

Ascension Sunday Teaching, Relevant Ascension (6/1/25)

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Intro

Hello! My name is Melissa Logsdon and I serve as Associate Pastor for New Covenant Fellowship; I'm bringing you today's Ascension Sunday teaching: Relevant Ascension. I invite you to look at Jesus' ascension, not just as a historic moment or something that makes a difference in eternity (both of which are true), but also how it can make a difference in your life today.

Let us pray.

So why does this matter?

In some ways it feels like somethings that been there done that. In the past. It happened.

But in other ways it's everything. And even though it's everything I forget that.

It's everything

Jesus is seated at the right hand of God with all power. Jesus is in his glorified body that we will one day have.

Jesus is preparing a place for us to one day dwell with God forever

Jesus is holding the church in his hands praying for us

Jesus is working towards the renewed earth and heaven for us

With all justice peace healing life

Jesus is everything for us.

And somehow I forget all this as I go through my day. How Jesus' ascension can make a difference for how I engage with the people around me and the circumstances I face.

Jesus started something amazing over 2000 years ago.

Modeling how we the people of God could live in intimate relationship with God, basking in God's love for us and from that place we could in turn let our relationships be propelled and permeated with love.

Caring for those vulnerable in our society to make sure there is fairness, justice, safety, provision.

And what seemed impossible at any given point throughout time, is possible with God. The possibilities within God's kingdom supercedes any oppressive powers. Jesus seated on his throne is reigning with all power and love.

Ephesians 1:20-21 (CEB)

"God's power was at work in Christ when God raised him from the dead and sat him at God's right side in the heavens, far above every ruler and authority and power and angelic power, any power that might be named not only now but in the future."

Path to Ascension

All the hope wrapped up in Jesus' ascension no doubt was on the lips and in the minds of Moses and Elijah. That moment that we refer to as Jesus' transfiguration.

Luke 9: 29-31 (CEB)

"As [Jesus] was praying, the appearance of his face changed and his clothes flashed white like lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, were talking with him. They were clothed with heavenly splendor and spoke about Jesus' departure, which he would achieve in Jerusalem."

It's what Jesus thought of when he turned to Jerusalem.

In Luke 9:51 (NLT)

"As the time drew near for him to ascend to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem."

When he made his triumphant entry (that we celebrate on Palm Sunday.)

Jesus is king over all. We are part of THAT kingdom. So no matter what isn't right in our earthly citizenship, we have a heavenly citizenship full of justice and love.

This is the hope I have in Jesus' Ascension:

Jesus is the Lord of all. The king of all. Is seated on the throne above all thrones.

Is making all things right. Is working for the renewal of all things.

Jesus is preparing a place for us to dwell with God.

Jesus' Ascension

Leading up to this moment, the disciples had been following Jesus and enjoying hearing Jesus say how he had come to declare God's kingdom justice for all. Jesus was healing people and speaking out against the corruption and calling people to right living: to a right way of interacting with each other and living aligned with God's way (God's Kingdom).

Jesus was bringing hope and freedom (salvation) to the people.

So, every time Jesus tried to talk about the coming of his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, they just couldn't conceive the idea. Even after Jesus had been resurrected, they continued to ask questions based on their mindset:

Acts of the Apostles 1:3-8 CEB

[3] After his suffering, he showed them that he was alive with many convincing proofs. He appeared to them over a period of forty days, speaking to them about God's kingdom. [4] While they were eating together, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised. He said, "This is what you heard from me: [5] John baptized with water, but in only a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

[6] As a result, those who had gathered together asked Jesus, "Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now?"

[7] Jesus replied, "It isn't for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has set by his own authority. [8] Rather, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

And then it happened. Just like that Jesus was gone. And the disciples finally got it.

Even though this is still a time of waiting they finally realize that something big is happening!

Luke 24:52-53

At Jesus' ascension his followers were "overwhelmed with joy."
They spent their time "continuously in the temple praising God."

At this moment we are now at the "end" of Jesus' earthly ministry, but only the beginning of what Jesus plans to see unfold through God's people on earth.

Jesus' ascension is the launching pad moment for the rest of what we find recorded in the New Testament.

And the continuing unfolding story we are living out as followers of Jesus today.

Ascension Relevance

Why it matters to me?

When Jesus commissioned his followers to do what he modeled he knew they would need help.

With his ascension, Jesus moved into a position to help his followers. Jesus had told his followers all the ways him leaving them would benefit them (and therefore us today):

Preparation

John 14:1-4 CEB

"Don't be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me.

My Father's house has room to spare. If that weren't the case, would I have told you that I'm going to prepare a place for you?

When I go to prepare a place for you, I will return and take you to be with me so that where I am you will be too.

You know the way to the place I'm going."

Empowerment

John 14:16-20 CEB

"I will ask the Father, and he will send another Companion, who will be with you forever. This Companion is the Spirit of Truth, whom the world can't receive because it neither sees him nor recognizes him. You know him, because he lives with you and will be with you.

I won't leave you as orphans. I will come to you. Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Because I live, you will live too.

On that day you will know that I am in my Father, you are in me, and I am in you."

We are called and empowered to continue to be witnesses to all of God's goodness. (Pastor Renee will teach on the sending of the Spirit in her Pentecost teaching next week).

Commission

John 14:12 CEB

"I assure you that whoever believes in me will do the works that I do. They will do even greater works than these because I am going to the Father."

Story: Ministry in our Peoria apartment complex via parties, personal relationships, serving the staff with providing and stuffing Easter Eggs

We are called to live faithfully following Jesus's radical way of love.
No matter the political circumstances, the followers then and us today are commissioned to be faithful followers of Jesus in the midst of it all.

And, in the midst of it all...

There is hope.

Together with Jesus, we are vessels of hope.

Conclusion

What Difference does this make? for me? for you? for us?

We are not left alone or powerless.

The Revelation of Jesus:

- Reigning with Love and Power
- Empowering through the Spirit to fulfill the commission (continue what Jesus started)
- Holding the church in his hands (Revelation 1 image)

Trust and Reliance

- Pastor's Note/Blog—Kindred Spirit
- About Ann Kiemel (and books available at welcome center)
- God with me—Prayer from Ann on hoping in her dreams with God

Closing Prayer

From the Gelasian Sacramentary:

"Lord Jesus, we remember how you returned to your Father on the first Ascension Day. Although we cannot see you with our eyes, we know that you are still with us as you promised always to be. We thank you for being our constant friend. Help us to remember that you are near and that you will never fail us. Help us to come to you when

we are frightened or disappointed, and may we remember to tell you about our joys as well as our troubles..." Amen.