

The Festival of the Ascension of our Lord  
St. Mark 16:14-20  
May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## He Sat Down at the Right Hand of God

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

Almighty God, Who hast raised up Thy dear Son from the lowliness of His earthly state to Thy right hand in the heavens, grant that, as we do joyfully believe and this day celebrate His Ascension, so we may even in this present world live in heavenly things, seeking only the things which are eternal, that we may in the end be made partakers of the glory of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord; Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

When our Lord + Jesus, the Christ ascended into Heaven to sit on the right hand of the Lord God, heavenly Father, He promised them that He would return again on the Last Day. The Evangelist St. Luke in his Book of the Acts of the Apostles records the conversation between the Lord + Jesus and His Apostles. Still erroneously thinking that the Lord + Jesus would create an earthly Kingdom, and that He would restore the kingdom of Israel to the glory it enjoyed during the days of King David and King Solomon, they asked Him when He would restore the kingdom of Israel. When the Last Day was to come was not for them to know. It is not for us to know, either. And when our Lord + Jesus ascends into Heaven, the Apostles are caught by two angels still looking up into Heaven, as if the Lord + Jesus was going to return immediately.

Our Lord's return is not delayed as some consider it to be, but He is patient with mankind, desiring that no one be lost. Every person on Earth needs to hear the Gospel of our Lord + Jesus Christ, that He has fulfilled the Law of God on their behalf, and has paid the penalty of their sins by atoning for their sins on the tree of the holy cross. All those who cling in faith to these works and merits of the Christ have exactly what He promises to give: forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation.

To ensure that all those who will believe—that the number of souls to be saved is completed before the great harvest on the Last Day—hear the Gospel and cling in faith to the Lord + Jesus alone, He promised on the day of His ascension to send the Holy Ghost to the Apostles. They were to remain in Jerusalem until they received the gifting of the Holy Ghost. We will celebrate this giving of the Holy Ghost in ten days on the Feast of Pentecost, also called Whitsunday (so-called because the Holy Ghost makes men clean and pure, that is, "white." Hence the name "White Sunday," or "Whit-Sunday").

The Holy Ghost was not just given to the Apostles, but He is given to the Church. He is given to the Church to make more Christians; to open the ears of all mankind to hear the good news of salvation found in the Lord + Jesus Christ alone. The Holy Ghost has been sent into our midst to give comfort and peace to all of us poor, miserable sinners. He comforts us with the knowledge that our sins have been fully paid for by our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Our good works are not enough to save us. Even

when we “do good for a time” we still fall back into doing the same sins over and over again. If our salvation was dependent upon how good of a Christian we are; if it was based upon how well we keep and obey the Ten Commandments, we would surely not find any salvation.

This is why the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, the One Who our Lord + Jesus sent to be with us after He went to sit on the right hand of the heavenly Father, opens our ears to hear of what our Lord + Jesus did on our behalf. He turns our eyes away from our failings and miserable keeping of the Law, to the perfect fulfilling of the Law by our Lord + Jesus. He turns our eyes to the cross, where our Lord + Jesus took upon Himself the punishment which we deserve. If one wants to know if his sins are paid for; if one feels that his works are not enough to win salvation for him, he only needs to look at the tree of the holy cross, where our Lord fully atoned for his sins. He need only cling in faith to what our Lord + Jesus did, and does not need to look at how he has failed in regard to the Law of God.

The Holy Ghost also draws us away from being filled with pride, too. When we get puffed up with how good of a person we are, when we begin to think that our works count for something, the Holy Ghost again takes our eyes of faith, and our focus and puts them on the only means of our salvation. This is why the Apostles were first sent into all the world. They were sent to call men to repentance, and to direct people’s faith away from themselves and their works, to the works and merits of the Christ. This is what the Church continues to do through the called ministers of the Christ. The minister preaches the Law to convict men’s hearts of their pride and sin, and direct their eyes of faith to the Christ, and the sacrifice that He made for them.

The Holy Ghost uses the preaching of the Gospel, and the administration of the Blessed Sacraments to draw men away from their own works, to the works of the Christ. Everything the Church does is to point us to our Lord + Jesus. We are constantly reminded in the Church that our Lord + Jesus may not be present with us in the way that He was with His Apostles, but He is still with us in His Word and Sacraments. He is still with us in the means of grace. He still intercedes for us poor, miserable sinners to the heavenly Father on our behalf. Showing Him His hands, feet and side which stand as an eternal testimony that our sins have been paid for, and that our punishment has already been meted out upon our Lord + Jesus. He endured our punishment so that we do not have to.

The Evangelist St. Mark tells us in the Gospel reading for today, that the Apostles went out and preached everywhere. The miracles that they performed through the power of the Holy Ghost, confirmed the testimony that they gave. Through the Holy Ghost they received power to be eyewitnesses of all that the Lord + Jesus had done. They proclaimed the works of the Christ to Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the Earth. Men heard the Gospel and believed and clung in faith to the Lord + Jesus as the One and Only Savior of the world.

This task continues today. We have also been given power by the Holy Ghost. We have been given power to resist the assaults of our enemies—the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh. We have been given power to be comforted when we are attacked by sin, death and the devil, who desires that we be filled with either despair over our inability to keep the Law, or be swelled with pride and think that our good works count for something. We do good works not to be praised for doing those things, but we do them out of love for the Triune Lord God Who rescued us from sin and death and saved us. We do good works because we want to please the Lord God, not because they merit for us salvation. The Holy Ghost gives us power to resist the lies and temptations of our enemies, and teaches us to cling to the Lord + Jesus alone.

The Holy Ghost teaches us to always carry our weapons with us wherever we go; to not neglect our weapons, and keep them sharp and in working order. This is why we gather here in this place often, for it is by the Word of God and the Blessed Sacraments that we are able to resist the temptations of the evil one. Daily do we live in our Holy Baptism. When we remember our Holy Baptism—when we

remember that the Name of our Lord was placed upon us, the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost—we are remembering that our Old Adam has been drowned and killed through those holy waters. Through the confession of our sins, we daily drown the Old Adam anew. Through repentance—through contrition, that is, sorrow over our sins, and faith in the works of the Christ—we are renewed each day with the knowledge of our salvation in our Lord + Jesus Christ alone.

There may be days when we find ourselves looking up into Heaven, just like the Apostles did, waiting expectantly for the return of our Lord + Jesus, and His triumphant Last Day, when He will call us all into our eternal home in Heaven. But until that day, we continue to live in this body of sin, and in this world filled with sin, and our enemies diligently seek to overthrow us by corrupting our faith—by leading us into either despair, or self-righteousness. To combat this, we continue to gather in this place to be reminded by the Holy Ghost, that our salvation is assured in Heaven on account of the works and merits of the Christ. Here in this place, we gather with our fellow believers and comfort one another with the promise of the forgiveness of sins that our Lord + Jesus won for us.

My dear friends, the good news is that the Last Day is closer now than when we first began. The day of our Lord is coming quickly. Let us not lose heart when this vile world rails against us, but let us open our ears to hear the wonderful things our Lord God has done for us to prepare a home for us in Heaven. He has suffered for us. He has fulfilled the Law for us. And He sits on the right hand of the heavenly Father interceding for us poor sinners, so that when our last day comes, we may join Him there in Heaven for all eternity. May the Lord + Jesus grant this to us all quickly. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Lord Jesus Christ, Thou Son of the Most High, Who no longer dwellest on Earth in lowliness and poverty, but art seated at the right hand of the Father, a Mighty Lord over all things in Heaven and on Earth, filling and ruling all: we beseech Thee, send us Thy Holy Spirit, give us faithful ministers, endow them with Thy gifts and keep them in Thy Word, hinder Satan and all tyrants, and mightily protect Thy Kingdom on Earth, until all enemies are laid at Thy feet, and we overcome sin, death, and all things by Thee, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*