

## THEME: DISCIPLESHIP & MISSION

### **Mission is to share what you have seen and heard of Jesus**

Acts 1:1-9 (Jesus' ascension) As Jesus left He said the Holy Spirit would give them (& us) power to be Jesus' witnesses. A witness is someone who has seen and experienced something and who tells others. Q. What have we seen and experienced of Jesus and who can we share this with?

Jesus' ascension takes place on the 40<sup>th</sup> day of Easter, always a Thursday. Ten days later the promised Holy Spirit is poured out on the disciples.

Luke 24 and Acts 1 describe the day of Ascension.

The ascension is included in the Nicene Creed – 'He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father'. As the great creed has reminded Christians across the ages, "He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty, from where he will return to judge the living and the dead." Jesus went up and back into heaven, but will one day return as our conquering king.

This is the reality of which he spoke when he addressed the bewildered disciples in John 14, "And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." Thus, the Christian's great and blessed hope, the hope of the resurrection of the dead and eternal life in the new Jerusalem, is intimately tied to Christ's first going up

Pete Greig said, 'The day of Ascension means the resurrected Jesus who was once somewhere at one time for some is now everywhere, always for all. He is here and now, with you for you, hearing your prayers. Let's pray!

New York Pastor, Tim Keller:

The Ascension of Jesus Christ "takes what Jesus was and did on Earth, and releases it into the universe and into lives with all of its healing power."

"If Jesus merely wanted to return to the Father, he could have just vanished. There were other times when he vanished immediately out of sight, as with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. But instead, at the ascension Jesus literally rises up into the clouds and disappears into the distance of the heavens. Why did he do it that way? We can only speculate, but it may have been for the same reason that we have a coronation ceremony."

"In the ascension Jesus left the limitations of the time-space continuum and passed into the presence of the Father. In his incarnation, Jesus was limited to one spot at one moment. If you wanted to speak with him or relate to him, you had to do it at that place. "But at the ascension," Keller writes, "Jesus leaves the space-time continuum and passes into the presence of the Father. He is still human, still our second Adam . . . and still our Advocate—yet now he has been so glorified that everything he does has a cosmic scope . . . any time-space limitation passes away"

Three incredible things about the Ascension:

1. Fully available – across the globe for all of time
2. Supremely powerful – the king of kings at the right hand of the Father
3. Praying for us constantly at the side of the Father. Our freedom and forgiveness guaranteed!

The Holy Spirit was promised to the disciples – . 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." Acts 1:8

So, witnessing is not something we do; it is who we are. A witness is an individual who, being present, personally sees or perceives a thing; a beholder, spectator or eyewitness; A person or thing that affords evidence.

The disciples were given an enormous task – to take this good news all over the globe. They spent 10 days praying for the Holy Spirit to come. When he did, he gave them courage and boldness. Father James Mallon said “Without the Holy Spirit, the church will always stay in the upper room”

Bryan Stevenson this week said, ‘Hope is our Superhero’. With that in mind, let us pray in faith, ‘Thy kingdom come’. On hope, Billy Graham had said, ‘Today so desperately hungers for hope, yet uncounted people have almost given up. There is despair and hopelessness on every hand. Let us be faithful in proclaiming the hope that is in Jesus.

If there are situations, we are worried or anxious about. We can take strength from the promise that Jesus is speaking up for us and our fruitfulness.

With Jesus praying for us in heaven, we can be sure that ‘If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. 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 (Romans 8).

Action – Download the ‘Thy Kingdom Come’ App and pray for friends and family.