

## Ascension Sunday ~ Sunday, June 1, 2025

### “Risen Indeed! ~ The Ascension”

#### Ephesians 4:1-16 and Luke 24:44-53

From the earliest of times, Jesus’ saving work has been divided into three great events—the crucifixion: Christ died, the resurrection: God raised Him from the dead, and the ascension: He ascended to heaven. In the crucifixion, Jesus defeated the power of \_\_\_\_\_. In His resurrection, He defeated the power of \_\_\_\_\_. And in His ascension, He defeated the power of \_\_\_\_\_, taking His rightful place, and \_\_\_\_\_ for ever at God’s right hand.

“When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’” (Acts 1:9-11)

The resurrection of Jesus signalled the end of a chapter in Jesus’ earthly life. It was essential then, that there should be a clear-cut \_\_\_\_\_ to bring that chapter to a close.

There had to be a dividing day—when the Jesus of earth became the Christ of heaven. And so, the ascension was the only fitting \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus’ earthly ministry.

This is most likely a reference to the Shekinah—the cloud of God’s glory that hovered over Mount Sinai after the Exodus. The Shekinah exceeds in radiance any other cloud—it’s the visible \_\_\_\_\_ of God’s radiant glory.

Jesus’ departure was anything, but ordinary—it was a moment of remarkable \_\_\_\_\_.

Ascend =

Jesus’ ascension refers to His going to a special \_\_\_\_\_ for a special \_\_\_\_\_.

“So then, the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.” (Mark 16:19)

Jesus didn’t just disappear into the clouds, but rather returned to heaven and took His \_\_\_\_\_ place next to God. The resurrection and ascension can’t

be separated—they form two parts of one continuous movement resulting in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus.

The resurrection and the ascension are milestones in the process whereby Jesus—crucified, risen and ascended—entered finally into the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

Jesus had triumphed over Satan, the world, sin and death. His resurrection and ascension proved He was the \_\_\_\_\_—the Lord of Glory. The ascension was Jesus’ \_\_\_\_\_ day, as He took His rightful place in heaven at God’s right side, as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. From this position of ascended authority, Jesus rules, administers His kingdom, presides as the \_\_\_\_\_ of heaven and earth, intercedes on our behalf, and serves as the head of His body, the church.

“God put his power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.” (Ephesians 1:20-23)

“When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people. When it says, ‘he ascended,’ what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descends is the same as the one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.” (Ephesians 4:8-11)

### 3 BENEFITS OF THE ASCENSION

**Benefit #1.** \_\_\_\_\_.

“We are no longer to be children tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming...” (Ephesians 4:14)

### 4 DIFFERENT METAPHORS OR IMAGES

- \_\_\_\_\_  
When Paul says we’re no longer to be children, he’s referring to \_\_\_\_\_, not age. He’s telling us that we shouldn’t be immature in our \_\_\_\_\_.

- \_\_\_\_\_  
Someone who isn’t rooted and established in truth can be damaged by the wind and waves of \_\_\_\_\_.

- \_\_\_\_\_

This is a picture of someone who's not rooted and established in the truth. They're just blown around from here to there by every new \_\_\_\_\_, fancy, and fad.

- \_\_\_\_\_

Paul doesn't want the Ephesians (and us) to be easily \_\_\_\_\_ or led astray by false teachers who pervert the truth of the gospel for their one agenda or selfish ends.

That's why being established in the truth is so important—we need to know what we \_\_\_\_\_ and why so we won't be easily led astray.

### Do you glory in God's Word?

**Benefit #2.** \_\_\_\_\_.

"But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ..." (Ephesians 4:15)

Despite what some might think, truth and love are not opponents, but rather \_\_\_\_\_ in the great work of Christian maturity. They need to be held in \_\_\_\_\_.

Some churches are heavy on the truth and light on love; they use the Bible as a \_\_\_\_\_ to beat people into submission, pointing out their sin and everything that's wrong in their lives without showing any care or concern for them

Other churches are heavy on love and light on the truth, they're \_\_\_\_\_ and accepting of all behaviours, regardless of what the \_\_\_\_\_ has to say.

Both of these approaches are not only wrong, but also \_\_\_\_\_. Despite what some people might think, the NT shows us that truth and love are not opponents, but rather \_\_\_\_\_ in the great work of Christian maturity. They go together, and they need to be held in \_\_\_\_\_.

According to Paul, the function of truth is the \_\_\_\_\_ of real Christian love, and the goal of truth is the \_\_\_\_\_ of real Christian love.

The word 'love,' in the context of the gospel doesn't just mean "being \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of everyone and everything," which is what love is often reduced to in our culture.

"Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all

things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends..." (1 Cor. 13:4-8)

According to Paul, love is a \_\_\_\_\_ and not just a noun—it's a deliberate \_\_\_\_\_ to do loving things—sometimes things that are \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ love is loving someone enough to do something that's not very pleasant for you or for them. This requires both truth and something more than just niceness. It requires a genuine \_\_\_\_\_ for the well-being of another person, even though it might cost you. This kind of strong, heroic, self-sacrificial love is what the ascension is meant to produce in us.

### How do you show heroic love in your life?

**Benefit #3.** \_\_\_\_\_.

"...from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." (Ephesians 4:16)

Paul clearly emphasises that the \_\_\_\_\_ we experience as a result of the ascension isn't just for ourselves, but for the entire \_\_\_\_\_.

Our ultimate concern shouldn't simply be for our own growth, edification, or sanctification but, for the well-being of the whole \_\_\_\_\_ of faith. Jesus didn't rise, ascend, and pour out gifts on the Church so that we could simply bless ourselves, but rather \_\_\_\_\_.

"Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." (1 Peter 4:10)

The proper working of each individual part shows the \_\_\_\_\_ of each believer's gift. The growth and maturity of the church isn't the result of clever methods, but of every member of the Body fulfilling \_\_\_\_\_ his or her own spiritual gifts in close contact with other believers, and for the benefit of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Where God's people have close relationships of \_\_\_\_\_, God works.

God's not looking for creativity, ingenuity, or cleverness, but for willing and loving \_\_\_\_\_. Like a human body, the church functions properly only as each member in union with every other member responds to the direction of the \_\_\_\_\_ to do exactly what it was designed to do.

### How are you using the gifts you've been given to bless and build up the body?