

The Blessings of the Ascension of Christ

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[0 : 00] You're listening to the online sermon podcast ministry of the First Baptist Church of Jackson, Kentucky. Hi, my name is Jonathan Clemens and I'm the pastor of the First Baptist Church.

We've put this sermon archive together and we pray that it will be a blessing to the saints and edifying to those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as that it would be a light to those in our community who have questions about the gospel.

One of the wonderful benefits of the internet is that it can give us so much access to good quality Bible teaching materials.

But I want to encourage you not to use the internet as a crutch or a substitute for obedience to Jesus. It's so important that each and every one of you are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for your salvation and growing in spiritual maturity and in fruitfulness before the Lord.

And that requires obedience to His command to assemble and be a part of a local congregation. God calls each of us to go to church, but not just go to church, be a part of a church.

[1 : 05] And I want to encourage you, if you're not a member of a church, to find that biblical church. One that preaches and teaches the Lord Jesus Christ and one that will embrace you as an important part of the congregation.

And be active and involved. You can never use online materials to substitute obedience. Well, our sermon will follow shortly.

I pray that this ministry will be a blessing to you. And we would love to hear from you. Feel free to reach out to us over our Facebook page. You can contact us on our church website.

And of course, you're always welcome to join us on a Sunday morning. You'll find us at 1105 Main Street in Jackson, Kentucky. That's at the corner of Main Street and Broadway down by the police station and City Hall.

We gather at 1045 in the morning and we would love to see you. Have a wonderful day. God bless. God bless. God bless.

[2 : 15] John chapter 14.

Today's sermon is entitled, The Blessings of Jesus Going to the Father. I had debated entitling it, The Blessings of the Ascension, which means the exact same thing.

Jesus ascended to the Father. We understand that this passage of Scripture is taking place Thursday evening. He would be crucified Friday. He would be buried in the tomb for three days.

On the early morning of that third day, on Sunday morning, God would raise Jesus from the dead mightily and in power. He would visit with His disciples some days after that.

And then He would ascend into heaven. They saw Him visibly lift up and get taken straight up into heaven where He's in God's presence right now at the right hand of the Father.

[3 : 24] And when Jesus ascended into heaven, the Scriptures say that He brought gifts to men. And there are many blessings that have come to us through the ascension of Christ into heaven.

things that would not have come about any other way than through His ascension into heaven at the right hand of the Father. Now many of us have heard the saying, and it's quite common, it's actually an expression of doubt, I'll see it when I believe it.

Or I'll believe it, I'm sorry, I'll believe it when I see it, right? I'm not going to believe this until I see it for myself. It's an expression of doubt. I remember hearing this saying when I was growing up.

I remember particularly in dealing with this type of doubt towards God, the Christian materials that came out when I was growing up to address atheism and the claims that they made.

Atheists said they wanted to see or have some sort of physical, scientific evidence of God. And of course, what is science? Well, the scientific method is you observe something, that thing would be repeatable, it would be verifiable, and it would be falsifiable.

[4 : 42] You could look at these actual tangible things. You know, you might, for example, theorize that if you drop a hard-boiled egg off the top of the bleachers, something will happen.

And you could test that, observe it, repeat it. That's what the scientific method deals with. It deals with that which can be tasted, touched, smelled, heard, felt, seen, observed.

And we're people that like to observe things. Of course, having encountered this view later on in college again, I had a college professor that was quite clear. He said, I'm open to believing in God when I see the evidence.

When I see that evidence. And he said, he was talking science, he wanted that scientific evidence, that physical evidence, that there was a God. And I raised my hand, and I said, Sir, I have a question for you.

And he had just defined science. I said, if science deals with the physical realm, and you won't believe in God who is a spirit until you have physical evidence, aren't you discounting all the spiritual evidences of God's existence?

[5 : 52] Will that taint the outcome of your conclusion? And he thought about it and concluded, Why, yes, I suppose so. I've cut myself off from the truth.

Now, he liked to do that, but he still kept down that path in the end. Today, there are many people that doubt, though. There are many people that question, and our age has become quite cynical.

When I was a boy, people would say, I want the scientific proof, and they would demand it for everything. And then it turned into, well, that's your truth. And now, it's just a mess.

Nobody knows whose truth to believe. The media, you can see something happen in real time. And the media, each organization, each anchor, is ready to present the truth as they feel it is.

Not as it is. We call that putting their spin on it, their bias. We expect this from politicians, but it's definitely there. We see this on all the social media platforms.

[6 : 56] That's given everyone the opportunity to share their own bad ideas with the world. That's what social media does. And people have become cynical, distrusting, not sure what to believe.

And so much have the times changed. People used to say, I'll believe it when I see it. Now, with technology, you can see things and still not believe it's true.

People are so cynical and doubting. Many Christians might be tempted to say, Jesus, He ascended into heaven, but wouldn't it be easier if He kind of just stuck around?

I mean, just think about that. If He kind of built a castle in the middle of Jerusalem and just reigned there for 2,000 years like some sort of king or pope, wouldn't it be easier for people to believe if they could just see Him?

Of course, I think we can often forget that the whole world did see Jesus. The Romans saw Jesus. The Jews saw Jesus. The Greeks saw Jesus.

[8 : 03] The Pharisees, the Sadducees, the wise men from the East, the wicked Herodians, the crazy Jewish zealots, they all saw Jesus and for the most part, they all rejected Him.

That was the stance of the world. They demanded that He be crucified. Jesus Himself testified, though many are called, few are chosen. Many people saw Him, yet they did not believe in Him.

And the same, I assure you, would happen today. But it wouldn't just be modern Christians that might ask this. It was certainly His early disciples that would have asked this.

Remember, they expected the physical kingdom of Israel to be restored. They expected Jesus to sit on that throne of David there visibly. They expected Jesus to raise an army.

They expected Jesus to get rid of the Romans. And of course, He began working with their expectations. And He has already begun to explain to them that He is departing.

[9 : 07] He is leaving. And this intimate setting with His disciples, Judas having just left. He encourages them. He tells them in John 14, 1, He said, Let not your hearts be troubled.

You believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would not have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself. He is explaining to them He is going to leave. But it is actually a good thing.

He is going to prepare a place for them. And He is going to receive them unto Himself. Today, Jesus goes on to explain the significance of His leaving.

And we actually begin to see God's greater plan. And that Jesus is going to accomplish more at the right hand of the Father in glory than He would be walking the streets of Jerusalem today.

[10 : 07] He will accomplish more at the right hand of the Father than He would ever accomplish staying here on earth today. And we'll look at the significance of that. And we'll look at what that means. Not just for the early disciples, but what that means specifically for our church and us as individual believers.

So please look with me at John chapter 14. And we'll start in verse 12. Jesus said this, Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I shall do, he shall do also.

And greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

And ye shall ask anything in My name, and I will do it. If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray to the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive.

Because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him. But ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.

[11 : 31] Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me, because I live, ye live also. At the day ye shall know, I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.

He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me, and he that loveth Me, shall be loved by My Father. I will love him, and manifest Myself to him.

Judas saith to him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us, and not unto the world? And Jesus answered, and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings. And the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me. These things I have spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I said unto you.

[12 : 47] Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away and come again unto you. If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice because I said, I go unto the Father, for My Father is greater than I.

And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not walk much with you, or not talk much with you, for the Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me.

But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me the commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence. This is the Word of the Lord.

There is much here that we could look at and discuss, but we are going to look specifically at three things Jesus tells us that are going to happen because He is going to the Father.

[13 : 55] We are going to see that the church will perform greater works than He would perform had He stayed because He goes to the Father. We are going to see that He gives us the Holy Spirit because He goes to the Father.

And we are going to see that He gives us His peace because He goes to the Father. These are the benefits, some of the many benefits of Jesus going unto the Father, of His ascension into Heaven.

First, Jesus leaving will cause Him to perform greater works through the church. Verse 12, Verily, verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall He do also, and greater works than these He shall do, because I go unto My Father.

And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.

Now these are two amazing promises that Jesus makes to the church. When He leaves and goes to the Father, we will do greater works, He says, than He did here on earth.

[15 : 03] And not only that, He says that when we seek Him in prayer, He will answer that prayer because He has gone to the Father. Two great and profound promises that we need to hold to as Christians doing Christian ministry.

Because that is exactly what it pertains to. The work that Jesus started on earth, the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, the making of disciples, these promises pertain directly to that.

Now there are many false teachers out that preach a false gospel, a prosperity gospel, that want to tell people that these promises pertain to all things, to anything.

They will say, for example, because Jesus made this commitment to prayer, that you can name and claim anything you want, and God will give it to you. Of course, what does James say?

You ask and do not receive because you ask amiss that you might spend it upon your own pleasures. God doesn't answer all prayers about anything as just a blanket.

[16 : 12] That is a false teaching. Many people have heard these teachings and they were on some sort of essential medication, quit it, and died a few days, few weeks later.

There have been many illegitimate or forbidden relationships formed because people have held to these teachings. They want it, they claim it. There are great fortunes, small fortunes, and even the poor giving out of their poverty to false teachers as demonstrations of faith so they think that they can go out and claim anything they want.

It's a false teaching. False teachers also make claims about doing the works of Christ. They say that when Jesus said that the church will do greater works, that this is pertaining specifically to miracles.

It's pertaining specifically to miracles. And that you have the capacity to go out and do greater miracles than Jesus Himself did. I will challenge you to beat the virgin birth.

I will challenge you to raise from the dead or ascend into heaven. That is not what this passage says. We have hospitals and nursing homes and rehabilitation centers full of the sick that would love to be fully restored, yet these people won't go in there and work the powers they claim to wield.

[17 : 35] What is being discussed here then, having discounted the false teachers? Well, first and foremost, the promises that Jesus gives pertain directly to the ministry that Jesus is performing.

It's important that we recognize it. He says, the works that I do, He shall do also. What's the context of this? Is this talking about that new car that you want or new house?

No, it's talking about doing the works that Jesus had been doing specifically. And what works did Jesus do? Well, Jesus came, as Scripture would testify, preaching the Gospel.

That is what characterized, first and foremost, the ministry of Christ. Luke 8.1 Soon afterward, Jesus began going around from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God.

That is what characterized, first and foremost, the ministry of Jesus. Now, He did do miracles as He went, but as Luke summarized His ministry, He notes that is what it was known for.

[19 : 02] Matthew 28.18, Jesus said this, All authority in heaven and earth has been given into Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I have commanded you.

The mission that Jesus started of going village to village preaching the Gospel, He gave to the church. Now, did the apostles perform miracles?

Yes. Yes, they did. They actually referred to these in the epistles that would follow the Gospels as the signs of the apostles. The apostles performed miracles, their associates performed miracles, but what you see is that the miracles, all of them that they performed and as wonderful as they were, no one walked on water.

No one ascended into heaven. They were wonderful miracles, but they do not exceed Jesus' miracles. What's Jesus talking about?

What's the main goal of Jesus? The preaching of the Gospel, the making of disciples. When Paul was nearing the end of his life and his ministry, he wrote letters to men like Titus and Timothy.

[20 : 22] Charged them not to be apostles, but to be pastors. To find qualified men and to have them teach and preach the Word of God as delivered by the apostles.

Yes, God would work miracles and signs and wonders, and in a different way, we still see God miraculously intervening in our world today. But what was the main focus of Jesus' ministry?

It was bringing light to people, bringing truth to people, bringing the Gospel to people. We have a promise one day of being resurrected and receiving an incorruptible body.

But the Gospel right now, you know what it gives us? A born-again soul. That's what we're guaranteed right now. You are guaranteed right now justification. You are guaranteed right now sanctification.

You can be saved, you can grow in your faith, you can see many great miracles of conversions. You can see God's providential hand guiding you. We have no guarantees of living forever until Jesus comes back though.

[21 : 31] You say, why is that? Because that comes later. That comes later. That comes at the end of the age when death is finally abolished, when the curse of sin is finally abolished.

This broken world is continuing for a time. Why? Because God intends to save sinners out of it. It's a sinking ship. And you know what really stinks?

If you go on a cruise and it sinks. And you're on a sinking ship. That's not enjoyable. We are on a sinking ship. This world is perishing. It's falling apart all around us.

But God said, we're the crew and we should be saving people. That's what we're called to do. We're to share the gospel. We're to share the hope of Jesus Christ. We're to make disciples.

And then one day, we'll be on a boat that's not sinking. But that time is not now. We have a mission in this world. And as hard as it is to see it, as broken as this world is, this should be all the more of a reminder to us that God will bring it to an end one day.

[22 : 36] But we have a mission right now in this world to see people become Christians. But not just to profess Christ. Jesus says we ought to make disciples to see them growing in their faith.

Committed Christians. Christians. So the promise, it pertains specifically, those works that we do pertain specifically to the works of Christ. The miracles that the apostles did didn't exceed Christ's miracles.

But you know what happened during the ministry of the apostles and every subsequent generation since then? More disciples have been made than Jesus ever made in his three years of ministry.

Jesus had eleven apostles at the end. and a few hundred disciples. And after his ascension into heaven and the spirit came, three thousand people became Christians.

And thousands more have become Christians since then. Jesus is doing more now at the right hand of the Father than he did when walking the streets of Jerusalem as it pertains to the work of salvation.

[23 : 43] So the ministry, the works pertain to that of salvation. Second, it is believers that this pertains to. And that's obvious, but it's believers that are the ones doing the works of ministry.

Jesus says, he that believeth on me. That is the one who's going to be doing the works. That is the one who's going to be praying. So what does it mean to believe on Jesus?

Well, Romans 10 9 says this, If thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Lord Jesus and believe in thine heart that God is raised in from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Romans 10 9. To be a Christian is to accept that Jesus is Lord. It is to live under the Lordship of Christ. It is to accept that the kingdom of heaven is not a bunch of independent groups of people doing whatever they want.

We are a kingdom under a king who tells us what to do. The kingdom of heaven. And it's not just accepting in name Jesus as Lord.

[24 : 50] If you believe Jesus as Lord, if you have true faith, you're going to live that way. Jesus looked at a group of people that were happy to, in name, say that he was Lord. Luke 6.

46, and he says, Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Jesus, that could be his response to so many today. Why do you say I'm your Lord and Savior when you don't do what I say?

We must obey the Lord. If you believe he's the Lord, you'll obey the Lord. James says it this way, James 2.17, Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

If faith really believes God is who he says he is, faith acts like it believes God is who he says he is. To believe in Jesus is to accept him as Lord. Of course, it also means to accept him as Savior.

It means that one humbly confesses and admits that they're a sinner apart from grace lost and they desperately need God to save them. So many false teachers today, so many people in general today, think that they're okay.

[25 : 57] They're doing just fine, thank you very much. But to those who would be doing the works of the ministry, to those who would be saying these prayers that God is hearing, they've accepted Jesus as their Savior.

They know that they're sinners apart from Christ. They confess those weaknesses to Christ. 2 Corinthians 5 21, he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

They have accepted Jesus as God's son. Understanding, of course, that God's son refers specifically that he is God incarnate. He is fully God, he is fully man.

It is also to accept him as God's son in the sense that he's the Messiah. He's the God's son that Israel was waiting for to bring them salvation. Of course, though, in the immediate context of this passage of Scripture, Jesus has just asked them to believe some things, hasn't he?

He's asked them to believe that he was going to who? To the Father. He's asked them to believe that he was doing something at the Father's. He was preparing a place for them.

[27 : 10] He's asked them to believe that he would receive them. He's asked them to believe that he was the way, the truth, and the life, and that no one could come to God except through him.

And those who believe on him are those who are doing the works of the ministry. They're those who are doing great and powerful works. They're those who are praying and having their prayers answered in a very powerful way.

Now I know that we've all been exposed to different traditions of Christianity, different teachings, and there are some of you who might be disappointed by this. I don't know. I know some people would be disappointed if they heard that this passage didn't deal with getting stuff.

There really are a lot of people that expect that. If that's you, you need to repent. That's worldliness. This isn't about getting stuff, living your best happy life now.

That's not what it's about. It's about doing the works of Jesus and continuing in the ministry. And I'm going to say too, that if you believe this passage is about doing the works of the ministry and praying, you need to repent too.

[28 : 19] Do we really believe what this passage says? God has expressed his will to save. God has expressed his will to sanctify.

God has expressed his will to answer every prayer that we pray that's in line with God's will. That the Son would be glorified. Do you pray in line with God's will?

Do you understand what that means? Does that drive you to faithful prayer? You say, well, can I have some examples? Well, you know, we don't often know the specifics of God's secret counsel, his secret plans.

He says that that which is given to us belong to us and our children, but the secret things belong to the Lord. But we can know some general things. I promise you this, if you pray and you pray fervently that God will save the lost, guess what he's going to do?

He will save the lost. This is a church, it's a real church. If you pray and pray fervently that fruitful discipleship will happen, guess what will happen?

[29 : 25] Fruitful discipleship will happen. Listen, if you pray that prayer that Jesus prayed, we have it on our side, sanctify them by truth, thy word is truth.

I pray that for myself and I pray that for you. God will answer that prayer. You say, well, what if I'm real stubborn and surly and don't want to be sanctified by the truth?

Oh, God disciplines those he loves. God will discipline you. We all need discipline by God. I pray that God disciplines me. I pray that God disciplines you.

We all need that. We all need his loving hand. He answers those prayers. You pray for wisdom, he will answer that prayer. You pray for strength, he will answer that prayer.

You pray for moral courage and fortitude to face the trials that he's put before you, he will answer that prayer. You ask God for the strength to share the gospel with your neighbors, he will answer that prayer.

[30 : 22] You just approach him in faith. You will see people saved. You will see God work mightily in your life. You will see the Son of God glorified.

It will happen if you approach him in faith. He doesn't like a double-minded man. You know what the Word says and you go before God in prayer and he will do it.

But we must know what he wants. And we must want what he wants. That's why we must be in the Word.

But if you want to see people saved, if you want to see people grow in their faith, if you want to grow in your faith, if you want to walk in the power of God, all you have to do is ask.

And you will. That's why I say we all need to repent. Amen. This is huge. This is huge and significant. If we only knew what God was willing to do, I think we would pray more.

[31 : 24] We got a little idea of it here, don't we? We should pray more. If you said, well, what are ten miracles that you could see on your street that you lived on? I can imagine ten of them.

If they're in line with God's Word, you know what he's going to do? He'll hear and answer. Again, we don't know specifics. We don't know specifics. I can't be any more clear about that.

But we know the general will of God as revealed in Scripture. And God will answer those prayers. He will. So we have this wonderful promise from God that because Jesus is going to heaven, he's going to do more through the church than he would if he just stayed here on earth.

He's there at the right hand of the Father. Father. Second, second, Jesus going into the presence of the Father results in him sending the Holy Spirit to comfort us, which is a very good thing.

It's a very good thing. There was a day where if you wanted to have fellowship with Jesus, you hoped the crowd wasn't too big. You hoped the weather was good so you could make it there.

[32 : 35] But now we don't have those worries, do we? No matter where we're at, we can fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. We can be in his presence. So how does this work?

Well, verse 16. Jesus says, And I will pray to the Father, and he shall send another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

I shall not leave you comfortless, I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more, but ye seeth me. Because I live, you shall live also.

At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, it is he that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Jesus says, he will send another. He will send another. Who's he going to send? He's going to send the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, sent Jesus the Son, the second person of the Trinity, who ascended into heaven, and who did he send?

[34 : 00] The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. Now he says he will not leave us comfortless. And you know, to comfort, it means to assure, you know, that is to comfort, it's to assure, it's to speak those truths, give hope.

But Jesus says he's not going to leave them comfortless. And what he has in mind here is the idea of bereavement. We understand bereavement.

To be bereaved is to be deprived of something. People can be bereaved of human rights, food, shelter. It means to make destitute. It means to have something very dear taken away.

A spouse can be bereaved of their significant other. Children who are orphaned, who lose their mommy and daddy, are bereaved.

As a matter of fact, the Greek word here that speaks to being comfortless is orphanos. Does that sound familiar? It's where we get orphaned from.

[35 : 07] He's saying, I'm not going to leave you as orphans. He refers to them just a few verses earlier as what? Little children. Young children. How upset would a young child be if they lost mommy and daddy?

Jesus understands the spiritual turmoil that these disciples are in for at the thought of losing him. And he said, I will not leave you orphans.

That's a promise. I'm not leaving you alone, though I'm going into heaven. He said, he's going to send a comforter. He's going to send the Holy Spirit to have that parental caring, guiding, encouraging, nurturing, protecting role in their life.

It is the Spirit who works in us and causes us to bear the fruit of the Spirit. It's the Spirit who convicts us of our sin. It's the Spirit who gives us assurance of salvation. It's the Spirit who gives us wisdom for godly living.

It's the Spirit who gifts us for the works of the ministry. He is the one who comforts us and cares for us. We're not left as orphans.

[36 : 21] And Jesus says this, and it's interesting. He's sending the comforter. He's leaving. And he says, I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you. Well, how does that work?

And this is something very powerful about the Holy Spirit. Remember, Jesus said, when they were asking to see the Father, He said, hey, if you've seen me, you've seen who?

The Father. If you've known me, you've known the Father. Jesus mediated. He represented the Father to the disciples. And He's gone away to heaven.

And what does the Holy Spirit do now? He mediates to us Christ. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father. But because the Holy Spirit, which the Bible also calls the Spirit of Christ, dwells within each of you and is present here in this room, Christ is said to what?

Dwell within each of you and to be present with us in this room. He's presiding over this very worship service right now. He hears every hymn we sing and I'm going to give an account to Him for every word that I speak one day.

[37 : 29] Christ is here. He is present. This church belongs to Him. And He speaks and ministers to us through the Word and the Spirit of Christ.

He's given to comfort us. Verse 20. And the fact that we have the Spirit is something very important to us. It's a guarantee.

Verse 20. And in that day, you shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. That's what we call assurance of salvation.

That's a guarantee. He says, when the Spirit comes, you will know, I'm with the Father and with you. You'll know there's that fellowship. Paul says it this way in 2 Corinthians 1.22.

He says, of God who hath sealed us and given us the earnest, that's a guarantee, of the Spirit in our hearts. Scripture speaks of the Spirit being a seal.

[38 : 30] The Holy Spirit dwelling within you now is proof of the things to come. The relationship you have with Christ now is the proof of things to come.

He is the guarantee. He is the earnest of our salvation. It's that internal assurance that we know that these things are true. The Holy Spirit being there.

Of course, Jesus, He goes on and He says something very significant for us.

Verse 15, He says, if ye love me, keep my commandments and I will sin. You see, we understand this, that while salvation is by grace, that the way in which we live affects our relationship with God.

You say, what do you mean by that? Well, Scripture says that we can hinder the Spirit through our disobedience or disorder such as in worship. There are worship services that hinder the work that God would have done otherwise.

[39 : 39] And I'm speaking in a human way. And this is how Scripture speaks of it. We can look at this world from the human perspective as God calls us to. Or we can look at it from the divine perspective as He shares us.

And we can hinder the Spirit in that way. The Scripture says we can grieve the Spirit. When the Spirit, and He's with us, sees us sinning, that grieves Him.

In the Scripture, we're called to love God. And how does the Scripture say we love God? We keep His commandments. We obey. How do those who hate God live?

They live in disobedience to the commandments. So when we sin, it's not just, oh, I'm just being a little selfish. I'm just rewarding myself. I deserve this.

Or God will make an exception. And I've had a hard day. When we sin, we're just being downright hateful to Jesus. Whether or not we sin directly against Him or against our neighbor and against Him.

[40 : 44] We're just being downright hateful towards Jesus. Some of us are the sweetest people on the outward, but we can really struggle with those thoughts. And we're just hateful people sometimes.

Because it's disobedient thoughts that we have. And that grieves the Spirit of God. And if you've ever been in one of those times in your life where you feel like you're in a wilderness, where you feel distant from God, well, friend, your faith has become weak and you've grieved the Spirit of God.

The problem resides within you. Now, the Scripture gives us this wonderful promise that God disciplines His children. And if it were not for God's gracious intervention, we would all be lost, right?

One person said, I love this quote, I've contributed nothing to my salvation except the sin that made it necessary. I love that quote. And it's true. God will discipline us.

He'll correct us. And sometimes the burden and the grief of that loneliness of that wilderness that we can feel like we're in is one of the very first clues that we're under God's discipline.

[42 : 05] He will not let us continue on in sin as if there's nothing wrong. Jesus says, if you love Me, keep My commandments. And we're all in danger of going through these dry seasons.

And the problem is not God's. We're not waiting around on God. The problem resides within us. And we need to confess to God that.

We need... If this is you, confess it to God. And if it's not you, if you're having a sweet time of faithfulness and fellowship, you can probably look back and say, oh, I remember that season.

It was awful. I hope it doesn't happen again. Right? Turn. Trust. Walk close with the Spirit. Walk close with God.

Fellowship with Him. Fill your heart and fill your mind with the things of God. What does Paul say? Whatsoever is good, whatsoever is true, of noble report. You know, think on these things.

[43 : 03] Fill your heart with those things. So often times, we'll fill our heart and mind with things that are just grievous to the Spirit. And you say, well, they aren't necessarily bad things.

Like, I think the news probably can get a lot of us. We fill our hearts with the news. But then what do we do with it? What do we do with it? We worry over it. And is God pleased when we worry and fear man and fear our circumstances?

Does that draw us closer to Him? No. We're to fear God. We're to trust in God. And we can fill our hearts and minds. We only have so much space. We can fill our hearts and minds with the things of God and walk in His presence.

Or we can walk after the path of this world. Jesus says, if you love Me, keep My commandments. Obedience is important in our experience of walking with the Spirit.

And God will discipline us if we stray. So, Jesus' ascension into heaven is going to secure a greater blessing for the church in the fact that we're going to go out and see disciples made and God will answer those prayers that are in line with the will and the work of God.

[44 : 17] And not only that, He's given us the wonderful presence of the Holy Spirit. That wonderful gift where we all have equal access to Jesus and even our circumstances can't keep us from getting to Him.

It doesn't matter what time zone Jerusalem is in, you can have God's presence in your life. Sadly, the only thing that hinders us from this is our own disobedience. When we do not walk in love, that can hinder us.

Let us confess that to Him when we stray. Finally, what we see here is Jesus ascending into heaven gets us the wonderful blessing of peace. Verse 27.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither be afraid.

Ye have heard now, I have said unto you, I go away and come again unto you. If ye love me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father, for my Father is greater than I.

[45 : 21] Jesus gives us the peace, He says, and it's not as the world gives us the peace, is it? How does the world give us peace?

I remember, I heard this growing up, it was pop marriage advice, and I studied counseling, and had to deal with this advice that was common.

You got a married couple, they're not getting along, you know what they just need to do? They just need to compromise. Compromise. That's the world's peace right there. You got two selfish sinners, sinning, being unloving, and unkind to each other, arms crossed, being nasty, over what they want.

And if you want to get along, what should you do? Well, you've got that sinful angle, and they've got their sinful angle, so let's just kind of come together, and figure out how we can both sin, and get along.

You say, well how do you know it's a sinful angle? Well, because they're behaving so poorly over it. It's compromise. That's not how God teaches us how to work out problems. If you're wondering, well then what's the Christian solution to conflict?

[46 : 35] I would encourage you, it's a great Bible study to look at. But the world teaches, just compromise. You both have your sinful desire, work at it together. The world teaches us that peace is an absence of conflict.

Look at all the wonderful years there's been peace on the Korean Peninsula. North Korea, South Korea, all have guns, nukes, and tanks, and cannons pointed at each other.

They're at peace. Is that really peace? Not as God would have it, as the world has it. They would say, that's a great victory. There's a whole religion out there called Buddhism that teaches peace by not wanting anything so you never fight over it.

You just have low standards. There's peace through domination. You just go in there, guns a-blazing, kill everyone off, and then you have peace.

Well, I guess that's true. That's the world's peace. That's the world's peace. Jesus didn't give us peace as the world gave us peace. All of the world's solutions at solving conflict will not work for the Christian.

[47 : 46] We have peace that Jesus gives us. Peace with the Father. You say, what does that look like? Well, we as sinners are the mortal enemies of the immortal God.

He could wipe us out in an instant. But He chose not to. He made peace through the cross. By His grace and His goodness, He sacrificed Jesus on the cross that we might be saved.

Peace is made when we confess our sins humbly. We give up our sinful angle and go to Him. Peace is made when He graciously forgives our sins.

Peace is made when we are reconciled with God. The world has many solutions at dealing with conflict.

God won't accept any of them. He'll only accept the peace that comes from the cross. Forgiveness, reconciliation, grace, and mercy.

[48 : 55] That's the answer to the marriage conflict question. forgiveness, reconciliation, grace, mercy. That is how God brings peace.

He didn't say, you know, I don't like you guys but I'll let you alone. You do your thing. I'll go do my thing. No. No. God didn't do that. He got involved.

He got involved. He made a way that we could know His love through Jesus Christ. He intervened on our behalf. It is peace that also extends to the church.

Forgiveness, grace, reconciliation. Scripture says that He tore down the dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles. All of the worldly walls that people build up with age or gender or whatever tears them all down that we may have fellowship and forgiveness and grace as Christians.

Not only that, the Scripture speaks of the peace that we have in our faith in Christ. He's in control as a peace that passes understanding.

[50 : 12] The world can't understand it because the world doesn't have it. And Jesus says, my peace I leave with you.

He has left us peace with the Father. He's given us the means to have peace within the church, within our relationships, if only we will take those up.

And He's given us peace that passes understanding. But we only have to trust in Him. These are the wonderful blessings that Christ has sought to give us through His ascension.

Power to do the work of the ministry in significant ways. I encourage you to walk in that power right now. Leave this building in that power. Go out in the moral power that the Holy Spirit gives you and courageously share the gospel.

Talk to God. Find out what His will is. And pray that His will is done. And see powerful things happen in your life. Say, well how do I do that?

[51 : 17] Get in the Word. Believe it. Go. Run with it. It's already yours. It's not like you've got to work your way up to it. It's in Scripture. It's here. Just take it up.

Just like old Elijah when he was going and he threw that mantle down. Elijah just picked it up. Pick up the Word. Pick up the ministry and go. And you will see the power of God at work in your life and the life of others.

God has given us the blessing of the Holy Spirit through the ascension of Christ. You are never alone. You are never without comfort. The idea that He's left a comforter for us means that we're going to need it.

We're going to need it in this life. And we will always have the comforter of the Holy Spirit because of what Jesus has done. We only need to walk in the love of Christ.

And God brings us His perfect peace. Peace that passes understanding. Peace that healed our broken relationship with the Father. Peace that can even get into your own families and your own relationships and you can see gospel healing in those relationships too.

[52 : 27] God can do all those things through the ascension of Christ.