

Luke 24:50-53 Worship Jesus as Our King! Ascension May 5, 2016

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Our ascended Lord and Savior guarantees God's grace and peace to you as you trust in Him! Amen.

Luke 24:50-53 assures us that Jesus is our Savior who can help us at all times.

These are Your words heavenly Father to help us see Jesus, the ascended King of all. Your Word is truth.

Dear Members of Christ's Kingdom,

Tonight, we will be describing Jesus as our ascended Lord. As we live in this world we are affected by sin, sadness, and unexpected changes that weigh us down. We should be comforted that Jesus is in heaven ruling over all powers and authorities for us. Yet, much of the world seems unaffected by His rule. There is constant opposition to our service for Christ from people outside the church and from within because we all sinners! We may ask, "What good is Jesus rule for us?" In our verses we'll see why we can

Worship Jesus as our King!

First, Jesus is king according to God's plan! The Jews had planned for months to murder Jesus to stop His opposition to their sinful ways. Once He was dead, they thought they were in full control. Jesus' disciples appeared to be ready to disband. They certainly were living in fear after the crucifixion and even after Jesus had risen. The unbelieving Jews thought at this point that everything was going to back to their "normal" without Jesus. They could continue with life without another thought about Him. Many people think that they can continue with their sinful lives because they feel in control of their lives.

It was the opposite for the disciples. After Jesus' death, they would have said that it was the worst day of their lives! But after Jesus appeared to them, they realized that despite the evil plans God fulfilled His plan to make His death the best thing for their lives! Luke wrote, "*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.'*" (Luke 24:45-46) Jesus taught them that His death was no accident; nor was He overpowered by the Jews' evil plot. It was God's plan for Jesus to die. Isaiah wrote, "*It was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.*" (53:10)

Jesus' death won the victory. By His shed blood for all sins, He established the only way for people to enter God's kingdom. This is the reason that Jesus called Himself: "*the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*" (John 14:6) Just as Jesus fulfilled His Father's plan through His death and His rising, He is now fulfilling what was said about Him as the ascended King. In Psalm 110 David described His rule: "*The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'*" (v. 1) Despite so much opposition against Him, Jesus completed God's plan to save us.

Just as Jesus gave understanding to His disciples through the Scripture, He is doing the same for us. We believe in Him as our Savior through His promises. He said, "*Whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved.*" (Mark 16:16) In the Lord's Supper He promised, "*This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*" (Matthew 26:28) The saving promises in God's Word assure us where we stand with God! Heaven is ours as we trust in Jesus' completed work for us.

Second, Jesus gives us direction in life. Jesus directed His disciples: "*Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in [My] 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.*" (Luke 24:47-49) What amazing orders He gave to these common men! Yet, Jesus gave them the Holy Spirit to enable them to speak about what He taught and did.

Jesus still gives us His Word to direct us. We are following His commands to make disciples of all nations baptizing and teaching people all that Jesus taught in His Word. What good news we have to tell! Yet like the disciples, we may feel overwhelmed for the task! There are so many people who need to know of Jesus as their Savior. How can we reach them all? And people by nature don't want to hear about their need for a Savior. Unbelievers think that they have their own remedy for sin or that they haven't done anything bad enough for God to be angry with them. Our task, to speak to others, is not easy. It is even difficult for us to remain strong in our faith as the devil hurls his temptations at us like spears and our own sins make our faith weak like fire melting wax. But we are not left alone to contend for the faith.

Third, Jesus is ruling in heaven for our good. He led the disciples one last time to the Mount of Olives giving them final instructions and encouragement. It states, *"While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven."* (v.51) What does it mean for us and for all people that Jesus ascended? It does not mean that He is far away or removed from us. He promised, *"Where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them."* (Matthew 18:20) Jesus sent out His disciples and said, *"I am with you always, to the end of the age."* (Matthew 28:20) Paul wrote that Jesus is at God's side *"interceding for us."* (Romans 8:34) If He intercedes for us, it means He knows what is happening in our lives.

Not only did Jesus win the victory over the power of death, sin, and the devil, from heaven He continually fights for us to see us safely through spiritual attacks against us. Earlier, David had written that Christ would sit at God's right hand until all the enemies that seek to harm us are defeated. So, Jesus is at ruling with power and authority to bless and to keep us as His people. He said of believers, *"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand."* (John 10:28) So, He is ruling over kingdoms and authorities in heaven and on earth to ensure that we remain secure in Him. God sees us even now connected with Christ by faith. Paul wrote, *"God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus."* (Ephesians 2:6) God is that confident that we will be with Him in heaven that it is as if He already sees us there with Jesus our ascended Savior and Lord! Jesus also promised, *"In My Father's house are many rooms.... I am going to prepare a place for you."* (John 14:2)

You would think that the disciples, seeing Jesus ascend into heaven, would have been sad. But, they knew that Jesus would keep His promise to be with them, even if they didn't see His visible presence. After Jesus was gone from their sight, our verses state, *"they worshiped Him."* (v.52) They were certain that Jesus heard their praise and was seeing their worship. Then it states, they went back to Jerusalem *"with great joy"* and *"were continually in the temple praising God."* (v.53) What a difference for the disciples! A few weeks earlier, they were behind locked doors afraid of all and had no plan for their future. From the ascension on, they joyfully met in the temple courtyards telling all who would listen that Jesus is Lord and Christ.

Jesus is with us. Even as God directed events in history to accomplish His purpose in Jesus' life despite the evil in the world, Jesus is ruling over history to accomplish eternal good for us. He has given us a purpose in life as His people to honor Him by our words and actions and service, so people we know are blessed. From heaven, Jesus knows our needs better than we know them here! We can trust in Him in all situations. With faith in Him we too can worship our ascended Lord for He is our King now and forever! Amen.