

A Bible Bullet (aimed at the heart)

Feast of the Ascension, Cycle C

Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians 1:17-23; Luke 24:46-53

Beginning or end? End or beginning? The Ascension can be either or both. For Jesus, it marked the end of his life on earth. He would no longer be with his companions to share conversation, fish, bread, and wine. For Jesus, it would also be His return to God where he sits at the right hand of the Father forever.

The disciples also would experience the Ascension as both beginning and end. It was the end of face to face encounters with their Savior. His flesh and blood presence would no longer be there among them to rekindle their lagging faith in moments of despair. They could not run to him to seek his guidance when the journey was unclear. But this was the beginning of knowing their best friend was now in heaven interceding on their behalf. He had kept His promises to them and had overcome even death on a cross and a hewn rock tomb. No wonder they were filled with joy!

This was also the beginning of their **active waiting** for the Spirit:

*See, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you,
so stay in the city until you are clothed with power from
on high.*

Have you ever considered the act of waiting as active? When we wait with anticipation, with deep faith in what seems absurd to the world, we wait actively. Faith allows us to wait actively. Jesus friends waited with a faith that seemed absurd to the world. The Old Testament story of Hannah offers us a beautiful example of active waiting.

In anticipation, the disciples waited, not knowing what the coming of the Spirit would mean. End of life as they had known it, perhaps?

The beginning of a new life beyond their imaginations? Ultimately, it would be the beginning of a new life that would bring them to violent ends so that their new lives in heaven with Jesus may begin. The seeds sown from their examples would sprout life anew in future believers.

We have all passed through various stages of life, leaving some aspects behind while dealing with that which is new to us. Did anything new happen to you this Easter season? Did it cause you to wait with anticipation? Did you choose to leave anything of your material life behind to enhance your relationship with Jesus? Did Lent draw to a close without a fresh start, a new beginning, continuing into the weeks that followed? Rejoice and be glad, because a new beginning is always there for us to choose. Our best friend is in heaven, at the right hand of the Father, interceding for us today.