

Lifegroup notes from Sunday 22 May 2022

Reading: Luke 24:36-53

The Ascension



1. The ascended Jesus keeps His promise and sends the Spirit.

Read about the promise here: John 16:7-16

There is a heavenly dynamic we can see being worked out here: the Father sends the Son; the Father and Son send the Spirit; The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sends the Church.

Just as the Son was on a mission to see God's Kingdom come on Earth, so too the Church is meant to be on that same mission. Read Jesus charge to the gathered believers (and doubters) at the end of Matthew's and Mark's gospels. The Spirit would be soon poured out following Ascension, but it is given for a purpose; the fruit and all the gifts of the Spirit are meant to be so that the world will hear and see the good news.

Peter's Pentecost Preach joins the dots between Ascension and the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2:33

2. The ascended Jesus gives repentance and forgiveness.

Our Salvation was won at the cross, but the Ascended Jesus now works out in our lives the manifestation of that. As Peter says in Acts 5:31

From the position of authority (right hand of God), and also in the heavenly tabernacle (the place where sacrifice is received and forgiveness extended), Jesus gives the gifts of repentance and forgiveness because of what He has achieved. What has been won on the cross now can be applied to our lives.

3. The ascended Jesus prays for us, and continues to pastor us during suffering.

See Romans 8:34

This is what Jesus is doing (although the metaphysics of time, space and activity are all up for discussion!!). Paul's encouragement to us is that Jesus is not disinterested and sitting back now that His work is complete. Rather He is still at the heart of all that's happening, praying for us, calling us into the place God wants us to be.

We see his passion and presence at work in Acts 7:55-56 when Stephen becomes the first martyr of the Christian church, a vision of the ascended Christ brings reassurance and hope.

In response to the Luke passage then, we should: seek to live in both the challenge and the blessing that Jesus gives; seek the place of prayerful unity, that's where He sends the blessing; watch for His return – He will come back, in the same way He left, will he find us ready?

Some questions

- What encouraged or challenged you in this message?
- Should we be making more of a focus on Ascension?
- Of all the things that Jonathan spoke about regarding Ascension, was anything new to you?
- Why did the Ascension have to happen before all the blessings flowed?
- Are we in danger of seeking the blessings without engaging in the mission? What can we do to make sure we stay on the mission?
- Have you been filled with the Spirit? What happened? What changed?
- What do you think / hope Jesus is praying for the Church now?