

Historic Scripture Lessons for the Ascension of our Lord Old Testament

Genesis 5:21-24 NIV When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. 22 And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. 23 Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. 24 Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

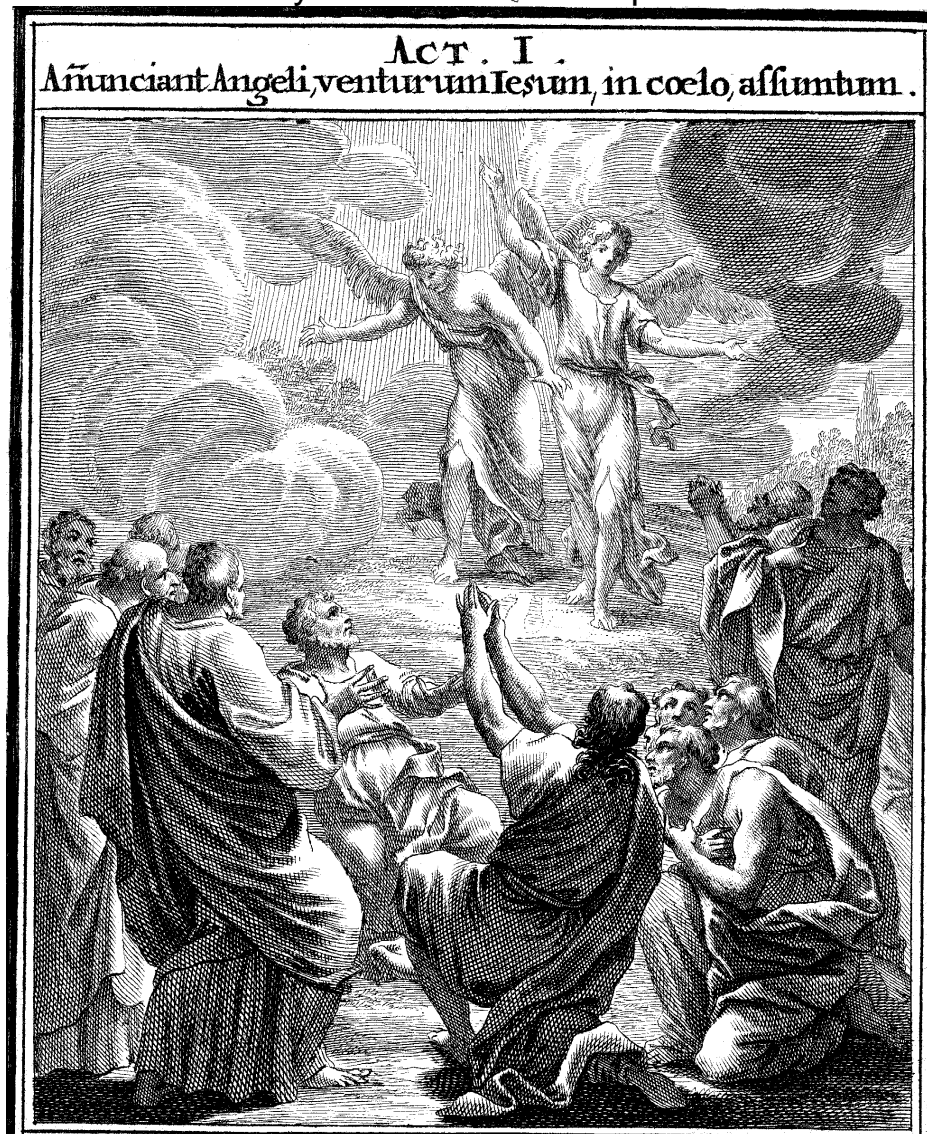
Epistle

Acts 1:1-11 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 showed Himself to these men 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 So when they met together, they 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."

Gospel

Mark 16:14-20 Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen. 15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." 19 After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. 20 Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

Our Savior & Peace Lutheran Churches  Lakeland
(40 days after Easter) ✠ *Ascension of Christ*
May 13th, 2015 🕒 7:00 pm



Woodcut illustration from a 1695 Bible – Acts 1:1-11
Following **Jesus' Ascension** into heaven **two angels** appear from heaven to inform the disciples of the Second coming.

Image courtesy of the Digital Image Archive, Pitts Theology Library, Candler School of Theology, Emory University
<http://www.pitts.emory.edu/dia/detail.cfm?ID=8185>

OSL OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH OSL

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BIBLE CLASS 8:30 AM WORSHIP 9:30 AM FELLOWSHIP 10:45 AM

✱ Rev. Peter Heyn, PLL 647-2531 ✱ Organ: A.R. Burmeister 430-5859

May 13th, 2015 ✱ The Ascension of Our Lord

WELCOME to Our Savior! We are so happy to have you worship with us today. If you are visiting us for the first time (or in a long time), we ask that that you please fill out a visitor card found in the pew cardholder and place it in the offering plate. Come and worship with us again! **God bless you.**

PERSONAL PRAYERS FOR BEFORE WORSHIP & COMMUNION: ELH p. 40

OUR ORDER OF WORSHIP Printed here and in (black ELH) Hymnary **p.120**

Service		
Invocation Hymn	389 (7v)	<i>Sing vv. 1-4</i> A Hymn of Glory Let Us...
Hymn of the Day	55 (5v)	Crown Him With Many Crowns
Canticle Hymn	392 (3v)	On Christ's Ascension I Now Build
Closing Hymn	389 (3v)	<i>Sing vv.5-7</i> O grant us thitherward to...

PROPERs for ASCENSION DAY ☼ ✱ ☼ ✱ ☼ **MAY 13, 2015**

INTROIT Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? Alleluia! This same Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven. Alleluia! Alleluia! Oh, clap your hands all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph! ...from **Acts 1**

COLLECT Grant, we beseech You, Almighty God, that just as we do believe Your Only-Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to have ascended into the heavens, so may we also in heart and mind to heaven ascend, and continually dwell with Him who lives, and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. **C: A-men.**

GRADUAL C: Alleluia! Alleluia! God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Alleluia! You have ascended on high. You have led captivity captive. Alleluia! ...from Psalm 68

SCRIPTURE LESSONS (printed on the outside back page of the bulletin)

O.T. **Genesis 5:21-24** Enoch is taken directly up to heaven.

Epi. **Acts 1:1-11** Jesus is taken up to heaven.

Gos. **Mark 16:14-20** Jesus commissions His disciples to preach the Gospel.

SERMON Text: (ILCW-Gospel) **Luke 24:44-53** Luke's Ascension Account.



ILCW Years A B & C Lessons for Ascension of our Lord

First Lesson

Acts 1:1-11 NIV 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 showed Himself to these men 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 So when they met together, they 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."

Epistle

Ephesians 1:16-23 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray also 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 the saints, 19 and His incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of His mighty strength, 20 which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at his Right Hand in the Heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be Head over everything for the Church, 23 which is His Body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.

Gospel (Sermon Text)

Luke 24:44-53 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." 45 Then He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and Rise from the dead on the Third Day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His Name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what My Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." 50 When He had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51 While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into Heaven. 52 Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53 And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

KYRIE ELEISON (*Lord Have Mercy*) **C:** ♪ Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us. - Lord, have mercy upon us.

The LORD'S PRAYER (Congregation pray, say together, ♪ *Sung Amen.*)

C: *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, ♪A- -men.

The (Evening) COLLECT (*Pastor prays, Congregation Amen*)

P: O GOD, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed: Give unto Your servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both our hearts may be set to obey Your Commandments, and also that we being defended by You from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One True God now and forever. **OR,**

P: Abide with us, Lord, for it is toward evening and the day is far spent. Abide with us and with Your whole Church. Abide with us in the end of the day, in the end of our life, and in the end of the world. Abide with us with Your grace and goodness, with Your holy Word and Sacrament, with Your strength and blessing. Abide with us when the night of affliction and temptation comes upon us, the night of fear and despair when death shall come. Abide with us and with all the faithful through time and eternity.

C: ♪ A- -men.

The BENEDICAMUS *P:* ♪ Let us bless the Lord. **C:** ♪ Thanks be to God.

The BENEDICTION *P:* ♪ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the love of God, And the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **C:** ♪ A- -men.



CLOSING HYMN *A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing* ELH #389 sing verses 5-7

5. Oh, grant us thitherward to tend - And with unwearied hearts ascend
Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia!
Unto Thy kingdom's throne, where Thou, As is our faith, art seated now.
Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu---ia!
6. Be Thou our Joy and strong Defense
Who art our future Recompense: - *Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia!*
So shall the light that springs from Thee Be ours through all eternity.
Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu---ia!
7. O risen Christ, ascended Lord, - All praise to Thee let earth accord,
ALLELUIA! ALLELU-IA!
Who art, while endless ages run, - With Father and with Spirit One.
ALLELUIA! ALLELU-IA! ALLELU-IA! ALLELU-IA! ALLELU---IA! A-men.

Silent Prayer (Candles out.)

You may be seated.

FELLOWSHIP_

✱ p.4 ✱



I. The Service of Vespers ELH p.120



WELCOME 05/13/15 7:00pm ASCENSION DAY (EVE) JOINT WORSHIP

INVOCATION Please rise.

P: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son ✱, and of the Holy Spirit. **C:** Amen.

THE CONFESSION OF SINS *P:* Dearly beloved! We have come together in the presence of God our heavenly Father, to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at His hand, to set forth His most worthy praise, to hear His holy Word, and to ask for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and salvation. O come, let us worship Him! Let us kneel and bow down before Him. Let us confess our sins with penitent hearts, and obtain forgiveness by His infinite grace and mercy.

C: Almighty and most merciful Father, we have strayed from Your ways like lost sheep. We have followed the devices and desires of our hearts. We have offended against Your holy Law. We have done those things which we should not have done, and we have not done those things which we should have done. Have mercy on us, O Lord! Spare us and restore us, according to the promises You have declared to us in Jesus Christ, our Lord. For His sake grant that we may live a godly, righteous and sober life, to the glory of Your holy Name.

THE ABSOLUTION

P: The almighty and merciful Lord has granted us pardon and forgiveness of all our sins, grace for true repentance and amendment of life, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The COLLECT for ASCENSION (*Pastor prays, Congregation Amen*) **C:** Amen.

OPENING HYMN *A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing* ELH #389 VENERABLE BEDE

1. A Hymn of glory let us sing:
New songs throughout the world shall ring: - *Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia!*
Christ, by a road before untrod, - Ascendeth to the throne of God.
Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu---ia!
2. The holy apostolic band - Upon the Mount of Olives stand;
Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia!
And with His followers they see - Jesus' resplendent majesty.
Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu---ia!
3. To whom the angels, drawing nigh,
"Why stand and gaze upon the sky? - *Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia!*
This is the Saviour!" thus they say, - "This is His noble triumph-day."
Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu---ia!
4. "Again shall ye behold Him so - As ye today have seen Him go,
Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia!
In glorious pomp ascending high, Up to the portals of the sky."
Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu---ia!
✱ p.1 ✱

The VERSICLES ELH, p.120

P: ♪ O Lord, open my lips. C: ♪ And my mouth will show forth Your praise.

P: ♪ Make haste, O God, to deliver me. C: ♪ Make haste to help me, O Lord.

The GLORIA PATRI C: ♪ Glory be to the Father, - and to the Son, - and to the Holy Ghost. - As it was in the beginning; is now, and ever shall be, for-ev-er-more. A-men. Al-le-lu—ia!



📖 The words to our Ascension **Psalm 47** Please READ responsively 📖

P: Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy.

C: How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth!

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

⁴ He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom He loved.

⁵ God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.

⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises.

⁷ For God is the King of all the earth; sing to Him a Psalm of praise.

⁸ God reigns over the nations; God is seated on His holy throne.

⁹ The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham,

C: For the kings of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted.

(All) Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, one True God, now and forever. Amen.



The LECTION: Readings for Ascension Festival

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Genesis 5:21-24 Enoch is taken to heaven.

EPISTLE: Acts 1:1-11 Jesus is taken up to heaven.

...Congregation please **Rise for the reading of the Holy Gospel.**

GOSPEL: Mark 16:14-20 Jesus commissions disciples to preach the Gospel.

RESPONSORY P: O Lord, have mercy upon us. C: ♪ Thanks be to You, O Lord!

APOSTLES' CREED (Confession of Faith) All say together. C:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord;

Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary;

Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried;

He descended into Hell; the Third Day He rose again from the dead;

HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN AND IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY

From there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of sins, the Resurrection of the body, and the Life everlasting.

Amen. (The Congregation may be seated for the next hymn.) ✧ p.2 ✧

SERMON HYMN “Crown Him With Many Crowns” ELH #55 DIADEMATA

1. Crown Him with many crowns - The Lamb upon His throne;
Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns - All music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing - Of Him Who died for thee
And hail Him as thy matchless King - Through all eternity.
2. Crown Him the Virgin's Son, - The God Incarnate born,
Whose arm those crimson trophies won - Which now His brow adorn;
Fruit of the mystic rose, - As of that rose the stem;
The root whence mercy ever flows, - The Babe of Bethlehem.
3. Crown Him the Lord of Love. - Behold His hands and side,
Rich wounds, yet visible above, - In beauty glorified.
No angel in the sky - Can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends His wondering eye - At mysteries so bright!
4. Crown Him the Lord of Life - Who triumphed o'er the grave
And Rose victorious in the strife - For those He came to save.
His glories now we sing - Who died and rose on high,
Who died eternal life to bring - And lives that death may die.
5. Crown Him the Lord of Heaven, - Enthroned in worlds above,
Crown Him the King to Whom is given - The wondrous Name of Love.
Crown Him with many crowns - As thrones before Him fall;
CROWN HIM, YE KINGS, WITH MANY CROWNS - FOR HE IS KING OF ALL. A-men.



SERMON Text: (ILCW-Gospel) Luke 24:44-53 Luke's Ascension Account.

THEME “OUR ASCENDED LORD BLESSES US” Thanks, Pr. Heyn for your message.

(After the **SERMON**)

The OFFERING

The VERSICLE P: ♪ Let my prayers rise before You as incense:

C: ♪ And the lifting up of my hands-- As the ev'ning sacrifice.

The CANTICLE (In place of Canticles: *Magnificat* or *Nunc Dimittis*) Sing

CANTICLE HYMN “On Christ's Ascension I Now Build” ELH #392 (3verses)

1. On Christ's ascension I now build - The hope of mine ascen-sion;
This hope alone has ever stilled - All hope and apprehen-sion:
For where the Head is, there full well- I know His members are to dwell:
When Christ shall come and call- them.
2. Since He returned to claim His throne, - Great gifts for men obtain-ing,
My heart shall rest in Him alone, - No other rest remain-ing:
For where my Treasure went before, - There all my thoughts shall ever soar
To still their deepest yearn-ing.
3. O grant, dear Lord, this grace to me, - Recalling Thine Ascen-sion
That I may ever walk with Thee, - Adorning Thy Redemp-tion:
And then, when all my days shall cease, Let me depart in joy and peace
In answer to my plead-ing. A-men.

Our Ascended Lord Blesses Us

- I. With the truths of his Word (vv. 44–47)
- II. With the Spirit’s power to witness (vv. 47–49)
- III. With joy in his ascension (vv. 50–53)

Dear fellow redeemed in our Ascended Lord,

Introduction: When I was younger, I lived in Bogota, Colombia, in South America. My father was a WELS missionary down there for a few years in the 80’s. If I still lived down there, tomorrow I would be celebrating a national holiday because that’s what Ascension Day is in Colombia, as it is in about 18 other countries including but not limited to Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Norway, and Lichtenstein. In the ancient church, it was one of the three main festivals, along with Christmas and Easter. Sadly, today’s world doesn’t give it much honor or remembrance, even in those countries where it is a national holiday. But we’re gathered here this evening because the Ascension of our Lord does give us great joy. This evening we see that this is because **our ascended Lord blesses us: with the truth of His Word, with the Spirit’s power to witness, and with joy in His ascension.**

I. [With the truths of his Word.] Our text begins on Easter evening. When our Savior, died, it seems that nothing could have shocked them more. Now they’ve heard stories of people seeing Him again but they are confused. Suddenly, Jesus is again with His disciples, and He reminds them of what He has told them so many times. John writes, “**He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”**” So He stands among them on Easter evening and shows them that what God has promised, and all of God’s Words, are true, and that they are fulfilled in Him!

Really, it should have come as no surprise, right? I mean, these people knew what the Jewish Scriptures said, and furthermore, they had been learning from Jesus for three years! And yet they didn’t get it. Why? Well, for the same reason that you and I don’t get it on our own. For the same reason that, even after coming to faith, we so often struggle with questions and doubts. And not just about God’s Word, but about whether or not He really knows what’s best for us and what He’s doing. Because we’re born with that natural inclination to doubt God and be skeptical of what He says to us. Our eyes and minds need to be open and that’s the first way that our ascended Lord blesses us.

John writes, “**Then He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and Rise from the dead on the Third Day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His Name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”**” “**He opened their minds**” and opened their eyes, because it’s the only way they could see the truth of His Word,

and that’s just what our ascended Lord has done for us as well. Still just as living as He was on Easter evening and on that Day of Ascension, our Lord still comes to us and opens our eyes. For most of us, He first did it in baptism, but He is continually re-opening our eyes as He comes to us in His Word.

What a blessing! On Ascension we celebrate that we have a God who *is* faithful to His Word. A God who would never lie to us and has always kept His promises. He promised a Savior... and sent Him. It had to be His Son... it was. And so we can have every assurance that everything He says in this book [the Bible] is true. Since He says we are forgiven – we truly are. Since He says that heaven awaits us – it surely does! Everything He has promised has come true and so we know we can trust Him. We can rely on His love, His wisdom, and His power.

II. [With the Spirit’s power to witness] But these truths that give us so much hope are not just for us, they are for the world. We are called to be *witnesses* of what we have seen and know by faith. He says, “**You are witnesses of these things.**” And how blessed we are that our Ascended Lord gives us the *privilege* of sharing them with the world. Because in our Lord’s ascension, He has removed His visible presence from among us. He’s not here on earth in the same visible way anymore. So here’s the question? How does He get the Word out? How does He make His presence felt in the world? Through the Word, as we mentioned, which is shared through His *Church*; through *us*. Which gives us great joy!

But can also be a little scary, right? And so hear as our Risen Lord, who is also our Ascended Lord, empowers us. John writes, “**I am going to send you what My Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.**”

This was another promise that Jesus had made numerous times throughout His ministry. That He would send them His Holy Spirit. I remember when I sold books door to door my first summer of college, and it is a frightening thing to be talking to people on the spot like that. I had full confidence in the value of the books (they were study guides). I had no reason to fear their reaction. But I did. . What helped was when our student manager would come along and do it with us. They had experience and confidence.

Well that’s what we have with the Holy Spirit. We have God Himself going with us, giving us the words to say and the love and wisdom so we *can* represent Him and share with the world the hope that we have. God tells us that His Holy Spirit is the Comforter, Counselor, Advocate, and Guide, among other names. What blessing we have in our ascended Lord that He not only gives us the privilege of serving as His witness, but that He also sends His Spirit to be with us!

III. [With joy in his ascension] But our ascension joy is not limited to the promises He has fulfilled and the promises He makes us. There is joy in the ascension itself. Which doesn't make complete sense, does it? In general, the departure of a beloved leader brings sorrow and grief to his followers. We think of Socrates, the great philosopher. When he was drinking the poisonous hemlock, he tried to banish the despair of his sorrowful followers but he was unable. Some here might remember Nov. 22, 1963, when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. For the whole nation, it was devastating. Sorrow and sadness that filled our land. But this evening, we see that upon the departure of the most beloved leader of all-time, our beautiful Savior, we see something different. The departure of Jesus Christ means triumph and joy to His followers. At His Ascension, and still today.

John writes, **“When He had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, He lifted up His hands and blessed them. While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into Heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.”**

Why did they praise God continuously? It wasn't that they couldn't see Jesus anymore with their eyes. It was because the ascension is the crowning seal of approval placed on Christ's work of redemption. As King **David** writes in **Psalms 110**, Christ now sits at the right hand of the Father and uses His enemies as a footstool. Christ is our Risen, Living King! But not just another earthly king, He is the King of Kings and so, having risen from the dead, He has resumed full use of His divine powers and now rules over all creation. And *that* is what the right hand of God is. Not a physical place on the right side of God; it's a position of power and authority. He is God's "right hand man."

That is who has just lifted up His hands and blessed the disciples, and blessed us! The King who reigns over all creation and **who is coming back one day to take us to be where He is (John 14:3)**. The one who is **with us always, to the very end of the age**. Knowing that, there isn't much reason for sorrow, is there?

And so we too are joyful. We too gather regularly, weekly even as our Lord commands us. Why? Because here, gathered with our brothers and sisters in Christ, with whom we are united in heart and mind... here we hear and grow in understanding the truths of His Word. Here we are given strength, courage, and boldness, to go out and share these truths with those around us. And here we celebrate our joy in our Ascended Lord by praising His Holy name with word and song.

Conclusion: What joy we have in our ascended Savior! All of God's promises have been fulfilled, we are saved, and He gives us the privilege of carrying out His mission work in the world. May God bless you this week and throughout life, as we celebrate the joy that we have in our ascended Lord, who continues to bless us! **Amen.**

POSSIBLE Prayer of the Church Ascension Festival in Easter May 13

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, that those whom the Lord has marked as His own in Baptism and who believe in Him by the power of the Holy Spirit may walk worthy of their calling:

Almighty God, You have established Your Church through Your Son, Jesus Christ, and He has promised that He will remain with His Church forever. Keep us, we pray, from all harm and danger and finish within us Your new creation, that we may faithfully do the good works of Your kingdom, call many to know Jesus Christ by the proclamation of the Gospel and persevere to the end; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Let us pray for all pastors, missionaries and church workers and for those preparing for Your service:

Blessed Lord, You have given us Your Word and promised that Your Word shall not return to You empty but will accomplish Your purpose. Bless our Synod president; _____, our circuit visitor; _____, our pastor(s); and all those in full-time service to Your Church. Bless also those preparing for Your service at our colleges and seminaries. Give them all things needful so that their service may be fruitful, and bless us that we may fulfill our own baptismal calling of worship, witness, intercession and mercy work; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Let us pray for the world, for those who live in fear and terror, for the oppressed, the hungry and all people in their needs:

Gracious Father, Your good and gracious will is ever tried by evil men and evil power. Give to us and to all peoples of the world good and faithful leaders who will pursue paths of justice, protecting the weak and the unborn and using wisely all Your resources for the common good; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Let us pray for those who do not yet know Jesus Christ and for those who have fallen away from the truth, that they may hear the Word of God and believe it:

Mighty Lord, You do not desire the death of the sinner but that all would repent and live. Reclaim those who have fallen into error, renew those who have been absent from Your Word and Table, and rescue those who do not know Your mercy in Christ, that with us they may praise Your goodness and live in joyful response to Your favor; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Let us pray for our faithful use of all God's resources and for our stewardship of all His gifts, that we not squander what He entrusted to our care but use it well and for His glory:

Holy Lord, all things are Yours, and yet, in Your mercy, You place them into our care. Give us Your grace and guidance that all we have been given may honor You and that at the end of the day we may know the peace of a good conscience and rest without fear, knowing that You will not abandon us nor do You seek us any harm; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Let us pray for our fellowship, that we may know the comfort of God's presence, rejoice at the triumph of our Lord and His place at the Right Hand of the Father, and be kept holy and blameless to the day of His coming:

Heavenly Father, in the moments of our greatest fears, show forth Your presence that we may not be overcome. Hold forth the promise of Your return that when Christ comes to finish His new creation, we may be found faithful and worthy by His grace. Hear us now as we intercede for others, knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ pleads His blood for us, for all our needs and for a world still living in darkness, even as we pray: **Our Father, who art in heaven... Amen.**