

The Importance Of Christ's Ascension.

Text: Mark 16:15-20

Suggested Hymns:

111, 108, 114, 112, 106

- 1) The Ascension was important for Jesus
- 2) Christ's Ascension was important for His Disciples
- 3) Christ's Ascension is important for us

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Mark 16:15-20, ¹⁵ *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.* ¹⁶ *"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.* ¹⁷ *"And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ "they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."*

¹⁹ *So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.* ²⁰ *And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

The ascension of Jesus Christ marks a great event in the glorious account of Jesus' mission here on earth. It was the final, triumphant, victorious, and majestic step toward His complete exaltation and glorification. Through His ascension Jesus came into His own, into the fullest, the most glorious experience as the God-Man Saviour of the world.

The ascension was important for Jesus and it is important for us, in our Christian faith and our Christian life. So let us consider *The Importance of Christ's Ascension*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. The Ascension Was Important For Jesus

The story of Jesus' coming into this world and His life here on earth as the Christ of God would be incomplete without His ascension into heaven. Jesus

came into this world with a definite goal and purpose set before Him, namely, to save sinners, to save the world.

When Jesus had accomplished this purpose and had told His followers that His work was done, and when He had commissioned them to carry on for Him, in proclaiming His accomplished redemption for mankind to mankind, He went home. He ascended into heaven.

The Grandeur of His Homecoming

Let us attempt to picture the grandeur and the majestic nature of Christ's ascension and His entrance into glory. As Australians we pride ourselves on the great display which our large cities put on when a sporting hero or team returns from the Olympic Games or some other major sporting event. We think they are wonderful.

And although we are not able to be present at the event, the feeling of deep emotion and enthusiasm displayed moves us to sympathetic excitement.

Our greatest and most successful attempts in this direction fade into insignificance when we begin to understand somewhat of the grandeur of Christ's reception into heaven as the Hero of heaven.

Picture in your minds the indescribable magnitude and magnificence of the glory of Jesus' entrance into heaven. There was the infinitely glorious and eternal Father and the Holy Spirit welcoming back into His eternal glory the Son, who had been willing to leave His glory and to become man in order to carry out the gracious and good will of the Triune God to save all humanity.

Then there were the cherubim and seraphim. And there were the ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels, all joining in a joyous welcome extended to Jesus Christ, the triumphant, the victorious God-Man, the true Lamb of God, who had saved the world. The tremendous and stupendous possibilities of this heavenly scene enthral and overwhelm us.

However, added to this indescribable and breathtaking scene of supernatural beauty and glory there was music, heavenly, angelic, truly inspired music. Even here in this sinful world we are often moved by the artistry of human music and its charming effects upon us, transporting us into regions beyond our daily

experiences. Who could attempt to describe the beauty, the perfection of the angelic chorus of heaven?

The glories of heaven are so wonderful that Paul writes, that he *heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*¹

The hymnist writes,²

Conquering Prince and King of glory,
Majesty enthroned in light:
All the heavens are bowed before Thee,
Far beyond them spreads Thy might.

As I watch Thee far ascending
To the right hand of the throne,
See how hosts, their voices blending,
Sing their praise to Thee alone:

Let us also not forget, that the glory and beauty of Christ's entrance into heaven gives us a foretaste of what shall be ours in heaven.

Jesus, Sitting On The Right Hand Of God

Our text informs us, *So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.* What this means, St. Paul describes very aptly in his letter to the Ephesians, *“God seated [Jesus] at His right hand in the heavenly places,²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.³*

After His ascension, Jesus, even according to His human nature, shared fully in the rulership of heaven and earth and was given the special honour to be the Head of the Church and the Judge of the world. Jesus stated the equivalent of all this when He said before His ascension in Matthew 28:18, *“All authority [power] has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”* You see how tremendously important the ascension was for Jesus.

2. Christ's Ascension Was Important For His Disciples

Jesus gave His disciples a task to perform. He commissioned them in our text, ***“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”*** ¹⁶ ***“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”*** He promised them that He would be with them and give them the power of signs and miracles to confirm their message.

When Jesus had ascended into heaven, His disciples and followers returned to Jerusalem with joy. They believed Jesus’ promises. They knew that He would be with them to guide them and to bless them in their work. They looked forward to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And when these specific promises of Jesus had been fulfilled, ***they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs.*** Their faith in Jesus and His promises gave them the power to live victoriously.

3. Christ’s Ascension Is Important For Us

We Also Have a Task to Perform

God has put you and me into this world for a special purpose. This purpose is not that we should live primarily to and for ourselves and enjoy life in a selfish way.

The primary purpose of our living as children of God and followers of Jesus Christ is that we might live under Jesus in His kingdom and serve Him all the days of our lives and glorify Him throughout eternity.

We need a revitalised consciousness of this important calling in our earthly existence. We need a thorough re-evaluation of the purpose for which God has called us into His kingdom. It is our high and most honourable privilege as believers in Jesus Christ to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, to all people.

This fact must become a vital, throbbing, personal experience with every one of us. We should look upon the building of the Church, our loving gifts toward the realisation of this goal, the gifts of love we place into our own congregational treasury as a part of our glorious privilege as the children of God to ***“preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every creature.”*** Through these, our gifts of love, we are giving sinners throughout the world a chance, an opportunity, to hear about

the love of Jesus and to receive the full forgiveness for their sins, and to be saved from spending eternity in hell.

If we can begin to see this and to realise it as a precious privilege of the children of God, then our whole life will become a throbbing, energetic desire to serve Jesus more willingly, more forcefully, and more devotedly.

This enthusiasm will exert itself in our daily life, our daily contacts with people, always willing to utilise every opportunity to witness for Jesus, the Saviour of all men. Living for Jesus, serving Jesus, we shall by His strength and grace live victoriously.

Jesus wants us to live victoriously. Let us not overlook the wondrous promise Jesus gave His disciples before He ascended, ***“All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth.”***⁴ This statement of Jesus is not new to us. We have heard it often. But have we appropriated its meaning, its power for victorious living?

We are astounded, amazed, and terrified by the power of Nuclear energy. The scientists who have discovered this power are afraid of its possibilities. The vast amount of nuclear energy which can be generated by all the scientists of our day, including the entire stock pile of atomic bombs with all their destructive and devastating power are but a small part, a mere particle, of the immeasurable power of God.

Then remember, that Jesus your Saviour says to you, ***“All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth.”*** The exalted Jesus rules over all the world. He loved us and redeemed us. He is our Saviour. He rules this world.

Jesus Christ is also the Head of the Church. As Ruler of the world and Head of the Church, Jesus controls all things to the best interest of His kingdom. The historical events of this world must serve the cause of Jesus and His kingdom. His name must be proclaimed to the ends of the world, and then the end will come. We often grow despondent and are filled with fear. We can see only the wrong side of the tapestry of this world's events.

But Jesus sees, controls, and overrules the weaving of this world's events and directs them to His glory and the salvation of men's souls. Let us believe this truth, let us live it: Jesus, our Lord, is Ruler of this world and Head of the

Church. His will must be done. His name must be glorified, His kingdom must be built. Then we shall be able to live victoriously and triumphantly.

Look at the Things Eternal

Scripture tells us in 2 Corinthians 4:18, “***look not at the things which are seen.***” They are temporal. Do not permit temporal values and conditions to become too important. The things of this earth and life are transient, perishable, and temporary.

The second part of the text just mentioned encourages us to “***look at the things which are not seen.***” These “***things which are not seen***” are eternal. These invisible, eternal gifts of God are His grace in Christ Jesus, forgiveness of sins, and life with the Triune God in heaven.

Heaven and its promise staggers our imagination. It is too wonderful, too remarkable for our understanding. Do not let this trouble you. Jesus has promised in John 14:19, ***Because I live, you will live also.*** And in John 14:2, ² ***“In My Father’s house are many mansions ... I go to prepare a place for you.”***

Our corruptible body shall become like Christ’s glorified body. Wonderful promises! Glorious possibilities! Can we picture them? Certainly not! But by the power of God’s Spirit we can believe them, we can trust Christ’s promises, we can look with hope for the mansions Jesus has prepared for us.

Once we believe this with a confident, Spirit-wrought faith we shall know and understand that all the glitter and glory of this transitory world cannot be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us and in us, the children of God, nor with the great privilege of serving our dear Lord Jesus all the days of our earthly life. Then we shall be able by the grace of God and the influence of His Spirit to live victoriously, triumphantly, and trustingly.

May God forgive us our littleness of faith, our failure to respond to the wonderful opportunities and possibilities for victorious living, and awaken and arouse in us a fuller realisation of the thrilling reality that we have the great privilege of serving Him all the days of our life and living with Him in the eternal mansions forever. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ 2 Corinthians 12:4

² Hymn 110

³ Eph. 1:20-22

⁴ Matthew 28:18 (KJV)