

May 24, 2020

“Ascension Sunday”

Prayer of Illumination: Prepare our hearts, O Lord, to accept your word. Silence in us any voice but your own; that, hearing, we may also obey your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (The Worship Book, 1970, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.))

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:1-11

Devotion:

Ascension Sunday is like being in a rocket on a spacecraft launch pad patiently listening for the final countdown to blast off into outer space. Astronauts hear Command Control saying: “T minus 12, T minus 11, T minus 10, T minus 9, T minus 8, T minus 7, T minus 6, T minus 5 “Ignite final rockets,” T minus 4, T minus 3 “All systems are a go,” T minus 2 “All engines are ignited,” T minus 1, Zero “Blast off.”

The Apostles (Acts 1:1-11) probably felt a similar lift off experience watching Jesus, the Son of God, ascend to Heaven and sit at the right hand of God the Father. They were excited, thrilled, ecstatic, and could not stop thinking about the new Jesus. In the midst of this new awareness Jesus tells them to do three things as they wait for the arrival of the Holy Spirit. First, Jesus tells them to patiently wait for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Second, Jesus tells his disciples not to speculate about the future. Third, Jesus tells the Apostles to prepare and plan to be his witnesses for the Kingdom of God in the world.

Ascension Sunday’s meaning is to wait, to know, and to plan. Ascension Sunday becomes the launch pad for the birth and growth of the Church.

Of course, the arrival of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost means to blast off into the Jesus Christ movement, the Church movement. Make sure your seatbelt is securely fastened and prepare to endure the G-forces of the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercessory and Supplication: (Ask people what they wish to pray for today, briefly inquire about it, and pray for them. Ask them to join in your prayer.)

The Lord's Prayer: (Say the prayer in unison.) Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Blessing: "The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord be kind and gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)