

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

**10.19.2025 | He Ascended to Heaven and is Seated at the Right Hand of God the Father Almighty |
Proverbs 3:13-35 | Ben Day, Senior Pastor**

If you have a Bible, I want to invite you to turn with me to Acts chapter one. I believe in your bulletin there might be a typo that tells you to turn to Acts 11. You need to back up about 10 chapters. From that we're going to be in Acts chapter one, verses one through 11. We've been walking through the Apostles' Creed and for a few weeks now we've been in this section that really focuses on the person and work of Last week we considered Jesus' descent to hell or to the dead. I appreciate Pastor Clark for covering what is probably the hardest doctrine to cover in this Apostles' Creed, one that is probably often foreign to us. But I believe it was very helpful for us to understand in Jesus' death his descent to the dead.

But to be fair, I also gave Pastor Clark the resurrection of Jesus that he got to proclaim Christ not only died and descended to the place of the dead, to take victoriously those who had been there into the presence of God and to proclaim his victory over death, but he rose from the dead. Now he reigns over all, and this is where we pick up today as we consider this line that he ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. For us to consider, not just last week, Jesus' death and descent down to the place of the dead, but now Jesus' ascent to heaven, to his throne, to be seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

My prayer this morning is that we look at Luke's account of Jesus' ascent in Acts chapter one. We'll have to go out from there to a couple of other texts to help us to really understand what all this means. I want us to see how important Jesus' ascent is, how important Jesus' seated at the right hand of the Father, his current reign, is for us as Christians, for our faith, but also for our daily lives. So I want to read to you Luke's account of Jesus' ascent, which we find in Acts chapter one, verses one through eleven.

Luke writes that in the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom. And while staying with them, he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which he said, "You heard from me, for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And he said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus who has taken up from you into heaven will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

This summer, our family had the cool opportunity to go to Europe to visit my wife's brother and his family who live in Germany. And we went during Memorial Day week for us, and as we traveled over there, we found that all of Germany had off that week. They were off from school, and they were off from work. As you can imagine, they weren't off because they were observing our Memorial Day. They don't celebrate that over there. But they were off that week because of a holiday known as Christi Himmelfahrt. A German accent's not that great. Christi Himmelfahrt, which means Christ's journey to heaven. They were off that week because they were observing Ascension Day.

It's kind of interesting for me to think about Germany having a national holiday for Ascension Day. It kind of stuck out to me for a couple of. One, as post-Christian as Europe is, and probably even Germany is in many ways, it's moved to be a very secular society, there's still a lot of Christian roots in that culture. So much so that they would have a holiday devoted nationally to Jesus' ascension. What's also kind of interesting to me is that while Germany celebrated this day, we in America don't celebrate Ascension Day. And not only do we not celebrate Ascension Day nationally as a holiday, but for the most part, in our church culture in America, we often don't even recognize Ascension Day.

I've mentioned over the last few weeks as we've looked at some of these different doctrines that we're focusing on in Jesus' work, how a few weeks ago it might have felt like Christmas in September because we were talking about Jesus' birth. Or it might have felt like a Good Friday service or an Easter Sunday service as we talked about Jesus' resurrection. But it's hard to make reference to an Ascension Day service because we don't have one in our church, in our church culture, often in America. And I think this is telling. I think for many of us, including myself, so often when we think about the good news of Jesus Christ, we don't think about His ascension to heaven. Sure, we talk about Jesus' birth, His perfect life, His sacrificial death, His resurrection from the dead. We'll even go all the way to next week and talk about Jesus' return. But so often when we talk about the good news of what Jesus has done, we don't talk about His ascension to heaven, His current reign as King.

Should we? Is it important to our faith? The early church seemed to think so. The teaching of the apostles seemed to say so. That the apostles' creed would include the line that Jesus ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. I was reading through a sermon by Tim Keller in preparation for this sermon. And he said that the ascension of Jesus Christ is like the detonator that takes all the other work of Jesus and makes it available to the whole world. He says without the ascension, the birth, the death, the resurrection of Jesus is actually meaningless in the world. He said when Jesus ascended to heaven, it actually was like a detonator being set off. It began to move the work of Jesus and all of its healing power out into the universe and into your lives. And yet we so often don't think about the ascension of Jesus Christ. Is it so central to our faith? What does it mean? Why would he say it's like the detonator that makes the work of Jesus, the person of Jesus, available to all?

That's what I want us to consider this morning as we look into Luke's account of the ascension. There's three realities of the ascended Jesus that I want us to consider this morning that we're going to spend most of our time on. We'll close by briefly looking at two promises that really preview some coming doctrines that we'll study in the coming weeks. Before we get to those three realities, there's something you need to understand about the ascended Jesus that will help you as you think through these three realities of the ascended Jesus.

The first thing is that you need to know that when Jesus ascended to heaven, something didn't change. When Jesus ascended to heaven, what didn't change is the nature of who Jesus Christ is. Meaning at the incarnation, the Son of God, who had always been God, took on humanity without losing his deity. Right? In Jesus' incarnation, he becomes fully God and fully man. Well, guess what? At the ascension, as Jesus goes back to heaven, he does not lose either his deity nor his humanity. Jesus has been incarnated as fully God, fully man, and he remains that way for all of eternity. So when Jesus goes back to heaven in this ascension, he does not somehow shed his humanity. Just go back to being, you know, just fully God. He is, has always been fully God, but he will be for all of eternity also now fully man.

It's important for you to understand that when we think about this, the reality of this ascended Jesus. Something didn't change. The nature of Jesus as the God-man didn't change. But something did change. What changed was where Jesus is. That seems simple. But Jesus is no longer on earth. He is in heaven. And yes, he was lifted up, but we don't mean like he's in the heavens or like he's out there in outer space or in the We mean that he is back in the presence of God. We mean that he is no longer here in our physical earth, our first physical realm. And that means he is no longer bound as he was when he was here on earth. See, when Jesus was born to this world, he took the form of a man, fully God and fully man. He was confined to the physical limitations of this earth. In one body, living upon this earth, he was bound to a particular place and time. But when Jesus ascends back to heaven, he is no longer limited by the physical constructs of our physical reality. So now we have a Savior who has risen from the dead, who is fully God and fully man, back in heaven with God the Father Almighty, no longer limited by the physical constraints of earth. And that means some really important things for us.

Three realities of this ascended Jesus. The first is that he is powerfully reigning. Jesus, fully God and fully man, ascends back to the Father, back to heaven. It is to signify that he is powerfully reigning. What do we mean when we say Jesus ascended to. The word ascend means that he went up, right? Are we just talking about physically what happened to him as he went up into the sky? Yes, that is what happened. Luke writes in verse 9, "And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight." So Jesus went up and away from them. But when we talk about Jesus ascending to heaven, again we have to get in our minds that heaven is not some place just in the sky or some place above us. Jesus could have gone to heaven by simply vanishing out of their midst. He could have

simply kind of walked out into the distance like the end of some movie, you know, where he's just kind of walking out into the horizon where you don't see him anymore.

But Jesus ascended into the sky for a reason. Because it was symbolic that he was ascending to his throne. Jesus was lifted up to show that he now is reigning over all. Do you remember what he told the disciples in Matthew chapter 28? We often talk about this text as the Great Commission. We'll read part of it later. But he told his disciples that now all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to You say, "Well, hasn't the Son of God always had authority over creation?" Why is he saying all authority has now been given to me? Because for the first time, this incarnated God, this incarnated Jesus is reigning over all of creation, heaven and earth. It's a different type of reign and authority that he even had as God the Son for all of eternity. Because now he has taken on humanity. He has lived the perfect life. He has died the death that we should have died. He has conquered sin and death, and now he reigns as the new head over all of humanity. He is our representative. He is our king. He has ascended to above every other place in creation.

Think about what a contrast this is from last week. For Jesus to descend to the lowest parts. We use the term hell, not to say that Jesus was punished or tortured or anything like that, but to show that he descended down to Sheol, to the place of the dead, what we would consider to be the lowest part, and now he has ascended to powerfully reign, to have all authority in heaven and He is talking to the disciples about this. I mean Jesus' main topic throughout his ministry is the kingdom, because he is the king. As he is teaching about the kingdom, the disciples say, "So does this mean you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" See, they still have a very narrow view of the kingdom. Jesus is here to let them know his kingdom is not bound by any physical limitations. His kingdom knows no boundaries. His term as king has no limits. He is reigning over all. He is in control over all. The Bible says that he is over all things and he is putting all of his enemies under his feet. Paul writes about Jesus reigning as king in 1 Corinthians 15. He speaks about the resurrected Jesus who is He says this in verses 25 and 26. Paul is saying Jesus ascended to his throne to begin his reign over all things. Our Savior is in control of all things. He is bringing every kingdom, every enemy, every power under his Till one day he comes to remove the last enemy, which is death.

You know, in Jesus' resurrection, he took the sting out of death by conquering sin and death, but he has not removed death completely. Death is still part of our lives. It is still part of this world. I just want to let you know, many of you probably know our brother Larry Peterson, who has been a member here for years and Grew up in this church, still a faithful member here. Late last night, Larry's wife Vicki passed away. Death is still very much a part of our lives, our existence. We were visiting with Larry yesterday, just being able to reflect upon how Jesus gives us hope beyond death. And it's not just because of his victory over death and his resurrection, as important as that is, but it also is a victory over all the things that are wrong with this world. All the things that happen in our world, he is powerfully reigning over because he is the ascended king.

Do you draw hope from that in your times of grief, in your times of loss? Do you draw hope from the fact that Jesus is reigning over all? When things seem so chaotic in our world, do you draw comfort from the fact that there is one true king, that his name is Jesus, that he is sovereign over all, that the one who laid down his life for you, who descended to the place of the dead, to rescue those who were there? The one who humbled himself so lowly is now exalted above all and is in control over all. Do you draw comfort and hope from that? We should. We live in the midst of a broken world, when we see the different enemies of God ruling and reigning in the world, we should draw comfort and hope that we have a king who is powerfully reigning. We should also have hope that he is still very near to us.

This is the second reality of the ascended Jesus. He is not only powerfully reigning, but he is personally present. Jesus ascended back to heaven to actually be personally present in your life. This is something we'll kind of have to go outside of just our text here in Acts chapter one to really understand, but we do see some of it here, I think. Jesus is speaking with his disciples. He's telling them that they're going to receive the Holy Spirit, which we'll talk about in just a little bit. But he tells them that then they are to go and to be his witnesses. He is sending them out. Verse eight, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be witnesses of me, my witnesses in Jerusalem, and all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." In other words, Jesus is saying, "You, as my followers, are going to go out to all the earth to proclaim this good news about me, to witness about me."

And that reminds us of another time Jesus said that. Matthew's account of Jesus' ascension, or his last words to the disciples, I just mentioned, we call this the Great Commission. Listen to how Jesus words it here in Matthew chapter 28. He says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations," same thing Luke is writing in Acts one, "to the end of the earth, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you always to the end of the age." How can Jesus, who's about to ascend out of their presence, promise them, "I am with you always"?

Well, there's a sense that he is talking about, I think, the Holy Spirit that he's going to send. But I think he's also saying something You know, both the Holy Spirit and Jesus, God the Son, are fully God, but they are different persons. Jesus doesn't often refer to himself as the Spirit. The Spirit is something different, a different person than Jesus, though they are both one God. Jesus often said, "I will go away, and then I will send the Spirit." Not, "I will come to you," but the Spirit will come to you. So when Jesus says, "I am with you always," I don't just think he means in the form of the Holy Spirit who indwells you. I think he is saying, "I am personally present in your life always." And the reason is, is because Jesus has ascended out of this world. He is no longer bound by space and time.

See, when Jesus walked on this earth, he was personally present if you were in his proximity. If you could be near to Jesus, if you could hold on to Jesus, if you could fall at his feet, you were in his But when Jesus leaves earth to go back to the Father, he is no longer bound by time and space. He is able to be personally present in your life. Jesus once before had sent out his disciples. We read that he sends out the 72 to go and do ministry in the towns and villages. And as he sends them out, he doesn't say, "I am with you as you go," because he wasn't. He was a person standing there, sending them out, and then they came back to him. But now the promise is, "As you go, I am with you always."

The reality is, because Jesus has ascended back to heaven, he can actually be much closer to you, much more present in your life than he would have ever been if he was still standing on this earth. He can actually be with you in each and every moment. As you're at home, as you're at work, as you're carrying out daily activities, as you're going on a particular trip, as you are doing whatever ministry, whatever work he has called you, he is there with you. You think about that. The king, who is powerfully reigning, is personally present in your life. What comfort that should give us. What joy that should bring us.

I mean, have you ever been good friends with someone who is in some position of authority? Have you ever got to hang out with someone who is really important and just get to experience that? I'll give you just a small example that I was thinking of. One time somebody told me to meet them at a cafe, and I met them there, and I found that they were the owner of the cafe. So when we sat down, people were just bringing us pastries and coffee and stuff like that. We never had to pay for any of it, because this person owned it all, and now I was sitting with that person. Enjoying this together. You have the king, who is reigning overall, personally present with you, each and every moment of your life. This is a reality, because Jesus ascended back to heaven. He can be near and present in your life. Do you live like he's present with you? Do you walk with him and talk with him and enjoy the fellowship of his company? Do you cry out to him? Do you lean on him?

Jesus can be personally present in your life because he has ascended. But he's not only present in your life, but he is also in the presence of God the Father Almighty. This is so that he can be our high priest. This is the third reality of the ascended Jesus. He is a king who is powerfully reigning overall. He is a near friend who is personally He is a priestly mediator, serving as the great high priest of all of his people. He's our priestly mediator, a unique role that only he can play, that he plays now that he has ascended back to heaven. You notice that in the creed it speaks of Jesus sitting at the right hand of the Father. You have to wonder, what does that mean?

Does that mean like God the Father is in like the first chair and he's like the real king and then Jesus is like the second king or kind of the side king? Why is he sitting at his right hand? You know sometimes when you read the words of the incarnated Jesus you could think that he is somehow below the Father. I mean even this passage in Acts chapter 1 he talks about the Father fixing things by his. You see Jesus in the garden the night that he is betraying saying, "Father not my will but your will be done as if he is somehow subservient to the Father." There's a reality that as Jesus is on earth incarnated that he has taken this lowly form but in reality of who Jesus is, God the Son, he is not below the Father at

We believe in one God who exists eternally in three persons who are each fully God. God the Son is not any less God than God the Father. He is not on some second throne. He is not number two in the ranking. He is reigning as king.

So why do we say he's seated at the right hand of the Father? Because remember who he is. He is the God-Man. He is fully God and fully man and he has the unique ability to be the great high priest for us as humans. He has the unique ability to be the mediator between God and man. Because he took on humanity but also retained his deity and remains in that state forevermore, we believe that he is seated at the right hand of the Father interceding for us, mediating for us. In fact, the book of Hebrews even talks about this work that he is doing in interceding for us. In Hebrews chapter 7, the author of Hebrews says, "He holds his priesthood permanently because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them."

Why did Jesus ascend back to heaven? So that he could intercede for you. Did you know that? That each and every moment Jesus is interceding on your behalf. Sometimes it's nice to know that people are praying for you. People are interceding for you. They're lifting you up. They're supporting you. That's an important work for us to do as the people of God, but we should also draw great comfort from knowing the fact that Jesus continually lives to intercede. Jesus ascended back to heaven to be at the right hand of the Father to save. The author of Hebrews says, "To save even to the uttermost." Maybe sometimes you feel like you're the uttermost. Maybe sometimes you feel like you're as far away from God as you could be. Maybe sometimes you feel that your sin has separated you so far from God that you could never return. The Bible says, "On your own, you can't." You could not ascend to the right hand of the Father, but Jesus has on your behalf to save you even from the uttermost.

Do you see how central the ascension of Jesus Christ is to our faith? To believe that he is a sovereign reigning king who is personally present in the lives of his people and who always lives to make intercession for us. This is who Jesus currently is in his ascended state, reigning as king, living evermore to save those who draw near to God through him. Is that you? Have you trusted in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, as the one who died in your place, who rose from the dead, and who now is reigning as king? Have you trusted in him? Have you drawn near to God through him? You can do so today. He is able to save to the uttermost. He's able to intercede even on your behalf. He can save you from your sins. This is why he has ascended back to the Father. He might reign, that he might intercede.

He also gave, at least in his passage, two promises that I want to highlight. This is going to be very brief because they're really just a preview of the next couple of weeks of our series. But I want you to see that they are linked to the ascension. The ascension of Jesus is central to our faith because it reveals so much about who Jesus currently is. But it also is connected to these important promises. The first promise, that he has sent the Spirit. Two promises of the ascended Jesus. One, that he has sent the Spirit. I word it like this to make it clear. This is a promise that has already been fulfilled. Jesus had told his disciples earlier in his ministry, "It's better for you that I go away because then I will send my Spirit to you." He speaks about this, even leading right up to his ascension. We saw in verse 5, he said, "I told you before, John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many. Ten days later, Pentecost happened. The Holy Spirit fell, was poured out on the people of God. They were baptized with the Spirit. They were filled with the Spirit. They were empowered with the Spirit. To go and be Jesus' witnesses.

This is what he said in verse 8, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria until the end of the. Read the book of Acts. This is the outline for the whole book. Look at church history. This is the outline for the whole of church history. The Holy Spirit has been sent to indwell and empower God's people, to be witnesses of Jesus all around the world. This is what we continue to do today. You have the same Spirit that the Apostles received at Pentecost. If you're a believer in Jesus, you have the Holy Spirit of God indwelling within you and empowering you and equipping you for the service that God has called you to. Whatever workplace you're in, whatever your family situation looks like, whatever ministry God gives you, he has empowered you and equipped you with his Holy. We'll talk about this more in a couple of weeks, but I want you to see that the sending of the Spirit is linked to Jesus' ascension.

How important is Jesus' sending back to the Father? It's essential to our faith. It's how Jesus sends the Spirit to be with his people. It's also how he will return in glory. The second promise of the ascendant of Jesus is that he will return in glory. Jesus' ascension is a preview of his second return, of his return, of his second coming. The disciples see Jesus go off

in this cloud. They're amazed. They're just standing, looking into heaven. An angel comes. It speaks to them in verse 11. It says, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus who has taken up from you into heaven, he will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." Why did Jesus ascend in the way that he did to give us a preview of how he's going to return? Jesus could have just vanished out of their midst. He could have just walked away from them, but he didn't. He was raised up into the sky for a reason. Because as humble and as lowly and as gentle as Jesus is, he is also the authority above all.

Next week we'll see that he will come again to judge the living and the dead. He will not come quietly or unnoticed like he did in his first. He was a baby born in a manger in Bethlehem. Every eye will see. Every ear will hear. Every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord when he returns. His ascension to heaven was a preview, the authority that he will return with as he comes again in So let's respond like the disciples did. As we see this Jesus ascended to heaven, we understand who he is. He's powerfully reigning as king. He is personally present in your life. He is living to intercede for you as your priestly mediator. He has given you his spirit. He will return one day. Go and be his witnesses. Go and live out this mission that he has called us to. Go and proclaim that there is a good king who and worship him.

Do not worship the other powers and influences in this world. Do not worship money and the promises that the kingdoms of this world so often offer us. Worship King Jesus. That's what the disciples did. In Luke's gospel account he also talks briefly about the ascension before going into it in Acts chapter one. He says this at the end of his gospel account, Luke 24, Jesus blessed them. He parted from them and was carried up into heaven and they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple blessing God. Our king has ascended to his throne. Let's worship the king.