

THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

May 16, 2021

Why Do You Stand Around Looking at the Sky? Get to Work!

AS WE GATHER

"I'll see you soon!" So says the parent, spouse, or friend leaving for an errand or a short trip, with certainty that time together will soon be had again. "I'll see you soon!" so says Jesus as He departs and ascends into heaven. And though it has not been hours or days or even weeks, rather nearly two thousand years later, we still hold to the certainty of His promise that we shall see Him again soon at His time. Until that day, though, we are wise to not stay looking up into the sky, as the disciples began to do long ago. Rather, we heed His mission to make disciples and keep ourselves prepared for that day. Even as we long to see Him soon, we know that Jesus is enough for us every day, and we take comfort in the fact that our ascended Lord Jesus remains present with us now, in this life, even amid troubles and trials. We hold on to His promises by the faith given, and we anticipate that joyful day when He will come again in the same way He was taken up into heaven.

+ PREPARATION +

OPENING HYMN: [*A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing*](#)

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *Psalm 47:2-3; 124:8*

Pastor: For the LORD, the Most High, is to be feared, a great king over all the earth.

People: **He subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet.**

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the LORD,

People: **who made heaven and earth.**

Pastor : Let us then confess our sins unto our gracious Lord.

People: **We confess before God and before one another that we have failed to live in the image of Christ. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed.**

Pastor: We stand guilty before our Father in heaven and are in need of His forgiveness.

People: Forgive us for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Pastor: Because of and in Christ's continued presence through all our days,

People: renew us and strengthen us for Christlike living and service in Your kingdom until the day when we ascend to the heavenly realm where we shall be in the presence of Christ forever and ever.

Pastor: Jesus Christ, your ascended Lord, has heard your confession, and He alone has the power to forgive all sin. His presence and grace are enough for us in this time and eternally. God has promised His merciful forgiveness for the sake of His Son, Jesus, to those who repent of their sins and turn to Him in faith. As a called and ordained servant of the Word, in His stead and by His command, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: God keep you in His grace by the Holy Spirit, lead you in ways of faith and obedience, and finally bring you to live with Him forever; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: Amen.

+ WORD +

PSALM *Psalm 47*

¹Clap your hands, all peoples!

Shout to God with loud songs of joy!

**²For the LORD, the Most High, is to be feared,
a great king over all the earth.**

³He subdued peoples under us,
and nations under our feet.

**⁴He chose our heritage for us,
the pride of Jacob whom he loves.**

⁵God has gone up with a shout,
the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

⁶Sing praises to God, sing praises!

Sing praises to our King, sing praises!

⁷For God is the King of all the earth;
sing praises with a psalm!

**⁸God reigns over the nations;
God sits on his holy throne.**

⁹The princes of the peoples gather
as the people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth belong to God;
he is highly exalted!

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

KYRIE

Pastor: Christ, the Lamb of God, who saved us while we were still sinners,

People: have mercy on us.

Pastor: Christ, the Lamb of God, once lifted upon the tree of the cross,

People: have mercy on us.

Pastor: Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

People: have mercy on us and grant us Your peace. Amen.

SALUTATION and PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray.

Almighty God, as Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, ascended into the heavens, so may we also ascend in heart and mind and continually dwell there with Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

FIRST READING Acts 1:1–11

(Ascension of Jesus)

¹In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ²until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the

Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³To them he presented himself alive after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

⁴And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." ⁹And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL *adapt. from Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6*

Christ has risen from the dead.

**God the Father has crowned Him with glory and honor,
He has given Him dominion over the works of His hands;
He has put all things under His feet.**

EPISTLE *Ephesians 1:15–23*

(Thanksgiving and prayer through our risen and ascended Savior)

¹⁵For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also

in the one to come. ²²And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

VERSE - *Romans 6:9; Matthew 28:20b*

Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. Alleluia. Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Alleluia.

HOLY GOSPEL *Luke 24:44–53*

(Jesus fulfills all Scripture.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the twenty-fourth chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

⁴⁴Then [Jesus] said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

⁵⁰Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. ⁵¹While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵²And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³and were continually in the temple blessing God.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY: [*Crown Him with Many Crowns*](#)

SERMON: *Why Do You Stand Around Looking at the Sky? Get to Work!*

NICENE CREED

**I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth**

and of all things visible and invisible.

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life + of the world to come. Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

After each petition:

Pastor: ... Lord, in Your mercy:

People: **hear our prayer.**

At conclusion:

Pastor: ... one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9–13*

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER

Pastor: Let us pray.
We give thanks to You, ascended Lord, Jesus Christ, as Your Father has made You head over everything for the Church. In body and blood in, with, and under bread and wine, You have given us the gift of Yourself as You forgive our sins and strengthen our faith. Help us to know that Your presence with us each day through every trial and trouble is enough for our souls. Fix our eyes upon Your coming Kingdom, and grant that Your Church, strengthened by Your presence, live in faithful confidence and hope with all the grace You supply; through Your name above all names, who reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICTION *Acts 1:8; Numbers 6:24–26*

Pastor: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you,
People: and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Pastor: Go out into the world with peace and joy, for 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. The blessing of God Almighty—Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit—abide with you always.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Alleluia! Christ is risen!
People: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Pastor: Christ is risen, ascended, and glorified!
People: He sits at the right hand of the Father, enthroned in power and glory.

Pastor: Alleluia!
People: Alleluia!

CLOSING HYMN: *On Christ's Ascension I Now Build*

DISMISSAL

Pastor: With the power He has given through His Spirit, as His loved and forgiven people and as His witnesses here, nearby, and to the ends of the earth, go in peace as you serve our risen and ascended Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

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