



St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church

Rev. Ronald C. Szep, pastor

Wednesday, May 20, 2020

EVENING DEVOTION

The Ascension of Our Lord

Christ rules all things for his Church. In the early 700s AD, there lived an English churchman known to history as the Venerable Bede. He was the great teacher of the middle ages, the man who divided history into AD and BC, the first great historian of the English language and a devout man of God. On May 25, 735 AD, on the great Ascension Vigil, Bede finished his translation of the Gospel of St. John into Old English. Then, on that day of Ascension, he died. From his deathbed, the Teacher of the Middle Ages spoke the words that have become the Prayer of the Day on Ascension. This beautiful prayer sets the tone for the day, beginning with a note of triumph and ending with a supplication for the Spirit and his work.

Greeting by the minister

OPENING DIALOGUE:

Minister: Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world,

Congregation: The light no darkness can overcome.

M: Stay with us, for it is evening,

C: And the day is almost over.

M: Let your light scatter the darkness.

C: Let it shine in our hearts and lives. Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE:

M: Lord God, all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works come from you. Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments. Defend us also from the fear of our enemies, that we may live in peace and quietness, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Acts 1:1-11

The weeks of Easter had been filled with breathless joy in the presence of their living Savior. For forty days the disciples listened to Christ speak about the kingdom of God. All that kingdom talk whetted their appetite for power and authority. They had seen their Savior suffer; now they were ready to see him win. Jesus offered them the tantalizing promise of something greater than John's baptism, whom he had called the greatest man even born. What could it be? What heights of power and authority were waiting now that Jesus reigned as God and Lord? And so, because of that, they asked him a question that makes us marvel. Verse 6 displays the depth of their culturally ingrained misunderstanding of Messiah: they certainly had spiritual hopes for Jesus, but even at this late date they could not divorce them from their expectations of an earthly kingdom. Christ's answer gives direction for the Church of all time. They would get power, but not for an earthly kingdom. Rather, they would receive Spirit-power to be heralds of the impending kingdom of heaven.

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."

HYMN OF THE DAY: CW Hymn 174
"See, the Conqueror Mounts in Triumph"

ASCENSION

174 See, the Conqueror Mounts in Triumph



1 See, the con - qu'ror mounts in tri - umph; See the
2 Who is this that comes in glo - ry With the
3 While he lifts his hands in bless - ing, He is
4 He has raised our hu - man na - ture On the



King in roy - al state, Rid - ing on the
trump of ju - bi - lee? Lord of bat - tles,
part - ed from his friends; While their ea - ger
clouds to God's right hand; There we sit in



clouds, his char - iot, To his heav'n - ly pal - ace gate.
God of ar - mies, He has gained the vic - to - ry.
eyes be - hold him, He up - on the clouds as - cends.
heav'n - ly plac - es, There with him in glo - ry stand.



Hark! The choirs of an - gel voic - es Joy - ful
He who on the cross did suf - fer, He who
He who walked with God and pleased him, Preach - ing
Je - sus reigns, a - dored by an - gels; Man with



al - le - lu - ias sing, And the por - tals high
from the grave a - rose, He has van - quished sin
truth and doom to come, He, our E - noch, is
God is on the throne. By our might - y Lord's



are lift - ed To re - ceive their heav'n - ly King.
and Sa - tan; He by death has crushed his foes.
trans-lat - ed To his ev - er - last - ing home.
as - cen - sion We by faith be - hold our own.

Text: Christopher Wordsworth, 1807–85, abr., alt.
Tune: REX GLORIAE (87 87 D) Henry T. Smart, 1813–79.

SERMONETTE: *based on Ephesians 1:16-23 (NIV)*
“The Victory for All Eternity”

¹⁶ *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 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 his holy people,*

¹⁹ *and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength*

²⁰ *he exerted when he raised Christ 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 name that is invoked, 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.*

PRAYERS:

Luther’s Evening Prayer (*in unison*)

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day. Forgive me all my sins, and graciously keep me this night. Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Special prayers and intercessions: optional, read by the minister

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent Prayer

M: Lord Jesus, King of glory, on this day you ascended far above the heavens and at God's right hand you rule the nations. Leave us not alone, we pray, but grant us the Spirit of truth that at your command and by your power we may be your witnesses in all the world; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer *(in unison)*

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

BLESSING:

M: May the blessing of the eternal God be upon us: his light to guide us, his presence to shelter us, his peace to unite us.

C: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: CW Hymn 175 *(next page)*

"Hail the Day that Sees Him Rise"

175

Hail the Day that Sees Him Rise



1 Hail the day that sees him rise To his
 2 There the glo - rious tri - umph waits: Lift your
 3 See, the heav'n its Lord re - ceives, Yet he
 4 See, he lifts his hands a - bove; See, he
 5 Still for us he in - ter - cedes; His pre -



throne a - bove the skies! Christ, the Lamb for
 heads, e - ter - nal gates. He has con - quered
 loves the earth he leaves; Though re - turn - ing
 shows the prints of love. Hark! His gra - cious
 vail - ing death he pleads. He, the first of



sin - ners giv'n, Re - as - cends his na - tive heav'n.
 death and sin; Take the King of glo - ry in!
 to his throne, Still he calls man - kind his own.
 lips be - stow Bless - ings on his Church be - low.
 all our race, Near him - self pre - pares a place.

6 There we shall with you remain
 Partners in your endless reign,
 There your face unclouded view,
 Find our heav'n of heav'ns in you.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-88, abr., alt.

Tune: ORIENTIS PARTIBUS (77 77) Pierre de Corbeille, d. 1221, adapt.