sometimes, most of the time lol.

## **Waiting is all about formation**

One of the most interesting parts of this passage is Peter. Peter stands up and begins leading and is a different Peter than in the Gospels. This is not: impulsive Peter, sword-swinging Peter, denying-Jesus Peter. Something is changing in him, and Pentecost hasn't even happened yet. God is already forming him in the waiting. And this becomes a pattern throughout Scripture.

Think about it: Moses waits in Midian, Joseph waits in prison, David waits in caves, Israel waits in the wilderness, Jesus spends 40 days in the wilderness before ministry, and even here in our passage with the disciples waiting in Jerusalem. Over and over again God forms people before He sends people. Formation before mission. Being before Doing. Becoming who God has made us to be before doing what he wants us to do. And I hate that because I want God to skip to the breakthrough, but some things only develop slowly. Character develops slowly, Integrity develops slowly, Trust develops slowly, Endurance develops slowly, Compassion develops slowly, Depth develops slowly. And if I am honest, I usually want the fruit without the process. I am a millennial after all, I don't remember not having things instantly. Even worse for Gen Z and Gen Alpha here in the front row. You guys actually have bluetooth built into your brains, right? Just instant connection? No?

## Failure in Ministry

- First ministry job ended in failure (ask me about it later)
- Moved to Kansas with tail between legs
- Sat in shame and guilt and believing God was through with me
- Did not think I would ever get to serve him again
- Spent years in jobs that I had no passion for
- I felt:
  - felt stuck
  - Uncertain
  - frustrated
  - wondering what God was doing
  - Had he abandoned me?

We see the disciples exhibiting strength in this moment through every moment of waiting they went through before this. They had been being formed and shaped and molded over time. One day, one month, one year, one decade at a time. God was in each step of their journey.

## Peter roots them in Scripture

Peter begins explaining Judas through Scripture. Why? Because when life feels confusing, Scripture steadies us. The disciples were still grieving. Still confused, still had questions. And Peter reminds them God has not lost the story.

This matters for us too because waiting seasons can make us question: Is God still working, did God forget me, is anything happening, am I stuck? But Acts reminds us that God is still forming something even when we cannot yet see the outcome.

So Scripture is the way we root ourselves in what God has done. We can see his character and his integrity and the promises he has already kept to help give us peace and patience in our waiting.

## Preparing for what is next

Then we get this seemingly random section where they replace Judas with Matthias. At first glance it feels unimportant, but Luke includes it for a reason. The disciples are preparing for what is next. Waiting does not mean inactivity.

**Slide 13**

They were actively preparing for what might come. They had enough trust in Jesus to know something was coming. After all Jesus told them it was. So they were getting ready for what was to come. They were prepared the best they could be. How? Through gathering together, prayer, rooting themselves in God's word, and trusting God had something for them.

## Big Idea

Slides 14-15

Let's look at both sides of this real quick. Waiting done poorly can produce: bitterness, impatience, numbness, distraction, and isolation. But waiting surrendered to God can produce: character, integrity, prayerfulness, compassion, endurance, wisdom, and dependence. The deepest things God builds in us happen slowly.

## Gospel Reminder

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We need to remember: Jesus understands waiting: thirty years before public ministry, forty days in the wilderness, and waiting in Gethsemane. And because Jesus died and rose again, our waiting is never empty. God is present in it even when we cannot see what He is building.

## Conclusion

The disciples thought the mission would begin with movement. Instead, it began with waiting. It was prayer before preaching, formation before mission, character before platform, dependence before power. Maybe some of you today feel frustrated because you feel stuck in the waiting room.

You want: answers, healing, clarity, change, movement, but Acts 1 reminds us that Waiting is not wasting. God may be doing deeper work in you than you can currently see. The road before you is not only about where God is sending you, it is also about who God is forming you into along the way.

## Finish my stories

I left my stories unfinished because I wanted to show that the waiting was more important than finishing them, but I think it is important to see what the waiting brought in my life, and in my family's life.

After a period of anger at God I was eventually able to erupt at him. And he met me with such an incredible love. Over a few months I came to hear God answering my anger with compassion and what felt like him actually wrapping his arms around me and saying I am so sorry, this is not fair, I am with you, and with Crystal, and I have not forgotten you, and I love you both so much. And through months of feeling and receiving that, mixed with our community leaning in with us and speaking affirming words to us, I was able to feel hope and peace. And I was able to lean back in with our church community. I was able to step out of isolation. I was able to build a prayer life unlike what was there before.

Through several more years and even another surgery, Crystal would wind up cancer free! And that we would be ok to try for kids. And over the course of the next year or so.....Haven showed up. Amen! God is good.

*On the other side of things*, my job related, passion related, character related side of things: that was a hard journey. Long journey. It took years to refine the character and integrity deficiencies that lead to the failure in ministry in the first place. It took many men investing in me, counseling, small groups. Life groups, failure, job changes, doubt, small victories, more failures, days, weeks, months, and years, almost a decade. And don't hear this wrong, because I still have long way to go, but those years were not wasted. I am not that guy anymore. God has been faithful, my friends have been faithful, and my family has been faithful to me, and I get to stand here as a witness that God can change hearts! I am changed.

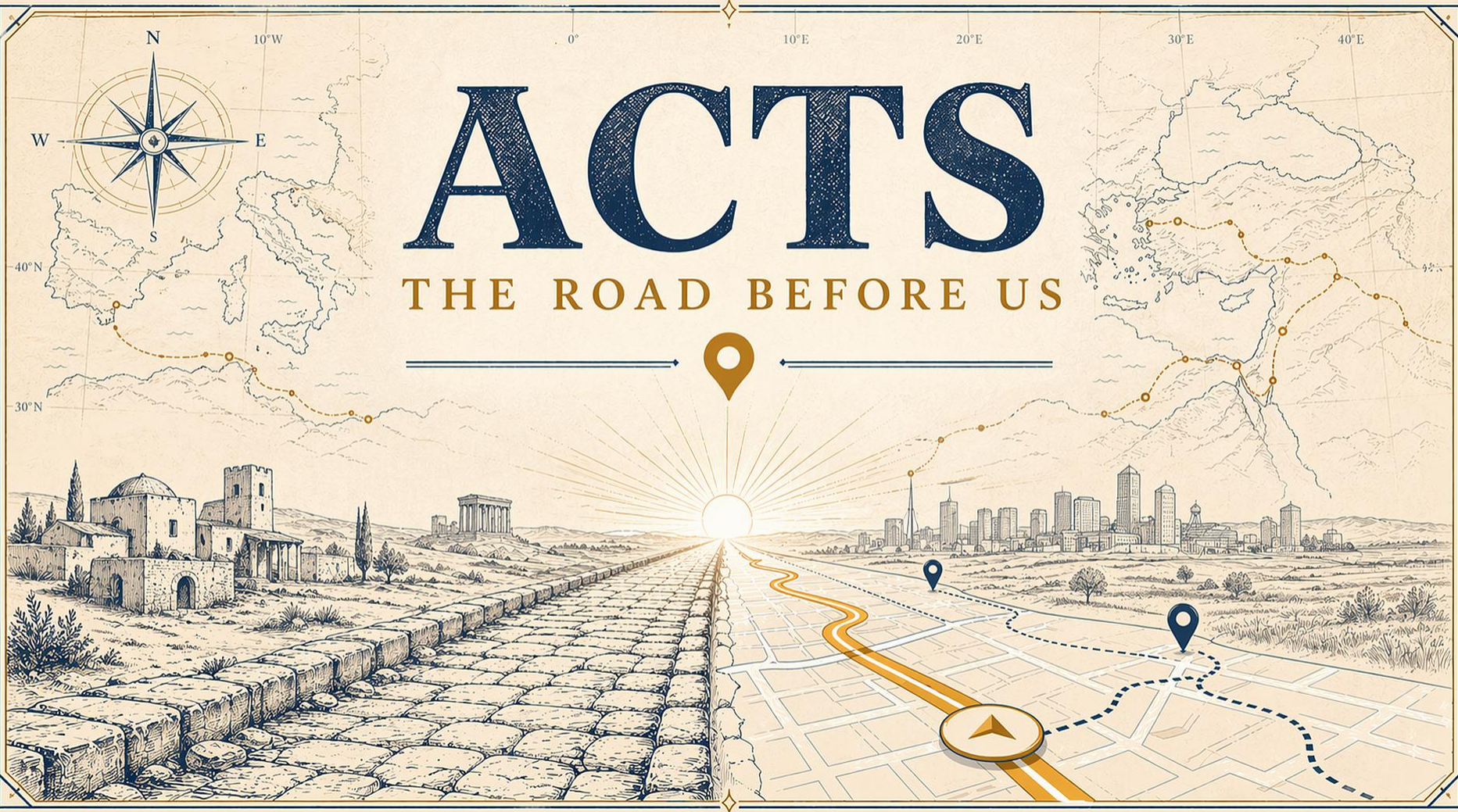
Just 2 months ago I accepted a job at Pure Desire Ministries as their part time Event & Speaker Coordinator, and not even a 3 weeks ago I stepped into Tru as your youth pastor. Both of which the old Dilan, would not have been able to do. But in both of those job's interviews I was told things about myself that could only have come from God. Because only people who really knew me could have said such amazing things reflecting back what they saw in me. And yet they said them, so they must be true. If I had not gone through each day of the waiting, each year of the slow change, I would not have been ready to stand here and preach this message. To prepare you for next week, for what is next, Pentecost. This message is true, I am living proof. God is in the waiting, it is important, and that waiting is never wasted, never.

## **Prayer**

Let us pray: God you are a good God, you are a faithful friend, you never leave us or forsake us. You are with us each step, each small moment, and you have a purpose for each of them. Help us to be a people who lean in with through this process. This process of waiting, because it is a process that slowly transforms and molds us in who you have made us to be. To be a people who brave, and true, and honest, and loving, and quick to extend grace, and so much more. Help us to not get so caught up on the things ahead that we miss that your biggest blessing sometimes happen where we are now, actually a lot of times. So this week and every week that we wait on you, help us lean into community, prayer, your word, and prepare for what you have next. We love and trust you Jesus, so much, amen.

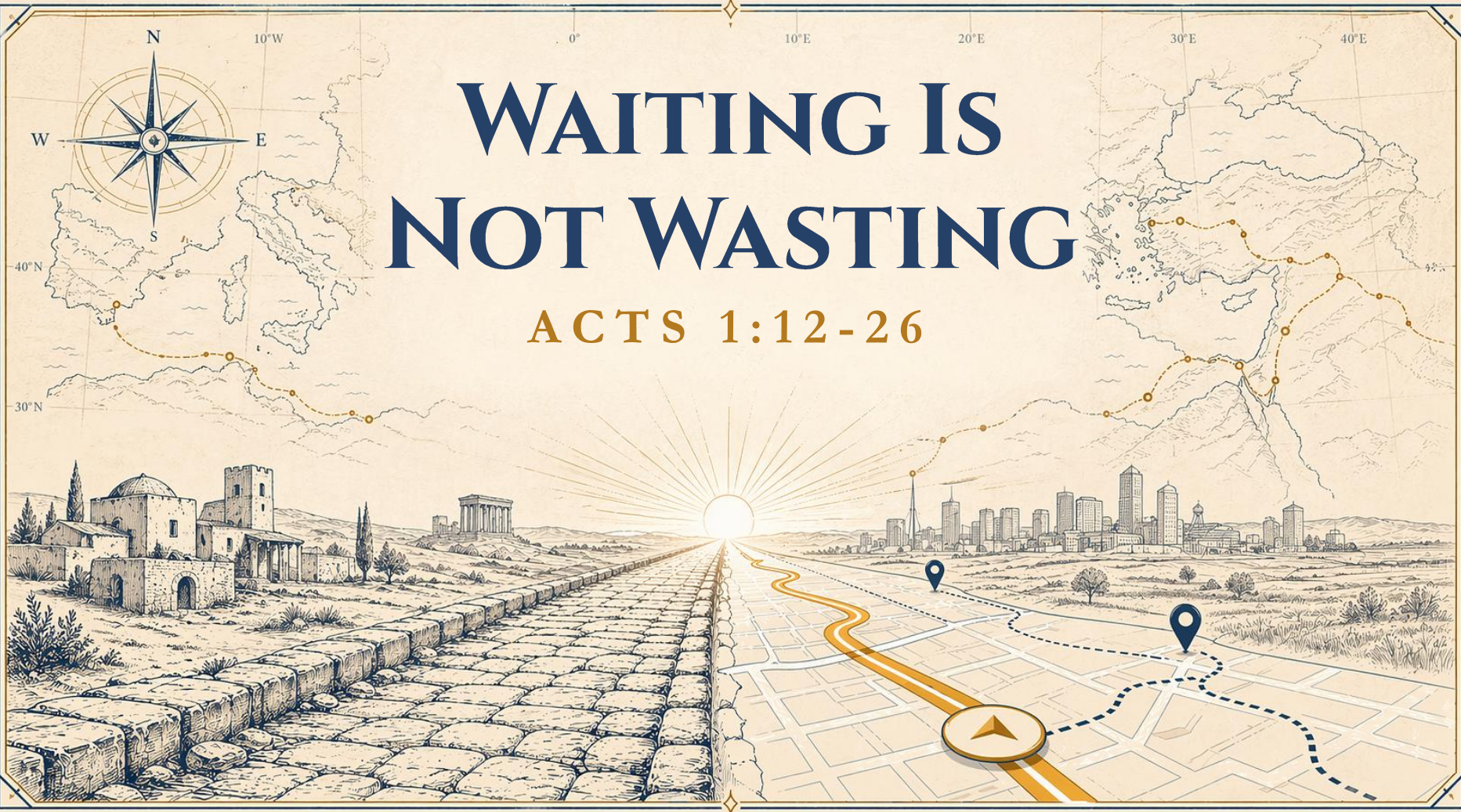
# ACTS

THE ROAD BEFORE US



# WAITING IS NOT WASTING

ACTS 1:12-26



# SERIES FRAMEWORK

## Acts: The Road Before Us

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

-Acts 1:8

- Jerusalem → Judea/Samaria → Ends of the Earth



# ACTS 1:12-26

**Acts 1:12-13** <sup>12</sup> Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. <sup>13</sup> And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James.



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# ACTS 1:12-26

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# ACTS 1:12-26

**Acts 1:20-22**<sup>20</sup> “For it is written in the Book of Psalms, ‘May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it’: and ‘Let another take his office.’<sup>21</sup> So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,<sup>22</sup> beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.”



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# ACTS 1:12-26

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# THEY WAITED TOGETHER

“All these with one accord were devoting themselves  
to prayer...”

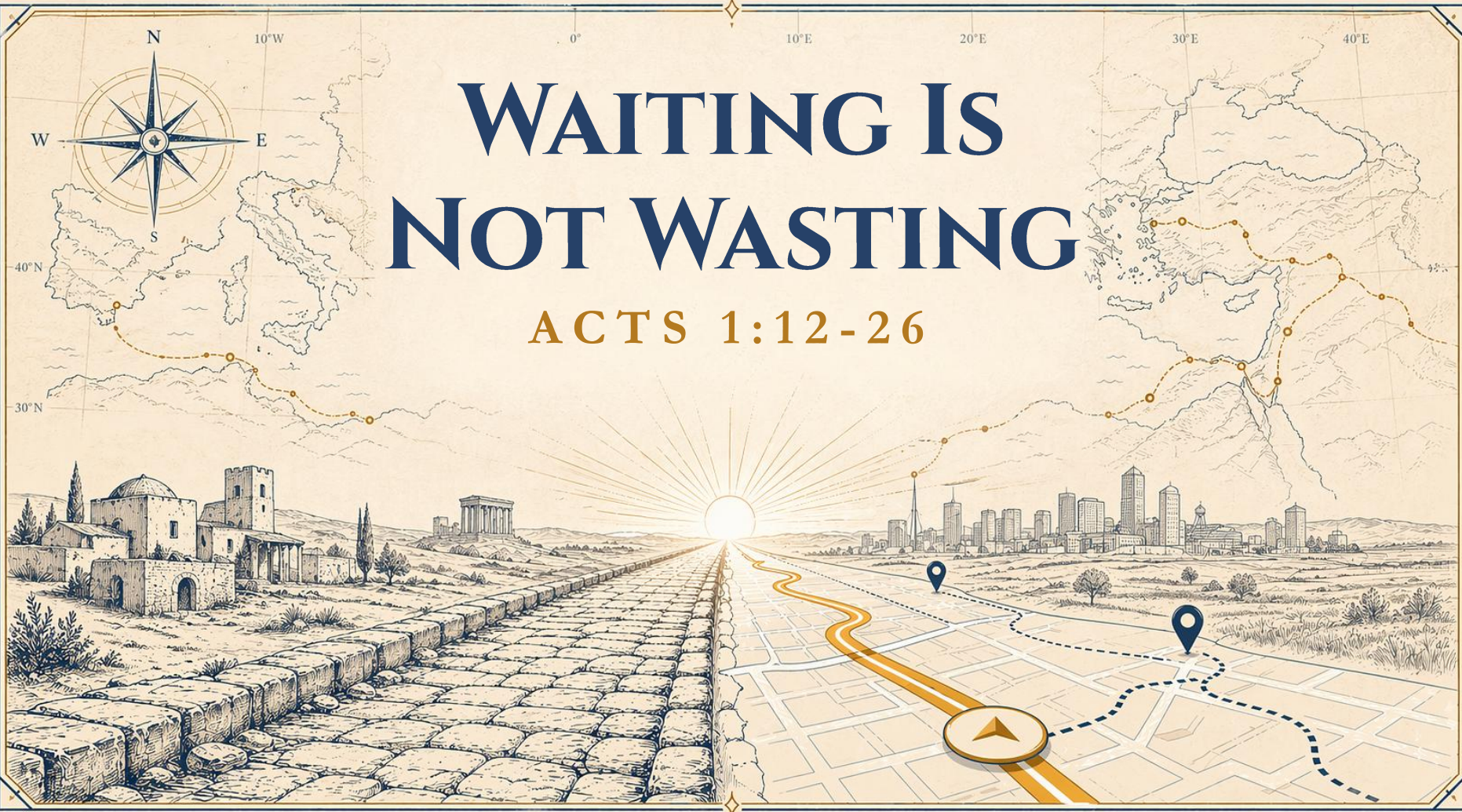
- Acts 1:14

Healthy waiting usually happens:  
**In community, not isolation.**



# WAITING IS NOT WASTING

ACTS 1:12-26



# ISOLATION VS. COMMUNITY

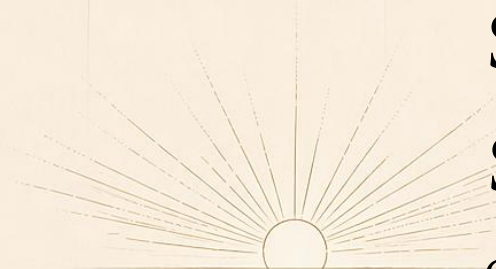
Waiting can produce:

Isolation

Fear

Bitterness

Exhaustion



But the disciples:

Stayed Together

Stayed Connected

Stayed Faithful





# WAITING IS NOT WASTING

ACTS 1:12-26

# WAITING IS NOT INACTIVITY

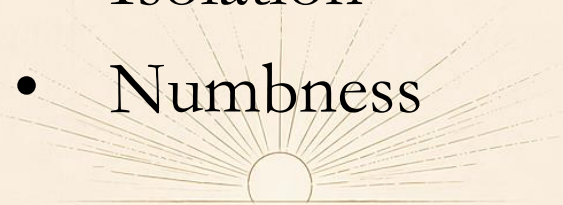
## The Disciples Prepared For What Was Next

- They Gathered Together
- They Prayed
- They Rooted Themselves In Scripture
- They Trusted God's Promise



# WAITING DONE POORLY PRODUCES:

- Bitterness
- Isolation
- Numbness



# WAITING SURRENDERED TO GOD PRODUCES:

- Character
- Compassion
- Endurance
- Wisdom
- Dependence



# WAITING IS NOT WASTING

ACTS 1:12-26

