

Jesu Juva

“Enthroned in Power For You”

Text: Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians 1:15-23

Alleluia! Christ is *ascended!* [He is *ascended* indeed Alleluia!] Alleluia!

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Jesus ascends into heaven and is enthroned at the right hand of God. The place that was His from eternity as the very Son of God, He now returns to as God made man, as the crucified and risen one, the work of salvation accomplished. He doesn't leave His body behind as if He was done with it. No, Jesus ascends as God and man, so that just as He came to take man's place on the cross, so now He gives to man His place on the throne. And with this, the story we have heard again all this church year comes to its climax.

The One promised from of old, after the very first sin, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who came in the fullness of time, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who was laid in a manger, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One circumcised on the eighth day, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who fled to Egypt, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who obeyed His parents, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One baptized by John, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who laid His hands on lepers, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who healed the sick, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who gave sight to the blind, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who gave hearing to the deaf, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who forgave sinners, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who welcomed and ate with the outcast, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who embraced the lonely, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who cast out demons, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who changed water into wine, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who fed the five thousand, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who walked on water, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who provided miraculous catches of fish, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who prayed for you, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who was betrayed, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who was arrested and unjustly tried, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who was spit upon, hit, and whipped, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who was denied by his own, *is now enthroned on high.*
The One who carried His cross, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One who was stripped naked and fastened to the cross, *is now enthroned on high.*
The One mocked and reviled on the cross, *is now enthroned on high.*
The One forsaken on the cross, *is now enthroned on high.*
The One who forgave from the cross, *is now enthroned on high.*
The One who bowed His head and died, *is now enthroned on high.*
The One laid in a borrowed tomb, *is now enthroned on high.*

The One the grave could not hold, *is now enthroned on high.*
The One who entered through locked doors to give His disciples peace, *is now enthroned on high.*
The One who walked the road to Emmaus, *is now enthroned on high.*
The One who fulfilled all the Scriptures, *is now enthroned on high.*
The One who preached good news to the poor, *is now enthroned on high.*

And this is good news for us poor miserable sinners, for it means that the work of salvation accomplished by Jesus in His death and resurrection He is now ordering and ruling and governing from the right hand of God. From that place of honor and glory and power. He does not ascend because He is done; He ascends to continue His work for you. And for all. That He might bring all people through death to resurrection and to the Father.

That is why Luke wrote that in his first book he ***dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up.*** Did you notice that? All that Jesus did in His life and death and resurrection was only the beginning. Now, Luke says, his second book, the book of Acts, will be a description of the work of Jesus *ongoing, after* His ascension. Only now He will work through His Church; now through the power of the Holy Spirit He will send to His Church. *But He will not stop.* Jesus will not stop preaching and calling and healing and forgiving. He will just no longer do this while walking on the earth. Now He will do it from the right hand of God, *enthroned on high.*

The disciples understood this. There was a great many things they did not understand, but this they understood. That's why Luke tells us that after Jesus ascended ***they returned to Jerusalem with great joy!*** They were not sad their friend had left - they were filled with joy that He was now enthroned and would be with them and working for them *in a new way.* A better way. For Jesus would now not only be present in Jerusalem or Palestine, Galilee or Samaria, but *everyplace* His Word is preached and His forgiveness given. Every font, every pulpit, every altar, every bedside, every nursing home, every hospital, every dining room or kitchen table, every school and workplace -everyplace His Word is preached and His forgiveness given, there is the power of God, there is Jesus and His Spirit and the right hand of God touching and healing and giving life. Just as truly as

when He walked this earth and did all those things, so He is doing them now, *for you*, until He comes again in glory.

That's why Paul prayed for the Ephesians that they too would know this; that they would know *the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe*. We need that prayer, too, because it is so easy to forget, so easy to doubt, so easy to disbelieve. Because it so often seems that it is the *opponents* of Jesus and His truth that have the greatness of power. Those who seek overthrow the Church, those who are seeking to undermine the truth, those who say that good is evil and evil is good, those who deny God and His Word . . . they are the ones who seem to be winning! *Just look at our world!* It doesn't seem that the Church has much power at all. Just words and things called sacraments and sinners who so often fail in our lives, in our confession, and in our prayers.

If that sounds like you and how you sometimes think and feel, then the ascension of Jesus is especially for you! Repent and rejoice with the disciples that Jesus *is enthroned for you*. It's true! He is enthroned for you who fail, you who fall short, you who are weak and powerless, to be your strength and hope and confidence and forgiveness. For at the right hand of God, there is nothing greater than He or stronger than He. Though we may not always be able to see it, *He is enthroned* and using this power for you.

Yes, the One who *is enthroned on high* is forgiving your sins.

The One who *is enthroned on high* is protecting you from the evil one.

The One who *is enthroned on high* is disciplining you to strengthen and keep you.

The One who *is enthroned on high* is sending His angels to watch over you.

The One who *is enthroned on high* is ruling all things for His Church.

The One who *is enthroned on high* is feeding you and washing you.

The One who *is enthroned on high* is building His Church, even through persecution and hardship.

The One who *is enthroned on high* is answering your prayers.

The One who *is enthroned on high* is comforting the troubled and worried and doubtful.

The One who *is enthroned on high* is loving you with a love greater than you could ever imagine.

And the love that brought Him here to die, will bring Him again to raise you to life, and to take you to be with Him and with the Father forever. And so He ascends, that you will too. He ascends, that the sins and troubles that here weigh you down in heart and mind be lifted by His forgiveness and grace. He ascends that we also may ascend even now - in heart and mind, confident of His promises and work, until that day when we too will ascend with Him *bodily*, to that life that has no end.

So today really is a day of great celebration. A day to rejoice and be glad. For *God has ascended with shouts of joy, the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets* (Psalm 47). Yes, **Christ is ascended!** [He is *ascended* indeed! Alleluia!]

In the Name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.