

Scripture:

Psalm 47

Ephesians 1:15-23

Acts 1:3-11

“Under His feet.”

Today is the Sunday in the church year where we remember and celebrate the Ascension ----- Christ ascending --- going up ----- to heaven --- returning to God’s side.

And the reality for all Christians born after the Ascension is that we all live in the in between time.

The in between time.

The time in between Christ having come for the first time and the time when Christ will come again at the end of time as we know it.

Christ was born --- the Incarnation / Christmas.

He ministered ---- and was crucified ---- Good Friday.

He rose from the dead --- leaving the tomb empty ---- Easter.

And then ----today’s focus ---- He returned back to His Father’s side ---- the Ascension.

And of course He will one day return again in all His glory --- as promised -- --- at the second coming.

But for right now we’re in the in between time --- the days between His first coming and His second --- and final coming.

This in between time ---- is the era we all live in.

And the Ascension signals the beginning of this time.

Another way of describing this in between time ---- is to say we live in the age of the Spirit.

The age when Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with us until He returns.

And so today in the book of Acts ---- we have the very first days of this in between --- age of the spirit time.

And as Christians ---- this time is marked with great anticipation and excitement ---- looking forward to the day when Jesus will return and we will be with Him forever.

In between times are times of great excitement ----- as we await something we have been looking forward to with great anticipation.

Our family recently lived through an in between time ----- this past Christmas part of Jeremiah and Ellianna's Christmas gift was a trip to DisneyWorld in Florida ----- and so from December 25th until May the 5th ---- - we lived in the in between time --- the time we know something was going to happen --- going to DisneyWorld --- and that actually happening --- getting on the plane to fly to Florida and visit Magic Kingdom --- Animal Kingdom ---- Epcot ----- Hollywood Studios ---- and so on ----- all that is Disneyworld.

That was a kind of in between time.

And of course we still lived our lives in that in between time ---- we didn't just sit around or stand around doing nothing ---- we continued living --- going to school ---- work ---- and so on ----- life went on in this in between time.

And God wants our lives to go on in this in between time as well --- we aren't just to stand around and wait or gaze upwards --- or do nothing --- we are to live --- and witness --- and testify --- and share Jesus with others until He comes again.

And this can be challenging at times.

Our scripture today from the Book of Acts recounts the day Jesus Ascended ----- was whisked away to heaven.

Picking it up at verse 10 ---- “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 there looking up 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.””

“Why do you stand there looking up into the sky?”

In other words don't just stand around idly looking upward doing nothing.

There are things to be done --- there are things God wants you to do and be -
----- before Jesus returns.

And if you read on in the book of Acts just past our passage today ---- you'll see that the disciples gathered together and they prayed.

“They all joined together constantly in prayer...” ----- verse 14 says.

We are in the in between time --- and there are things we must do in and with this time.

Just as we experienced a far less binding in between time ---- from December to May --- having the tickets to DisneyWorld ----- anticipating with excitement ----- looking forward to ----- we still had things to do.

We have the ticket to heaven ----- Jesus died for us ----- but He hasn't come back yet ---- and so we have things to do.

We have things to do as we anticipate His return with excitement.

As verse 10 from Acts reminds us we can't just stand around looking up into the sky waiting for Jesus ---- “Why do you stand there looking up into the sky?” ----- we have things to do --- for --- with --- and in Him.

In verse 22 from our reading from Ephesians Paul writes --- that God placed all things under His feet.

“And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church...”

And so the Ascension reminds us that we are in the in between time ----- and the Ascension reminds us that as we live in this time --- we aren't just to stand around idly or frozen in awe --- instead we are to live and witness and testify and do and be as Christ so leads us --- as we stand under His feet --- under his leadership.

And during this time --- this in between time ---- we are blessed with the guidance of the Holy Spirit --- which we'll hear more about next week at Pentecost.

For today --- we are reminded that God has given us everything we need to carry on in His name.

God has equipped us --- provided for us --- given us everything we need to witness to the saving love of Jesus Christ.

And to be clear --- to be witnesses to Christ simply means that we share with others.

To be witnesses simply means we tell other about Jesus --- the same way we share with others about our trip to say Disneyworld --- and other places and events that have mean to so much to us.

We don't need special training ---- or degrees ----- we don't have to read books ----- in order to share our favourite experiences with others ---- Disneyworld and so on ----- so we don't need special training or degrees to share Jesus with others.

The Ascension reminds us that with Jesus leaving ---- we are now under His feet --- and we are to be witnessing for Him.

He is above us --- watching over us --- protecting us --- guiding us --- leading us --- preparing a place for us in heaven ---- interceding on our behalf.

And so with excitement and great anticipation for what is to come ---- we are to share His great and saving love with everyone ---- ensuring that they too get in on the great journey that is a life of faith in God in Jesus Christ.

20th Century Pastor and Theologian --- John Stott summarizes the message of Ascension saying ----- “You have seen Jesus go. You will see him come. But between the going and the coming the Spirit comes and we are to go into the world for Christ.”

“You have seen Jesus go. You will see him come. But between the going and the coming the Spirit comes and we are to go into the world for Christ.”

We know he is with God ---- we know He will come ---- we have the Holy Spirit until He does ---- and so now we go and share Him with others --- spreading His love.

We are not called to idly focus on the wonder and beauty of heaven ---- without also witnessing --- and sharing Christ with others.

And it all begins with prayer.

Life in the between time --- life in Christ in general --- begins --- and ends -- ----- in prayer.

It all hinges on prayer.

Prayer is the very first thing the disciples do after Jesus ascends ---- verse 14 in Acts just past our passage for today ---- “They all joined together constantly in prayer ...”

The in between age ---- this age of the Spirit ---- is all about building the kingdom of God and witnessing to way the truth and the life that is Jesus Christ.

Just as we say every week in the Lord’s Prayer --- “thy kingdom come --- thy will be done --- on earth as it is in heaven.”

The age of the Spirit ---- our age --- the church in our lifetime ---- is all about actively pursuing ---- testifying ---- witnessing and working towards the kingdom of God.

And of course we do this ---- under His --- Christ's feet --- under His guidance and leadership and rule.

And that is a great comfort.

It's a great comfort to know that we are all under His feet --- under His care.

Jesus is forever above us --- watching over us ---- protecting us ---- guiding us --- leading us --- sustaining us.

And so -----

What does it mean to you to think of yourself as under the feet of Christ?

What does it mean to you to think of Jesus --- just above you ----- carefully and tenderly watching over you?

How does it make you feel to know that the whole world ----- is under the feet of Christ --- under His rule and dominion?

Have you ever stopped to think of our time as having the unique claim to being the only time in human history known as the in between time --- the time in between when Christ first came and when He will one day come again ---- how --- if at all ----- does this change how you look at the world --- and all that happens in the world?

Have you ever thought about your --- our lifetimes being described as the age of the Spirit --- the time in the history of the world where God blessed His people with the Holy Spirit in a special way?

At one time ----- God's people had only the Scriptures --- then they had Jesus --- now we have the Scriptures ---- Jesus and Holy Spirit in a different kind of way ---- and of course one day it will be Jesus walking the earth once again.

There is always more going on when it comes to God and His word ----- and His living Word Jesus Christ --- and His Holy Spirit ----- than any one mind or heart can ever grasp.

Today --- now ----- we have the opportunity to reflect --- as we do every week ---- but today we actually have some time set aside in our service to reflect --- and ponder and wonder ---- these and other questions.

For the next 5 to 10 minutes or so ----- we are all going to wonder and ponder and reflect a little bit --- on the Ascension ---- on Christ --- on the Holy Spirit --- on whatever it is that God leads us to reflect upon.

And there are a number of possibilities.

As you may have noticed there are 2 tables set up here at the front of the church today --- they have markers and pens for you to write and colour and reflect and ponder through that medium.

Shortly Brian will begin playing some reflective music --- you can listen to the music and reflect.

A number of images relating to the Ascension will be on the PowerPoint screen ----- you might find yourself looking at them as a means of reflection.

And of course you can sit quietly ---- reflecting from where you are in the quietness of your heart and thoughts.

Maybe you might even find yourself talking with someone nearby in the pews.

There is space in the bulletin to draw --- write --- pray ---- reflect.

Whatever it is you do ---- whatever it is that God leads you to do ----- take the next few minutes to reflect and ponder the reality of Jesus Christ and His great and saving love for you.

I'll draw us together in prayer in a few minutes ---- be at peace in this time with your Lord.

Reflect and ponder and wonder in this in between time.

Sit still or move around as God so leads you.