

Text: Luke 24:24-53

Theme: You will be my witnesses

Outline:

1. Jesus has ascended to the right hand of the Father, Rules and reigns over all things for our good.
2. Means, He's no longer here, seems as though the world is winning, sin predominates
3. Still ruling and reigning, empowers us to be His hands and feet to confess His saving grace to those around us.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Especially to you Kate, Kaylee and Jamie on your confirmation.

My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation today is the Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke chapter twenty-four, verses twenty-four through fifty-three.

Boys and Girls how are you doing this morning? I pray that you are doing well. Today we celebrate one of the most wonderful feast days of the church. We celebrate Ascension! That is a big word, what does it mean? It means that Jesus went up and up into heaven. Jesus goes up to the right hand of the Father to prepare a place for us to live with Him forever and ever. Can we see Jesus now? No, yet even though we cannot see Jesus, He is still with us, how can we see Jesus today? How does He continue to come to His people? Ponder these question as you hear the rest of the sermon. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

1.

Today we celebrate the feast of the Ascension. We celebrate the day when, as we confess in the creeds, Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father. This is the same Jesus who left the splendor and glory of heaven, took on our human flesh, suffered, bled, and died upon the cross. Now Jesus ascends into heaven, His nail scarred hands raised in eternal blessing in order to give to us every blessing under heaven. He has taken up His rightful place once again enthroned around angels, archangels, and all the host of heaven. He rules over the entirety of creation for our benefit.

2.

Our Lord's ascension is a wonderful blessing for us but it does mean that our Lord is no longer physically walking the earth. We cannot reach out and touch Him. We cannot say Hey, Jesus just landed in Billings, let's go see Him. He cannot make a star-studded appearance at a fancy gala in Hollywood. Because of this, it is easy for us to look around the world and conclude that He is not really ruling over all things. We look around the world and we see exactly how hard it is to be a Christian, to not only confess the faith but to hold fast to the faith, to live the faith in our daily lives.

The world does not want to hear about Christ and what He has done for their salvation. The world wants to earn its salvation by trusting in itself or others rather than in Christ. It threatens to do everything within its power to make the lives of those who follow Christ miserable. The world hates so it persecutes

and belittles those who follow Christ. It seeks to plunge them into poverty and hunger as a way to mock and gloat over the blessings God has given. Sometimes even going so far as to take those very lives. Satan is prowling around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. He is constantly tempting us away from the faith saying things like it is easier to just give in and live for earthly blessings rather than heavenly riches. It is easier to not be persecuted, to not give your very life rather than go through all of this hardship. You know what, He is right, it would be easier. Yet, that is not what we are called to do. We are not called to give up but to stand, having put on the full armor of God. With the help of the Holy Spirit living in us, we fight back against Satan and withstand his assaults, knowing that the One who died for our salvation, the One who rose from the dead for our Justification, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is in full and complete control over everything in heaven, on earth, and below the earth.

### 3.

Knowing that our Lord is ascending for our benefit, knowing that He rules and reigns over all things as our Crucified and Risen Lord and Savior, it gives us strength to live out our lives in the world. The fact that while our Lord is not visibly present He is still present in and through His Word, with His Spirit, for His people. Christ continues to support, empower, encourage, and save His church today, generation to generation

While yes, we cannot physically see Christ today, we can see those who follow Christ. As our Lord declares, "You are witnesses of these things." Kate, Kaylee, Jamie, in just a few short moments, you will join in that band of witnesses. You will confess that with the help of God, you will hold fast to the faith that you have been taught. That you will suffer all, including death itself, rather than fall away from it. This is a joyous time as you are joining in with all the other believers of Christ, past, present, and future. That your very lives will show the faith that Christ has given and sustained in you, all the way from the very moment you were baptized, until today, and until the day you die. That you, all of us, are the hands and feet of Christ in the world today.

Our faith shows itself in our works as we show our Love towards God by obeying His commands in love and service to our neighbor. Whether that be as a student, teacher, employee, boss, mother father, whatever vocation the Lord has given you. You are used by our Lord to show others that Jesus has indeed ascended into heaven for their good, the same One who suffered and died for the forgiveness of their sins will return to judge the living and the dead.

That is what we do, that is what you will do, until the day when Christ does indeed come again upon the clouds of glory, with angels, archangels, and all the host of heaven and we will live with Him forever and ever because Alleluia Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed Alleluia!

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.