

WE CONFESS OUR NEED

All: Lord Jesus, we confess that we are sinners who are unable to heal ourselves. It is by your grace alone that we know peace and by which we are restored. But our hearts are so often troubled and filled with doubts and fears. We are not like the disciples, who leave with joy and praise. We love to gripe and complain. We accuse you of leaving us or forgetting us and our needs. Forgive us for weak faith. Forgive us for focusing so completely on ourselves. Teach us to trust you. Forgive us and renew us by your grace. Amen.

Scripture Readings

Acts 1:1-11

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Ephesians 1:15-23

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Luke 24:44-53

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon Outline
"An Easter People" • "A Joyful Goodbye?"
Luke 24:44-53

Introduction: Saying goodbye, Hollywood style...

The Ascension of our Lord • A Joyful Goodbye?

"Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God." v.52-53

1. The right teacher.

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. v.44-45

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2. The right task.

"This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things." v.46-48

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3. The right tools.

"I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." v.49

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4. "I'll be back."

"This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1:11

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Answers to Sermon Outline:

The author's account.

At home and around the world.

Gifts we need are on the way.

The best promise of all.

Leader: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

People: And the people took the blessing and held it in their hearts.

Leader: Christ is Risen!

People: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Leader: Go in peace, serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!