



Sermon for Ascension Day  
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May 30, 2019

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Today we celebrate Jesus' ascension into heaven today, 40 days after his resurrection, and our celebration is about far more than Jesus simply "catching the bus home after work."

What I mean is this: the ascension is not simply about how the Son of God returned to his home in heaven after dying for the sins of the world. The ascension is about how human nature has been given a permanent place in the Divine nature of the Trinity.

The Son of God took on human nature (John 1:14) and he has never taken it off (Luke 24:39, Rev. 1:12-16). In his resurrection his human nature has been transformed into a new, glorified, and immortal nature (1 Cor. 15:42-44). Because of this permanent union between Divinity and humanity in the crucified and resurrected body of Jesus, St. Paul can say that we died when he died (2 Cor. 5:14) and that we were resurrected when he was resurrected (Eph. 2:5).

If we did not die when Jesus died and did not rise when he rose then who cares about his death and resurrection? If humanity is not included in Jesus' dying and rising then the story of Jesus is only a story about something weird that happened to some guy a long time ago. But the gospel is really good news: it is the good news that Jesus has shared in our death and therefore we share in his resurrection life.

Since we died and rose with Christ, it also follows that we have ascended with him. So, St. Paul says that "God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6) and that, having been raised with Christ, our lives are now "hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). Therein lies the hope of the ascension. Since humanity has died, risen, and ascended in Christ we know that "when Christ appears then we will also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:4).

To put it in even simpler terms: when Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven he took us all with him, just as he had taken us all with him in his death and resurrection. This means that we do not have

to wonder about whether we will go to heaven – in a spiritual since we are already there, in Christ! Yet we don't fully see it yet. We await with great hope and longing for the day of his appearing when our true identity will be revealed and we will experience our own resurrection. The hope of the ascension is the knowledge that Christ has taken us into his life with the Father and the Holy Spirit and he will never let us go.

Amen.