

Blessed by the Lord Jesus

May 8, 2016 – Ascension Celebrated

Luke 24:36-43; 50-53 – *“While they were still talking about this, Jesus Himself stood among them and said to them, Peace be with you. They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at My hands and My feet. It is I Myself! Touch Me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see I have. When He has said this, He showed them His hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, He asked them, Do you have anything here to eat? They gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and He took it and ate it in their presence. When He 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.*

When students go off to school they might be excited, but for the parents, and sometimes the students as well, there can be anxiety and fear and sometimes tears due to the good-byes.

The reason a student goes off to school and parents accept it is because they know it is for the good of their son or daughter. So their child can get the education in the desired field that interests them and land a good job to pay the bills.

When soldiers go off to war there is definitely going to be some fear and uncertainty, because the reality is, that the soldier can face life threatening circumstances and perhaps even be killed in the line of battle. Yet it is something that needs to be done to keep the country safe from foreign forces.

When a Pastor goes to a foreign country to serve as a Missionary, as exciting as it may be, it still is not always so joyful being away from family and friends and surroundings that are familiar. But that Pastor goes to fulfill the Call that God has issued to him through the church, with the hope that more will learn of Jesus their Savior and thus enjoy heaven.

In each case, difficult decisions needed to be made – The Student – The soldiers – The World Missionary. But in each case there are sacrifices that need to be made, tears that need to be endured or dried up and wiped away, a firm lower lip, a pulling up of the boot straps and do what needs to be done, all in the name of being Duty bound.

When Jesus Ascended into heaven, in the back of our mind we might want to think: Why didn't Jesus just stay here on earth and continue to heal the sick, give sight to the blind, raise the dead and preach the Good News of Salvation which He had won for mankind? Why didn't Jesus simply remain here?

Because Jesus had BIGGER and BETTER things in store. There was MORE than just what this world has to offer. What if Jesus would have remained and kept on healing everyone and raising them from the dead to keep on living in this World? This World has fallen into sin and multiple despairs. Why would anyone want to keep on living here, when there is something far more glorious?

After Adam and Eve fell into sin, we are told through Moses the Prophet, In **Genesis 3:22-24 – And the Lord God said, ‘The man has now become like one of US, knowing good and evil (By experience). Man must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the TREE of Life and eat, and live forever. 23 – So the Lord God banished Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which they had been taken. After The Lord God drove man out of the Garden of Eden, He placed on the east side of the Garden, Cherubim, and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the Tree of Life.”**

God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden, because God did not want them to live forever in this sin filled world. God had something bigger and better in store for mankind.

The same is true for the Ascension of Jesus. Instead of Jesus remaining here and making life on this earth as pleasant as possible, instead Jesus has a much greater and grander plan!

John 14:1-3 – “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; Trust also in Me. 2 – In My Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 - And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am.”

Jesus Ascended into heaven to prepare a place for you. For Us! In the Ascension of Jesus we know:

1. Jesus is KING – Jesus sits at the right hand of God. This is a reference to Christ’s Authority which encompasses all the universe. Heaven and the earth.

Matthew 28:18 – Jesus Said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

2. Jesus INTERCEDES for us: We can now approach God through Christ, and be certain that God hears our prayers in Christ Jesus our High Priest.

Romans 8:34, “Christ Jesus, who died – More than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”

Vs. 35 – Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

Vs. 37 – No in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”

3. Jesus Ascension leads us to the ASSURANCE that we are also Heaven ward bound. Not just as some spirit living in Goodness. (See John 14:3)

But we also will live in heaven with glorified bodies, in the flesh, together with Christ who also ate after his Resurrection, and is also flesh and blood.

As Jesus reigns He is True man – True flesh and blood and True God. Having a human body, yet reigning over all things, being: Jesus is: OMNISCIENT – OMNIPRESENT -- OMNIPOTENT

And So Jesus told His disciples at His Ascension that they would need to “Go and preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in His Name to ALL Nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (Luke 24:47)

Jesus also promised that He would send them the Holy Spirit to give them the Courage and strength to proclaim His Word, Yes His salvation to the nations. (Luke 24:49 – I am going to send you what my Father Has Promised.)

As Jesus raised up His Hands and blessed them. (Numbers 6:22-27, Aaronic Blessing).

He bestowed His Goodness upon them.

- εὐλογησεν + εὐλογουντες - - He Blessed them. This same word also means Praised.

And the disciples went back to Jerusalem. Praising God at the temple, CONTINUALLY.

We also want to praise the Lord God Continually as we wait for Christ’s Second Coming when He shall raise all the dead, and judge all mankind, and take us and all believers to our heavenly home. AMEN