

**Ascension Sunday ~ Sunday May 17, 2026**  
**“Joy Takes Root ~ Trusting Even When Jesus Is Out of Sight”**  
**Psalm 47 // Ephesians 1:15-23 // Mark 16:14-20**

If you think about it, the Ascension of Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ everything. Because now, the question becomes: What happens to joy when Jesus is no longer \_\_\_\_\_?

Jesus is no longer standing in front of the disciples, no longer walking beside them, no longer visible. And yet, Luke tells us something remarkable in his recording of the Ascension: the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great \_\_\_\_\_. Not confusion, fear, or grief, but joy.

The good news of the Ascension is: Joy doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ in this place, it learns to grow right here, right now—deepening, steadying, and taking \_\_\_\_\_ in a different way.

**3 Truths about Trusting Jesus Even When We Can't See Him**

**Truth #1:** \_\_\_\_\_.

The Ascension forces us to face something we'd much rather \_\_\_\_\_: Jesus is no longer visible.

“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' absence isn't abandonment, it's a necessary \_\_\_\_\_ in how He's \_\_\_\_\_ with His people.

We need to understand that this wasn't a sudden or last minute decision. It wasn't \_\_\_\_\_. It wasn't a change of plans. Jesus had been \_\_\_\_\_ them for this all along.

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” (John 14:18)

“It is to your advantage that I go away.” (John 16:7)

As long as He remained physically present, His presence would be \_\_\_\_\_ to one place at one time. However, through His ascension and the sending of the \_\_\_\_\_, His presence would now be with all His people, in all places, at all times.

Jesus isn't stepping back because He's less \_\_\_\_\_. He's stepping into a new mode of presence that requires \_\_\_\_\_ trust on our part.

The same Jesus who ascended is the one who \_\_\_\_\_ in Matthew 28:20, “I

am with you always, to the end of the age.”

If Jesus says He's with us, then His presence isn't measured by our ability to \_\_\_\_\_ it. It's anchored in His \_\_\_\_\_—which is rooted in His faithfulness.

Part of growing in faith is learning to \_\_\_\_\_ what's true, even when it's not immediately felt. It means continuing to pray, even when it feels quiet. Continuing to open Scripture, even when it feels dry. Continuing to walk faithfully, even when \_\_\_\_\_ isn't constant.

Because faith that depends entirely on visible or emotional \_\_\_\_\_ will always remain \_\_\_\_\_. However, faith that learns to trust Christ in His hiddenness \_\_\_\_\_.

Joy begins to take root when we stop interpreting God's hiddenness as \_\_\_\_\_, and start trusting it as \_\_\_\_\_. An invitation to deeper faith, to steadier trust, and to know Him, not just by sight, but by \_\_\_\_\_ in who He is.

**Truth #2:** \_\_\_\_\_.

The Apostle Paul prays in verse 18 that the church would have “the eyes of their hearts \_\_\_\_\_.”

“God put this 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.” (Ephesians 1:20-21)

This isn't poetic exaggeration; it's a statement of \_\_\_\_\_.

“God has gone up with a shout...the Lord with the sound of a trumpet...God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne.” (Psalm 47:5,8)

Jesus isn't absent—He's \_\_\_\_\_, he's taken His rightful place at the right hand of God. And that \_\_\_\_\_ everything.

The disciples watch Jesus go up, and for a moment, it may feel like \_\_\_\_\_. However, what they'll begin to understand is that He's not gone away to become less involved, but to take up His rightful place of \_\_\_\_\_. He isn't retreating; He's \_\_\_\_\_.

“He put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church.” (Ephesians 1:22)

Paul is telling here us that Jesus' authority isn't distant or \_\_\_\_\_; it's

\_\_\_\_\_, purposeful, and is exercised on behalf of His people. This isn't a king who has taken the throne and forgotten His subjects; this is a Saviour who now rules with \_\_\_\_\_—for the sake of His people, for the good of His church, and for the unfolding of His purposes in the world.

“...always lives to make intercession.” (Hebrews 7:25)

In Romans 8:34, Paul says that Christ is at the right hand of God \_\_\_\_\_ for us.

“...seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.” (Colossians 3:1)

What's Jesus doing right now? He's reigning. He's interceding. He's \_\_\_\_\_ all things according to the will of the Father. And He's doing it for \_\_\_\_\_.

It's one thing to affirm this truth \_\_\_\_\_ in church on Sunday morning; it another thing to \_\_\_\_\_ it on a Tuesday afternoon when life feels like it's coming apart.

If we're honest, we could admit that we often live as though the throne is \_\_\_\_\_. Of course, we don't say it out loud, but we act like everything depends on us holding things together, on our \_\_\_\_\_ improving, or on outcomes that we can \_\_\_\_\_.

The Ascension confronts this instinct head-on and says: The throne isn't empty. Christ is seated. And He's not sitting there wringing His hands—He's \_\_\_\_\_.

This doesn't mean life will be easy, nor does it mean we'll \_\_\_\_\_ everything. It means that nothing in our lives is outside His \_\_\_\_\_; nothing in this world is beyond His \_\_\_\_\_; and nothing we're facing is unknown to Him.

This is where joy begins to take root in a deeper way—not in the absence of \_\_\_\_\_, but in the \_\_\_\_\_ of a reigning King.

It means that when anxiety begins to rise, we don't just try to \_\_\_\_\_ it—we \_\_\_\_\_ it. We lift our eyes. We remind ourselves: Christ is seated. Christ is reigning. Christ is for me.

It means that when circumstances feel chaotic, we resist the urge to \_\_\_\_\_, and instead, choose to trust that there's a greater order at work than we can currently see. It means that our prayers shift from desperation to \_\_\_\_\_.

And slowly, quietly, almost imperceptibly, joy begins to take root—not because everything makes sense or feels secure, but because He's \_\_\_\_\_.

**Truth #3:** \_\_\_\_\_.

“Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.” (Mark 16:15)

Jesus gives them the \_\_\_\_\_ and then He \_\_\_\_\_ His visible presence. This means the disciples are now being asked to do something they've never done before: \_\_\_\_\_ Him without seeing Him. \_\_\_\_\_ Him without watching Him. \_\_\_\_\_ Him without physical reassurance.

“And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.” (Mark 16:20)

The Lord worked with them. He's unseen, but not \_\_\_\_\_. Hidden, but not absent. Ascended, but still \_\_\_\_\_. This is the great paradox of the Christian life: We don't see Him and yet, He's actively at \_\_\_\_\_ in us and through us.

“I am with you always.” (Matthew 28:20)

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses.” (Acts 1:8)

This mission that we're called to isn't carried out in our own \_\_\_\_\_. It's carried out in dependence on a present, active, reigning Christ—even though we don't see Him—through the power of the Holy Spirit working in us.

We're not \_\_\_\_\_ blindly. We're responding to a direction that's already been given by a Lord who is still \_\_\_\_\_, even when unseen.

It's very easy to drift into a kind of \_\_\_\_\_ Christianity where we're constantly waiting for something more—more clarity, more certainty, more feeling, more \_\_\_\_\_.

Ascension faith moves forward in \_\_\_\_\_—even when visibility is limited.

We do all this not because we feel constant \_\_\_\_\_, but because we trust the One who has \_\_\_\_\_ us. And here's the surprising thing: Joy doesn't come after everything is clear; it often comes as we step out in \_\_\_\_\_.

When we take that step of obedience—however small, however uncertain—we aren't stepping out alone. The ascended Jesus is already \_\_\_\_\_ of us, already at work, already moving. And, over time, as we walk in that kind of trust, something begins to happen: Our faith steadies, our \_\_\_\_\_ deepens, and our joy begins to take root—not because we can see everything, but because we're walking with the One who sees all things; the One who is still \_\_\_\_\_, still reigning, and still at work. And, that's where \_\_\_\_\_ lives now.