

Our Ascended King

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[0:00] Today, well, today is Ascension Sunday. It's really not Ascension Day. Ascension Day was last, this previous Thursday.

And Ascension Day marks the 40th day after Easter when our Lord went up bodily to glory. To the glory that was His since before the world began.

And today we commemorate as the people of God that momentous occasion. And as we commemorate, as we look into John's Gospel this morning, I want to be able to show us what that really means for us.

That Christ is ascended. Not only is He risen, resurrected, but He is ascended to heaven. Sits at the right hand of the Father in glory and majesty.

But before we do that, let us pray. And this is eternal life. That they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

[1:06] Gracious Father, we ask that You open our eyes, our mind, and our hearts to see You through Your Son. And that we may come to know that the life You give is through Your Son, Jesus Christ.

It is in His glorious name we pray. Amen. Now, do you remember the setting of these passages that we're in, in John's Gospel?

We've been going through these latter end of chapters of the Gospel of John. And the setting is that it is Jesus' last admonition.

It is His farewell discourse to His people. He's about to go to the cross. It is the day, actually, before He's arrested, tortured, and killed on the cross.

So, John 17 is the same, it's in the same line. Jesus has been teaching them what will happen, what it means. And now, in John 17, He prays.

[2:08] It is His apostolic prayer. Our Lord Jesus Christ prays. And He prays for Himself, as He's about to go to the cross. He prays for the apostles.

That is the eleven. Right now, at this point, Judas Iscariot had left. So, it's the eleven who are there with Him. He prays for them. And then, He not only prays for the apostles, He prays for us.

It's not in our passage this morning, but He prays. He goes on to say, Those who will believe in my name on account of the faithfulness of the apostles in preaching the Gospel.

Jesus Christ prays for you and I. Did you know that? And so, but we, I want us to focus especially on the first five verses of chapter 17 this morning.

And as you look at it, I hope you note that in these first five verses, the word glory is mentioned five times.

[3:14] Look at that language of John 17. The word glory is mentioned in one derivative of it five times in those first five verses.

It's triumphalist language that Jesus is using here. He's talking about Himself being glorified, being exalted. But it might seem strange for Jesus to be using these kind of languages.

When it's closely within the immediate shadow of the cross. He's about to go and die and be humiliated.

And yet He's talking about His glory. And then our glory as well. It seems strange for us to think about that.

That that's where His mind will be. Because when we think of glory, we think of being lauded and being celebrated by people. Red carpets and glamour and fame and fortune.

[4:21] That's what glory looks like in our world. In Jesus' world, glory looks like conquering in battle. And coming into the city gates.

With the crowd coming to celebrate you in your triumph. And you're being celebrated throwing wreaths and flowers at your feet as you come into the city gates.

And the spoils of war goes before you. The spoils of war go before you. With the conquering kings that you've conquered. And bound and humiliated.

And you come at the end of it. The victorious conqueror. That's what glory looks like in Jesus' day. But here, nowhere does suffering and glory go together.

Not in Jesus' day. Not in our day. It seems so foreign. But we know that Jesus is talking about glory with the shadow of the cross.

[5 : 22] The suffering that He's about to endure on the cross right before Him. Jesus speaks of exaltation. He speaks of His power in light of the humiliation that He's about to endure.

And He says, Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You. These two words, the hour, has been used through our John's Gospel.

If you remember, if you're well versed in the Gospel of John. By the way, the hour doesn't mean a literal 60 minute period. Jesus means it as the appointed time.

The appointed time when He will accomplish the purpose for which He came into the world. To accomplish. That's what He means by the hour. If you remember at the wedding in Cana, when the wine ran out.

And His mother asked Him to help. What was Jesus' response to His mother? Father, my hour has not yet come. And often times that phrase, my hour has not yet come, is often repeated throughout John's Gospel.

[6 : 35] When they came to arrest Him. And they weren't able to take Him. John explained to us, It's because His hour has not yet come. But now, now He knows.

The hour has finally come. In fact, we're told right from the beginning of this passage. From chapter 13. We've known that the hour has come.

And now He repeats. In His prayer, He says to His Father, The hour has come. The hour to accomplish that which I came to accomplish has come. Glorify Me.

That I may glorify You. Now, how might you face such an ordeal if you know that you will be wrongfully arrested, tortured, and executed?

How will you face such an ordeal? Knowing that is in your immediate future. Imagine, like me, you will be wailing and loud protestations. No protestations. And probably ultimately, knowing that that is coming, you will run away if you can.

[7 : 43] Get out of Dodge. As fast as you can. But that's not so with our Lord. He knowing fully, fully what is coming.

But in fulfillment of the seventh song, in Isaiah 50 verse 7, knowing what is coming before Him, Jesus sets His face like a flint.

That's a phrase that means that Jesus had unwavering determination to go towards the cross. Jesus knows that it is for that reason that He came.

And He trusts fully in His Father's will to accomplish the reason for which He came. So much so that He prays to His Father.

That His Father will accomplish the work for which He had sent Him. This is the disposition of our Lord. This complete trust in the Father's will.

[8 : 49] This is a lesson for us as His disciples. Isn't it? When we know we are following God's decreed will. When we know we're following His will.

And how do we know that we're following His will? From His word. It's scripturated in the Bible. Contained in the Old and New Testaments. That's how we know we're following His will.

When we know that we should not walk in dread. We should know we are squarely in the will of God.

We are in the safest place we can be. And so like Jesus, we can pray when we know that. No matter what is going on around us. When we know when God's will.

We can pray to God in those moments. Even when there is fear. There will be fear. When there's anguish. When there's sorrow. Jesus was human.

[9 : 47] Mind you. Right? Remember what happened in the Garden of Gethsemane. He knows what's coming. He sets His face like a flint to face it. That didn't mean that He didn't have agony over it.

The Bible tells us that He sweat droplets of blood. In agony. As He waits and anticipates the suffering He's about to undertake.

Although we would never suffer in that magnitude. But when we know we're in the will of God. Sometimes suffering comes. We should be like our Lord here. Our first resort is to go to God in prayer.

knowing that He is there with us. We can pray to Him in those moments. Knowing that He will see us through.

It's as D.A. Carson puts it. God's sovereignty functions as an incentive to prayer. Not a disincentive. I want to say that again.

[10 : 52] God's sovereignty functions as an incentive to prayer. Not as a disincentive. So when we know God's will and God's purposes. It should lead us even actually to go to God in prayer more and more.

And so we see that in these two prayers. It's actually divided into two in these 11 verses. Verse 1 to 5. Jesus prays for Himself. And we will see God answering Jesus' prayer.

In these first five verses. Jesus prays for us. And as God answers our Lord's prayer. It's to our benefit that He does. And then in verse 6. In fact, it's actually verse 6 to 19. Jesus prays for the apostles.

Those whom He's about to leave behind. To carry the gospel message to the world. He prays specifically for the apostles. And then in verse 20 to 26. Jesus prays for us.

Those who will believe through the apostolic message. But for the sake of our time. And we will only be really focusing on the first five verses.

[11 : 57] But know that Jesus. Know that Jesus has the ascension in mind as He prays. Do you see that? He's looking forward to what?

The cross? And what lies beyond the cross? And for us we might think He's looking beyond the cross to the resurrection. But that's actually not what Jesus is looking to here.

The climax of this event of Easter. For our Lord is not the resurrection. Although it is vitally important. Right?

But the climax for Him is the ascension. When He will return to His Father. Glorified, exalted, risen, King.

And imbued with the glory that He had before. The foundation of the world. The glory that He had laid down. So that He may come. And take on humanity.

[12 : 57] So that He may go to the cross and die for you and I. He is looking forward. To when He will go back to His Father. And so. And by the way.

I want you to see that. That's Jesus's. For Jesus. That's the climax. For the New Testament writers. The ascension is the eye point. To which the resurrection leads.

And Jesus prays that He will be glorified. And He says the Son's glorified. As He is glorified. It rebounds. It redounds in glory to who?

The Father. And it's vice versa. As the Son is glorified. The Father is glorified. As the Father is glorified. The Son is glorified. This is the mutuality of the Trinity.

They share glory and majesty. And in perfect love. They are constantly outdoing each other. What I mean by outdoing each other.

[13 : 53] It doesn't mean. You know. Upmanning each other. But outdoing each other in love. Exalting each other. By the way. When the Bible exhorts.

You and I. Christians. To outdo one another in doing good. It is a command to be like. Our triune God. Those who have the life.

Of God in them. Starts to act. Like the one whose life they bear. Their life together. That is our life together. As the people of God. Starts to reflect.

The love between the triune God. So Jesus prays. That the Father will glorify him. So that he can glorify the Father. And how does the Son glorify the Father?

He glorifies the Father. By accomplishing. The work of salvation. The purpose for which he was sent. The reason he shed his glory.

[14 : 52] And took on humanity. Was ultimately. Ultimately. Hear this. The reason. He came into the world. And went the way of the cross.

Was ultimately. Not to save you and I. We are beneficiaries of that. But the ultimate end. Is the Father's glory. That the Father will be glorified.

And when the Father is glorified. And the Father is glorified. In his work of saving you and I. That is the ultimate end. We are ends.

But the ultimate end. Is the Father's glory. And so based upon the plan of salvation. The plan of salvation. That has been wrought. Even before the foundation of the world.

Paul tells us in Ephesians. Based on this plan. The Son. The Son had been given authority. Over all of humanity. That he may grant eternal life.

[15 : 47] To those whom the Father gives the Son. That's a wonderful thing. Right. We've talked about God's glory. We've talked about the appointed hour. The time for him to go to the cross.

But here. Jesus is also talking. As in mind. The authority that he has. The authority that he has. Right. Over all of humanity. This authority by which. He then will be able to save all. Do you know that Christ himself. Is by reason of his sonship.

The ruler. The true king. Of the universe. We call him king. We call him king. Because he died. And rose. And he's exalted as king of the universe.

But by the fact that he is the son. He has been given authority. Colossians tells us. That it was for him. And it's through him. And for him.

[16 : 46] That all creation. Was ultimately. For him. It was through him. But also for him. And that he rules. And reigns above all. And so we see here.

In verse. In verse 3. As Jesus says. Well no. Sorry. Verse 2 first. Since you've given him authority. Over all flesh. To give eternal life. To all whom you have given him.

Jesus then says here. I have authority over all. And you've then given me. Authority over all of humanity. And then. Through that authority. You've given me those.

To whom. That will be saved. This is the eternal gift. The eternal life. That Christ speaks of here. Is a gift. It isn't something that any of us earns.

The son has been given authority. Over all humanity. Then he grants as a gift. Eternal life. To those whom the father gives the son. And he prays for that.

[17 : 44] That they may know you. The only true God. And Jesus Christ. Whom you have sent. Do you see how Jesus. As he talks about it.

This eternal life. This eternal gift. How does he capture. How does he. What's the language of the eternal life. That it is a gift. But what is it? It is a knowledge.

It's knowledge of God. God. Eternal life. Is to know God. How do we know God? Keep in mind.

All that Jesus has been saying. In this teaching. Up to this time. When he prays. To know God. We can only know God. In the face of Christ. Two weeks ago.

He told. He told. He told Philip. When Philip says. Show us the father. He says. Philip. I'm here with you. How can you ask.

[18 : 41] Show us the father. When I am here with you. You've seen me. Anyone that's seen me. Has seen the father. The knowledge of God. In the face of Christ. The only way to know God.

The only way to know God. Is to know Christ. And it is this kind of knowing. That leads to eternal life. You know. There's many people.

Who are working hard. And searching. For God. Through different means. And different ways. But here is Christ again.

Emphasizing. That the only way. By which we can know God. The kind of knowing. That brings true life. Is only through him. And then Jesus prays.

He ends his prayer. And he prays for. In verse 4. I glorified you on earth. Having accomplished the work. That you gave me to do. And now father.

[19 : 38] Glorify me. In your own presence. With the glory. That I had with you. Before the world existed. This is what Jesus had in mind. That he will be glorified. After he had gone through.

The ways of the cross. With the glory that he had. This is what the ascension really means. It's a moment of triumph. We only have.

From our point of view. If you look at that picture. In the front of your bulletin. We see Christ. And this is what we believe. This is what the church confesses. Jesus Christ rose up.

It wasn't an apparition. He rose up bodily. Ascended. Into heaven. There's mystery in that. That's all the Bible tells us.

But we hold it. And we confess it. That he rose up bodily into heaven. The significance of that. Is that. We've talked about this before. At Holy Trinity. We have a man.

[20 : 35] In heaven. We have a man in heaven. Jesus Christ. We say it every Sunday. In the comfortable words. As an advocate. We're coming to that.

But Christ rose up. Can you imagine. The triumph. We've just talked about. What a triumph looks like. In the world. When the conquering king comes.

Can you imagine. The triumph. Parade in heaven. As Christ. The son. Comes back. Having accomplished.

That which he came to do. Having conquered sin and death. The implacable enemy. Having conquered it. Having redeemed. And saved the people.

Can you imagine. The shout of triumph. In heaven. In fact. All of heaven. Continues in that shout of triumph. We will get to participate.

[21 : 34] In that continuous shout of triumph. What does revelation talk about? Revelation continues. In the praise of the son. He is referred to in revelation.

As the lamb who was slain. It is the cross in mind. Even in revelation. We will get to participate in that triumph.

It is an everlasting eternal triumph. The lamb who was slain. Risen and exalted. An ascended king. Now rules.

Overall. But what does it mean for us. For you and I. That Christ is risen and exalted. There is four things. And if you have read. For those who have read.

The newsletter. This will be familiar with you. But there are four things. That it means for us. Good news. That Christ is ascended. It means that his work of salvation.

[22 : 30] Is completed. What does the Bible refer to it? He sits. The author of Hebrews talks about. How the priest is continually standing. In the temple.

Continually standing. Making sacrifice upon sacrifice. Upon sacrifice. But Christ. Once for all sacrifice. Has been accomplished. No need for any other sacrifice.

Sacrifice. There is no other way. But there is one sure way. Jesus Christ has accomplished it. He now sits. Enthroned. At the right hand.

Of God the Father. In the place of authority. And power. This work of salvation. Is accomplished. That's what. The fact that Jesus ascended. Means to us. Nothing more. Needs to be done.

To secure your salvation. It has been done. It has been accomplished. This is good news. For you and me. Because it means. That there is no work. That you need to do. You don't have to work.

[23 : 26] Your way up to heaven. That's what that means. It means you need. Just to trust. And rest. In what Christ has done. Believe. In the gospel.

Believe. And accept it. Because Christ. Has done. All that is required. And he has done it.

Excellent. Second thing. That it means. For you and I. The good news.

Of the ascension. Is that his work. Of salvation. Is completed. It is also. Because it is. An accomplished. But it doesn't. It means that Christ. Although it is.

His work of salvation. Is complete. And accomplished. Christ does not sit. Idle. In heaven. He's not just sitting there. His feet up. He is in the place.

Of glory. And majesty. Work accomplished. But there is a work. That he is doing. On our behalf. It is not a work. Of saving us anymore. But it is a work. It is kind of a. Continuing work. Of that salvation.

[24 : 21] We say it every Sunday. In 1 John 2. 1. In the words. In the comfortable. We have an advocate. With the father. Jesus Christ. The righteous one. What does he do now?

The risen and exalted king. What does he do? There. At the father's right hand. He intercedes for you. And I. For you and me. Rather. He intercedes.

For us. Jesus Christ. Pleads. Our case. Before God. When Satan. Comes. To accuse you.

And he comes. Often. To accuse. He accuses you. He accuses you. Before God the father. He does so. Because he knows. That you are sinful.

For you are saint. Yet sinful. You stumble. And so he thinks. He can have a way. And he comes. To accuse you. What does your advocate do? He sits there.

[25 : 19] Right. At the. Right. At the place of judgment. And he pleads. Your case. And my case. Those who have come. To believe in him. And he says.

To the father. On the basis. Of my perfect life. On the basis. Of my atoning death. He is innocent.

She is innocent. It is not on the basis. Of anything you have done. It is on the basis. Of Christ's work. Accomplished. Finished. And accomplished. And you know what?

Those who are in Christ. Christ keeps. He never loses a case. The third thing. About the ascension.

Good news of the ascension. Is that. Christ. Bodily presses. Remember. Remember. What we confess. As a church. That Christ. Rose bodily. We have a man in heaven.

[26 : 16] Christ's presence. In heaven. Assures us. That we will also be with him. Physically. Physically. Heaven is not. Just a disembodied spirit.

Flowing around. We will have. The Bible says. New bodies. Not this body of flesh. And weakness. And frailty. But new bodies.

Renewed. A spiritual body. When the Bible talks about spiritual. It doesn't mean that it's not physical. It just means that it is a spiritual body. That is. Exempt from temptation. And sin. And all the things that happens in this world. That we struggle with. We can't even imagine it. But we have this assurance. That because Christ.

Bodily. Sits at the right hand of God the Father. You and I. If we trust in Jesus. We will also. Be with him. In fact.

[27 : 13] The Bible already speaks in those terms. In Ephesians 2.6. In Colossians 3.1-3. It talks about how our life is already hidden with Christ and God. It talks about how we are seated with Christ.

There. In the place of glory and exaltation. It is already true spiritually and mystically. And it will be true in full reality. When Christ comes.

At his second coming. To bring us with him. The fourth and final thing. About good news. I'm sure there are many more. But the fourth and final thing. For our purposes this morning. Is that the ascended Christ.

Do you see that? I mean. I know we are only covering verse 5 to 6. But. But in the Acts reading. Do you see the apostles. Questioning of Jesus. And Jesus says.

Yes. I am going. But he tells them. To look forward to what? Pentecost. That's next Sunday.

[28 : 16] Pentecost. So come. But he tells them to look forward. The angels even reiterate what Jesus says. Why? Because. If. Because Christ is ascended.

He sends the Holy Spirit to be with us. He says it in his. In his gospel. Nevertheless. I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit.

He said it earlier in John. It is for your benefit that I go away. Because if I don't go away. The counselor. Which is the Holy Spirit. Will not come to you. If I go. I will send him to you.

Because Christ. Is our risen and ascended king. And he is at the right hand of the. Of Christ. He is sent to us. The spirit of Christ. The Holy Spirit. Who indwells us.

And leads us. And ups us. That's wonderful good news. Because. There is no way. There is no way. We can walk.

[29 : 13] This Christian walk. Without. The power. And help. Of the Holy Spirit. And Christ. Has promised. And has given the Holy Spirit to us.

For all of you. Who have come to faith in Jesus Christ. Whoever you are. If you have the Holy Spirit. If you are. If you are in Christ. You have the Holy Spirit.

If you are in Christ. Of. These are the wonderful news. Of. The ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I hope that you can revel in it this morning I hope you can rejoice in it but it's only good news for those who are in Christ so if you're here this morning and you don't know you know that you're not you haven't put your faith in Christ you haven't come to entrust your life to him I implore you come believe that Christ Jesus has come to die for your sins that he has accomplished the work that's needed for you to be at peace with God and that through him you can have eternal life you can know God fully and if you are in Christ brothers and sisters this is the glory that we bask in we bask in the glory of our risen and ascended Lord we share in that glory his glory his glorification is our glory and it points to our ultimate exaltation as well

I want to say one last thing Jesus Christ looks to the cross beyond the cross to glory the path that he followed is the path that we must follow in the cross of Christ that glory the hymn writer says towering over the wrecks of time we must glory in the cross of Christ we also as followers of Jesus must bear our cross now our cross is not redemptive as he is but we must bear that cross we must ready to see that suffering leads to exaltation as it did for our Lord and Jesus Christ if you follow Jesus if you believe in him it doesn't mean that life will not be hard in fact life may be harder because you've come to trust him the world will hate you as Jesus says here in his prayers to his apostles the world will hate you because they hate the world hated him but the promise is that as you continue to stand upon his word trust in him rest in his finished work he will bring you through to

the place of glory and exaltation in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
[32:05] Amen