

[1 Texas] It's hard to believe, but I've been living in Texas now for longer than anywhere else in my adult life. College for 4 years, North Carolina for 5 years, and now Texas for 8 years. I don't know when I actually get the "I'm a Texan" card, but it should be coming up soon right?

And even though I've lived in Texas for 8 years, I had never been to a country honky tonk dance hall before until a few months ago. For the record, I grew up going to dances and I feel like I'm a decent dancer. I always had fun at middle school and high school dances, and in college I may have even worked up a few dance routines.... that I still know to this day.... have been known to do at karaoke from time to time... so I feel like I can hold my own on the dance floor.

[2 Red River Pic] That is until I went to Red River for a birthday party. For those of you that don't know let me explain it. It is a huge place and they have a stage and lights galore for live country music. There's a mechanical bull, which I was on for a bit. And then there's a big circular dance floor in the middle of the room that everyone is dancing around. When we first walked in, they were playing some hip hop dance club music and I was like, okay, I know how this works. This should be fun.

But then they started playing country music again.... my mind was blown. Once the music changed, the dancing changed. Everyone began doing this very specific type of dance. Everyone at different levels of skill and expertise, some were just doing the basic steps, but then others were doing incredibly complex spinning and rotating and arms twisting and craziness. But they all were moving together around the circle. I realized very quickly that I was out of my league. That I didn't know how to do even the most basics on that dance floor without causing a pileup of epic proportions. So I didn't even get on the floor I didn't want to fail and so I didn't even try.

[3 Wedding Reception] We've all been there before right? We've all, at some point, been at the club or the wedding reception, having a good time, and then that certain song came on everyone, it seemed, besides you hit the floor and moved in unison. It's like they all got the memo and you were just left on the sidelines, alone, as an outcast. You didn't know the moves. And you very frankly didn't want to even attempt to get on the dance floor for fear of making a fool of yourself.

[4 Office Politics] Or maybe it's not dancing, but a work thing. You start a new job and there's all these code words and processes that are so foreign to you that it's hard to know how to do the work. Or being in a group of friends where you just know one of the people and they have all these inside jokes and they don't bother explaining them to you so you just keep your mouth shut so you don't kill the mood.

[5 Church building] Or what about coming to church? Maybe it's your first time in church in a while, or ever, and there's stuff going on that seems foreign to you. We do our best to make our gatherings as easy as possible to join in, but there's still the fact that all this stuff we are doing isn't really done anywhere else. You see how everyone around you seems to have the hang of this "living for God" thing and it still hasn't clicked with you.

You think to yourself, I really wish I could know God like that. I wish that it would click. I wish that I wasn't feeling so out of touch with what everyone else is doing. I have good news for you. You can know God like that.

I know some of us hear me say that and immediately think, "Well maybe they can, maybe everyone in this room can, but I can't. Everyone but me." You think, you've been dancing to your own beat for so long that you'll never get your feet to do the God moves. Or maybe you feel like when it comes to following God and

living this life, you've got two left feet. They just don't work that way. They aren't getting the hang of moves. and you're nervous because you don't want to make a fool of yourself, or kill the mood, or cause a pile up on the dance floor.

We are at the tail end of a series that we've titled "Go There" and we've been looking at what happened in the aftermath of the resurrection of Jesus. The last 6 weeks, we've been looking at how the Spirit lead the early church to places that previously had been off limits. And we've seen over and over again how all the people that they thought God would never let in, the Spirit had already opened the door to them, and now there is no one who is out of bounds. Everyone is allowed on the dance floor.

Okay, so everyone is invited to dance, but how do we learn the moves. Well... you go... and wait...

Wait what?

Yeah. Go and wait.

that doesn't even make sense. Is it Go or is it Wait? Yes

[6 awkward dancing] We've seen the GO guys at the wedding reception right? They get out on the floor and they just start dancing and dancing, and you don't know what beat they are dancing to, but it's obvious it couldn't be the song that's playing. They just know they're supposed to get on the floor to dance, and so they just Go. Some of us have the tendency to do that with following Jesus. We know that we're supposed to do something so we just Go Go Go, Do Do Do, and after a while we get burned out and don't know why. I'm doing all the right things. I'm reading my bible, i'm praying, I'm serving. But I still don't feel the beat. I'm starting to wonder if there's even really a song playing, or if everyone's just making it up.

[7 wall huggers] We've also seen the opposite at the wedding reception. The people who just sit and watch. When asked to come on the dance floor they say, Oh i'm good. I don't need to dance to have fun. And then they end up never leaving their chair and they've got a sour look on their face all night. These are the waiters. They're the people that have been to church but keep everything, and everyone, at arm's length. They don't join in, they don't participate. Maybe they're afraid of looking foolish. Maybe they're still not sold on this whole "dancing" thing. So they are waiting....

But it's not go OR wait. It's go AND wait.

[Scripture Slide] So if you would, turn in your bibles, or click on your app to Acts 1. I want to take a look at how this plays out. If you grabbed one of the free bibles from the back its on page XXXX. As you're getting there, all the passages that we've looked at in this series have been looking at what happened after the Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, which is actually next Sunday. So it's been a look forward at what the early church did in response to receiving the Holy Spirit. This week we begin the prequels, minus Jar Jar Binks. The beginning of Acts tells of Jesus' last moments on earth with his disciples before He "ascends" (more on that later).

Jesus spent years teaching and leading this band of misfits, preparing them to be his ambassadors, his image in the world when he inevitably would have to leave. So as he is preparing to leave, his last words would be important right? We are now the disciples, the followers of Jesus, wanting to do what Jesus has called us to do so what does he want us to do... These words should be important for us.

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. 4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

7 He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But 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.”

9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:1-11)

Jesus’ final command to them, His final instructions are to GO to Jerusalem and WAIT. Because if you wait you will receive the Holy Spirit. And then when he flies away these angels appear and basically say, “what are you looking at? Do what he said! GO back to Jerusalem.” Go and wait. Do what he said... Go and wait.

There’s some weird stuff going on here. Anytime someone is flying without the aid of a jet pack, it’s pretty eye-opening. well, even WITH a jetpack, [\[Jetpack Video\]](#) that’s pretty impressive right? But in this story in particular, this raises some questions. First, why did Jesus go up? Or maybe that’s not a question you have...but it should be...

[8 Map of Ancient Cosmos] In the ancient world, there was this understanding that heaven was above, earth was below, and hades was below the earth, underground. They viewed these as physical locations, with a physical address that you could get to if you tried hard enough. That’s why early in the story, they tried to build a tower to reach heaven. This wasn’t even just the Jewish people either. Look at Greek Mythology. They believed the gods were living on mountain, whose peak was above the clouds somewhere right? And they had other stories where someone went down to hades to retrieve something and came back to tell about it.

But we now know by what we have learned with science and technology, that if you dig down far enough in the earth, you don’t find hell, but it sure will get hot. And we’ve sent astronauts and telescopes with cameras that shoot images of the universe further than we will ever possibly travel and still no physical heaven has been found.

So Jesus’ going UP had to mean something different than going UP to heaven. His going up was not for his benefit, so that he could reach that physical space in the cosmos where “heaven” is located. As one theologian puts it, he could have just faded from their site and it would have accomplished the same thing. Jesus is not going UP because heaven is UP. He’s going up because he is ascending to the throne of the universe. He’s not going up because God is up or heaven is up. He’s going up so that the disciples (and we as hearers of the story) recognize that He is now the Lord of all, the Cosmic King, ascending to His throne, where He is ruling to bring restoration to all things. This whole up and down stuff is just for our benefit. So

that we can wrap our heads around things. [9 Throne above the Cosmos] It's a symbol for us of Jesus' cosmic kingship.

Another question then is why did he have to go? If it really was for our benefit, that he didn't need to go to a physical place to assert his authority, couldn't he have just stayed.

The disciples had that same question. Throughout Jesus' ministry, they had an earthly view of Jesus' role as king/ Messiah. The entire time that he was on earth they thought that he had come to establish a new Israel, here, which meant driving out the Romans, the oppressors, and sitting on David's throne. You can tell this because at key moments of Jesus' life, the disciples ask, "is now when your kingdom will be established?" and "when you come into your kingdom can my sons sit on your right and on your left." and it's not different this time around.

They thought that it was all over, that Jesus was dead and gone, and they were hiding out from the authorities. I'm sure they were like, well I guess we got it wrong. At best there must've been something else going on in what Jesus was talking about, and at worst, he was an imposter.

But then they got word that Jesus was alive, that he'd come back from the dead. Well... maybe now is the time. "Jesus... you were dead. and you came back to life. surely that means that now is the time right! Now is the time that you will establish the kingdom, right? You'll reestablish Israel's dominion?"

And Jesus says, "no." and actually "i'm out. duces!" and off he goes.

It seemed as though all this work, the years of ministry and miracles, the cross, the tomb, and now the resurrection, was culminating in this moment when Jesus would kick at the Romans and take back the throne of David. But then he just bails...

[10 Wedding Reception] It's like we had gotten the wedding reception and we had introduced the bride and groom and they are about to take the dance floor for the first time as husband and wife, and the groom is like "#brb" I have a feeling we would all be staring at the door waiting for the groom to return so we could get on when the party, much like the disciples were staring at the sky bewildered at what just happened.

And then two men dressed in white call us out. "What are you looking at? [11 Back to the Future 3 moonwalk VIDEO] Dance. Dance."

Because what is dancing? Dancing is going and waiting. Don't believe me?

[12 Cupid Shuffle video] Take the cupid shuffle for instance... when you go to the right 3 steps you stop, and then you go to the left 3 steps... and then you kick, and kick and kick, and kick and walk it by yourself....if you just go to the right, you're just walking to the right.... and that ain't dancing."

Okay so that's pretty dumbed down dancing, no doubt. But take ballroom dancing... [13 Ballroom Dancers VIDEO] Even ballroom dancing is all about going, and waiting. And one person is leading the dance, and one person is following. And when they have been together for a while, it's hard to tell who's leading and who's following because they end up moving as one. Yeah! that's it! Over time you can't tell who is leading who, because it is one fluid motion.

What Jesus tells the disciples is, i'm going away because it's better if I go. If I stay, then I can't send the Spirit. But my dreams are bigger than that. If I take an earthly throne, I can impact one people group. If I take my cosmic throne I can impact the universe. If I stay, it'll be nice for Peter James and John. But if I go then the poor and powerless get to have my spirit, the broken and lame can have my spirit, the people that don't fit into the normal categories can have my spirit, and to the ends of the earth. If I stay, I'm only able to impact you. But if I go, the Spirit can impact everyone!

In essence, if the groom stays, he can only dance with the bride, when what he wants, is to dance with everyone. He wants everyone on the dance floor. And that means you too!

[14 learning to Dance] You may feel like you don't know how, but no one does when they are just starting out! It's the same with dancing. Starting out its follow my steps! do what i do! 1-2-3 1-2-3 1-2-3 good! good! that's it! you're getting it. It's SO basic that it sometimes hurts to watch and it doesn't look beautiful at all. But you watch partners that have been dancing for years and it can be the most beautiful thing you've ever seen. (Possible VIDEO - incredible dancer) So after some time of dancing with the Spirit, it will get easier to sense her leading. It'll get more and more in sync. it'll get harder and harder to tell the difference between you and the Spirit because it is one fluid motion.

When you're dancing with the Spirit, you recognize that you're not the lead dancer, you're the follower. You're the one that senses where the Spirit's next step is gonna take you and you move with her. You don't take the lead.

When you're dancing with the Spirit, you've gotta get out there and dance. You can study the moves all day long, read the books, watch the instructional videos, even go to the dance class, but at some point, you've gotta move from just gaining knowledge ABOUT the dance, to getting on the floor and trying out the moves.

Lastly, the bible refers to the Church, the people of God, as the bride of Christ. That's an intimate connection. Like the difference between a wedding reception and the 50th anniversary party, a couple's last dance is way more intimate than their first dance. The key is, you've gotta give into it. You've gotta trust your partner. You've gotta trust the Spirit. We are all invited to follow his lead, and amazingly, when we do, we begin to move as one.

[15 North Carolina] When I was in North Carolina, I was working at a job, and starting out things were great. I operated with the belief that I would be there forever. I knew that there would be ups and downs, but that I would stay and work it out. In 2005, that began to change. I started to realize that I wouldn't be there forever, but I didn't feel that I needed to leave just yet. So I waited. I talked with Meagan and there were many times that she would say, you just need to go, and I said, I don't feel like it's time yet. So I waited. 1 month, 2 months, 6 months, a year, 2 years went by. 2 years of waiting until I was told about this little town in Texas called Rowlett. And it was like the proverbial light bulb flipped on. It was clear as day. The Spirit said at that moment GO! And what did I find when I got here? That the Spirit was already at work in this place. That she had begun drawing like-minded people together to change the world. And we've been dancing ever since.

That's life, dancing with the Spirit. You wait for the Spirit to move and then you go there. You'll know. And the more you dance with the Spirit the more clear the moves will become. And over time, as you get more and more comfortable with following the Spirit, it ends up being hard to tell where your moves end and the Spirit's begin, because you are moving as ONE. And wherever you are, you end up seeing, as the disciples did, the Spirit has already been there, and you're just joining her on the dance floor. The disciples were told

to GO back to Jerusalem and WAIT. Next week, we'll see the Spirit make the first move, and the disciples follow.

So where are you? Are you just dancing by yourself? running yourself ragged? Tiring yourself out? Are you sitting on the sidelines? Have you been waiting so long that you don't know if you would recognize the Spirit's leading? Are you even in the dance hall?

God has invited you to join him in the cosmic dance that is bringing about the restoration of all things. Jesus' ascension to the throne has made this a reality. It began 2000 years ago with this instruction to go and wait... and the church has been dancing ever since. Rome's power faded, as has every other human dance, but Christ's dance has only gained greater and greater momentum. Can you imagine a 2000 year old dance? Can you join a dance that has been and is currently transforming the world. but not just that... but a dance that continues for all eternity... bringing all things into harmony

[16 Lectio Divina] **LECTIO Divina**

So how do we get started? What's the simple waltz steps that we can get used to dancing. On your seat this morning, you should've received one of our Guides to Spiritual Practices. These are some of the basic steps, the basic rhythms of a life with the Spirit. I'd encourage you to look over all of them in your own time and see about how you can put them into practice.

However, as a response to this going AND waiting dance that the Spirit is inviting us into, I want to focus on the practice of Reading Scripture, specifically the practice of Lectio Divina. This practice has been around for a long time and simply means divine reading. And I know what you're all thinking ... I thought you said we're supposed to wait? Not just GO read a bunch of bible and it all works out. That's why this practice is key.

This way of reading scripture is not a task-oriented, let's see how much I can read in a week, type of reading of scripture. It's specifically designed to make you WAIT on the Spirit.

You pick a scripture to start with, for this week, use John 3:22-36, and you read it 3 times. The first time you read through it slowly. This is like getting on the dance floor, inviting the Spirit to make the next move. You're just trying to take in the words of the Scripture. The second time, pay attention to your 5 senses. What are you seeing, hearing, etc. Take notes of what insights you have. This is like you're joining in the dance. The 3rd time, read through and pay attention to any words that stand out to you. This is where you're listening for the ways that this dance is transforming you. After you've read it the third time and you've found that word or phrase that stands out, take some time to reflect on why those stood out, what could God be trying to say in this moment. Then you close with a prayer.

This works so well because many times when we think about reading scripture, we think about having to read huge chunks, or we have the task of reading through it in a year, or 2 years or whatever. And there's something to be said for reading that much scripture. But usually only the GOers like that optoin.

So this practice is the GO and WAIT method of Scripture reading. You are active in that you're reading scripture, but you're also waiting. Waiting to see what God might be saying to you through the scripture. And that's a great dance!