

# His Power: Our Heart and Our Mind

*Ascension Day (C)*

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*"Wait in the city until you receive power from on high. He blessed them, was parted from them and carried into heaven" Luke 24:49,51*

The Ascension of Jesus Christ is critical to the life -- belief -- and work of the Christian community! Belief is essential to the Christian faith. Why, then, are we so often troubled even as we build our belief in the knowledge of Christ's resurrection and ascension? The answer is often found in how much we allow the Holy Spirit to control our lives and set us free for discipleship.

The Holy Spirit has empowered us to be his witnesses. We have waited and if we have listened, we are ready to share him with others in the same love in which he has shared himself with us. In waiting we have a moment "been with God."

Paul brings home clearly to the church at Ephesus the impact of Christ's ascension to be with his father. Paul talks about God placing all things at Christ's feet and that he is to be the head of the church... and that church is to be his body.

The church is to have the power of the Holy Spirit and it will transcend itself heart and mind to be the driving force that gives us wisdom and revelation. It is this wisdom and revelation that the church today grows as a witness to that power which manifested through discipleship. It is a commitment that reached out to challenge the generations of people who have grown indifferent to his love and compassion for children of all ages, races, and gender.

We need to recapture that same faith in our Lord and the love of the church, which the people at Ephesus had for Christ. Could Paul say of us, "I have not stopped giving thanks for you."?

The Ascension attempts to put into words what is beyond belief. It is an experience that is real (the disciples saw with their worn eyes). Yet, to those same disciples -- and to us in the 21st century -- it is as much an act of faith, as it is a real experience. Had it not been both of these things for the disciples, in time Jesus' life among them and the early church would have collapsed. That would have wrecked the Christian community of their time and the community we experience today would have never been. The Ascension is so important to our faith because it is a reality, which has a three-fold fact: an ending...a beginning and a confirmation of the assurance of God's love through Christ for his people. It was ending for the days when the faith of the disciples depended on the flesh and blood of Jesus' presence among them.

It was a beginning because the disciples did not leave the scene of Jesus' ascension in frustration. They left knowing full well Jesus' divine nature and His place at His Father's table. They left with great joy.

They had a Master from whom nothing could separate them, In Romans, Paul says: "I am sure that nothing -- in life or death -- can separate us from the love of God in

Christ Jesus our Lord."

Finally, the Ascension gave the disciples the certainty that they had a friend, both in heaven and on earth, who loved them at a level, which transcended all pain, all sin, all loneliness. This is a miraculous love that heals relationships and binds together those of us in community who see things differently but focus on Christ and his power to love the unlovable.

The church is the complement of God. We are the church of the 21st century. How well do we complement our God? There is a story that many of us have heard before - in one form or another - which tells how Jesus sent back to heaven after his time on earth. Even going to heaven, He bore the marks of the cross. As the angels talked with him, Gabriel, always inquisitive, said to Jesus: "Master, you must have suffered terribly for those people down there." "I did," Jesus said. "And", said Gabriel, "do they all know about how you loved them and what you did for them?" "Oh no," said Jesus, "not yet." Just a few in Palestine know." "What have you done," said Gabriel, "to let everyone know about it?" Jesus said, "I have asked Peter, James, and John and a few others to make it their business to tell others about me, and the others to tell others and others and others and others, until the farthest people on the widest circle know what I have done." Gabriel was less than convinced that this would work. He said to Jesus: "What if Peter, James, and John and the others get tired and forget and fail? What would happen if way down the years - say 2022 - and people just don't tell others about you? Are there no other plans? ...No back-up strategy?" Jesus replied: "I haven't made other plans. I'm counting on them!"

When Jesus ascended into heaven to be with his Father, he left the church with us. We are His body. He is counting on us! There is no alternate plan. Either as believers we share the word of the Risen Lord, the Ascended Christ, or we fail his call to be disciples to the world. At Baptism we made a covenant with God.

Today, we need to ask ourselves are we still in covenant with him. If the answer is yes - then we are evangelists in actions! If the answer is no - then we need to pray for the renewal of our faith.

**CHRIST IS THE ANSWER. AMEN! AMEN!**

**HE IS COUNTING ON US! YOU & ME!**

**AMEN**

Based on a sermon for Ascension Day by Harry Denman from Sermons that work

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/sermon/his-power-our-heart-and-our-mind-ascension-day-1998/>

Christ is Risen

**He is Risen Indeed, Alleluia!**

**AMEN**