

When Will We Meet Him Again?

18th Sun. after Pent. – 10/12/25 – Mt. Calvary Luth.

Text: Luke 24:44-53 Pastor Keith Besel (LWML Sun.)

vv. 46-47, “[Jesus] said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations...’.”

Introduction

✧ As we go through life, we all have those wonderful chance meetings – that are unexpected and often unwanted at first; meetings with people that impact us greatly. Perhaps it is that moment where you first meet your spouse; or you have interaction with a person that gives you some profound, new insight; or maybe it is a meeting with that one person who, by their witness, leads you to change the unhealthy or harmful direction that you are currently going in life.

➔ Then when that initial meeting is over, you are often left wondering when you will meet that person again.

I. The Context of the Moment

✧ In our Gospel reading today we find ourselves at the moment of the Ascension of our Lord, Jesus Christ. There’s so much more going on here though than just Jesus ascending physically to heaven.

➔ More than 40 days earlier Jesus was hanging, nailed to a cross; suffering an agonizing death. He had cried out in anguish, “My God, My God why have you forsaken Me?”

➔ With his face toward the ground, bearing the unspeakable weight of the entire world’s sins, not to mention the whippings and beatings earlier in the day, Jesus now endures the full weight and fury of His Father’s wrath against your sin; against my sin and everyone else’s sin but His own.

➔ And in the midst of that agony, Jesus breathlessly proclaims, “It is finished.” Then as John 19:30 tells us, “He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.” It’s then that Jesus’ side is pierced by a spear, and when the blood and water pour separately out of Him, our Lord and Savior’s death is confirmed. Yes, God died there at that moment, in the person of Jesus Christ.

✧ Then, as the Gospel accounts tell us, Jesus’ body was taken down from the cross, hurriedly wrapped with linen and spices and laid lifeless in a tomb that was not even His own. Struggling to understand all of this Jesus’ followers certainly had to wonder when, if ever, would they meet with Him again.

✧ But then, all praise be to God, three days later, on that first Easter Sunday, Jesus steps out from the tomb alive! In His sacrifice and payment for sin Jesus has now conquered death. No grave could contain Him. He rose as Victor – not only for Himself but for you; for me and for everyone who believes in Him alone for salvation and eternal life.

✧ And none of this happened in secret; away from eye witnesses. No, for the next 40 days, up to the time of our text here, Jesus meets with His followers. Yes, to the 11 disciples and those closest to Him at first.

➔ But Jesus ... He is alive! His conquering of the grave makes a bold statement of reality and truth, not only for His close friends, but for you and me and all who believe in Him still today. It is the indisputable truth that now you will not die! You will live with Jesus eternally as His gift!

II. Jesus leaves us with an assignment

- ✘ Then comes this day here in our text; what the Christian Church has historically called Ascension Day. Certainly the 40 days after Jesus' resurrection, leading up to this event, had to be wonderful and inspiring; many new Christians even meeting the risen Lord for the first time.
 - ➔ And now, those that witnessed Jesus' last earthly words and saw Him ascend, had to be wondering, "Where and when will Jesus meet us next? What joy awaits us then and there?"
- ✘ You see, throughout Jesus' ministry on earth; with every meeting, He brought teaching and blessings to those around Him.
 - ➔ But this day, when Jesus ascends into the heavens, verse 51 says it is not about coming back together. Instead it says, "He parted from them and was carried up into heaven." Yet the temptation had to be for these disciples who had seen Jesus leave them through death, only to come again three days later, to wonder, "When and where will we meet Him next?" "He did it once, surely He will do it again."
 - ➔ You and I know from the witness of God's holy Word, that this time was different than His other departures. We know that Jesus didn't appear bodily to them again here on earth.
- ✘ But, His promise in John 14:18, still stood. Jesus said, "I will not leave you as orphans." A few verses later Jesus explained, "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (Jn. 14:26). This is what Jesus is referring to in verse 49 today, "And behold, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you. ...stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."
 - ➔ In fact it is with the help of this Holy Spirit that Jesus continues to this day to be with you; with me and with all believers in His Church. And while we wait and wonder "when and where we will see Him next" He has given us all an assignment to carry out; an assignment that He fully intends to fill and occupy our time, talent, and treasure which He has poured out upon us in this earthly life.
- ✘ Yes, Jesus first gave this assignment to the disciples there with Him that day. But the very nature of the assignment has ramifications, you see, that now make it your and my assignment here today.
 - ➔ After all, you, my dear Christians ... you are believers only because those first Christians were faithful in performing Jesus' assignment, aren't you?
- ✘ Jesus told them, "repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in [My] name to all nations" (v. 48). And they did that, both verbally and in writing.
 - ➔ Now that proclamation has come to you – as you read God's Word, and hear it proclaimed to you from your pastors, parents, Sunday School teachers and others. You've heard about and been convicted of your own sin and you've received the Spirit's gift in Your baptism by which you are able now to repent of that sin. Likewise you have received Christ's forgiveness earned at the cross in baptism and have been gifted through the Holy Spirit with a saving faith in Jesus alone.

III. Where and When will We Meet Jesus Again?

- ✘ Yet, we've all still had times when we have wondered, "Where are You Jesus for me today?" Those doubts; those questions so easily show up in times when we face significant challenges; times when those urges to sin are at their worst; times when we wonder how God could love someone as sinful as us.
 - ➔ It's then, my dear friends, that we need to hear the proclamation of repentance and forgiveness again, and again. It's then that the witness in Scripture is so important for the eyes

and ears of our souls to hear even more, “Jesus has paid for my sin on the cross. Jesus has conquered death for me in His resurrection and I am covered by His blood today and forever!

✘ Yes, it's then that I need the Spirit to turn me away from thoughts of my works to see that I only have peace with God in the work of Jesus and Jesus alone!

✘ Friends, the proclamation of this truth; of repentance and forgiveness in the name of Jesus alone, is the gift that Jesus left for all people in His Church that day and every day until His return; it's the assignment that we in His Church still have; that it is our joy and privilege and responsibility to proclaim anywhere and everywhere that we are able to do so.

➔ After all it's through this message of Christ that you and I have been saved, isn't it? And it is only through this message that those who are not saved have any hope to be saved as well!

✘ Still the question remains, “When and where will we meet Jesus again?” Well, Luke leaves us a clue to that earnest desire in verses 52 and 53. “And they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God.”

➔ No, Jesus did not return bodily as He had in the past. But He did still come to them in the flesh; in the breaking of bread and the drinking of His blood in the sacrament of Holy Communion. He joined with them through the waters of Baptism and He came to them in His Holy Word.

➔ And my dear believer, the same is true for you and me today. You see, you don't have to wonder where Jesus is. You don't have to search for Him. Why? because Jesus comes to you exactly where and when He promised that He would be before He left. He comes to you in His Holy Supper. He meets you once and for all time in the waters of Holy Baptism, just as He promised. Romans 6:3-4, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” today and forever!

✘ So rest assured, your life in faith is tied to Christ. He gives you, not only the words of eternal life, but eternal life itself in His Word and Sacrament gifts.

➔ It's there that He gives you His life; He gives You forgiveness; He gives you His peace. And He gives you freedom; freedom to live for Him and freedom to express His message of repentance and forgiveness all around the world.

IV. Proclaiming to All Nations.

✘ Look, there are still so many people right here where we live and around the globe who do not meet with Jesus as He desires; who do not even know Jesus as their loving and gracious Savior.

➔ That's why dear Christians, it is so crucial that we be about this assignment that Jesus left for us at His ascension. But how? How can I go to all the “nations” of this wide world with the news of Jesus?

✘ Today we give thanks for the work of a very special group within our church, our *Lutheran Women in Mission* (also known as the LWML). Their work is to provide ways for us to partner together in this assignment from Jesus; to carry the Gospel to those people who need to meet this Jesus that is our Savior; the One who desires to be their Savior as well.

➔ They do so many things around the world; like making and gathering blankets for those in the midst of a tragedy; like putting meals into the mouths of those who are hungry and in need. On your behalf, they make certain that people in Africa have access to the Word of God and they

partner together to support pastors and missionaries who then are able physically to take that proclamation of repentance and forgiveness in Jesus to people around the world.

- ✘ By supporting and praying for the work of the LWML, God makes it possible, you see, for you and me to be a part of fulfilling that assignment from Jesus far more efficiently and effectively than if we each tried to do it only on our own.

Conclusion

- ✘ So, where is our Lord? He is right here, in the heart, hands, and voices of His people; reaching out and proclaiming Him and His gifts one on one and together through the efforts of groups like the LWML.

➔ Just as He promised before His Ascension, Jesus is anywhere and everywhere that His Word is preached and His Sacraments are rightly administered in His name. What a blessing to meet with Jesus; to live in repentance; and to have forgiveness in His name. What a blessing to proclaim that Good News far and wide as well. In Jesus, Amen.