

**Sermon 5-13-2018**  
**Ascension – Acts 1**  
**By**  
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**This past Thursday was 40 days since Jesus rose from the dead. According to the Scriptures, that means Thursday was Ascension Day. A couple of years ago, we actually talked about the Ascension twice in one year, once on this Sunday, and once during our series on the Apostles' Creed. But it's been a while, so let's talk about it again.**

***Acts 1:1-11***

**Here's a quick quiz: who wrote the book of Acts? Luke, that's right. Luke doesn't give us much detail about what happens during the 40 days after the resurrection, but here, he gives us the end of it.**

**\*\*\*read 1-8\*\*\***

**Jesus has two main interactions with his disciples in this section. They kind of have opposite directions to them. The first is while they are eating together, which I don't think is a coincidence. His word is basically "Stay." He is telling them that they need to be in Jerusalem to receive the gift that he has promised to them, which is, of course, the Holy Spirit. A promise of the Holy Spirit, while gathered around a table? Boy, that really sounds familiar. Could it be what we're**

doing here? And Jesus is talking about baptism, which happens right there! And this parallels with what Jesus then says when the disciples have their question. The Holy Spirit comes, and then is the time to "go". So we've got Jesus saying "stay" and then "go." But before you go, you have to get what, or who, you're taking with you. Once you have him, you'll be going to a lot of different places. But before he will come, I have to go.

**\*\*\*read 9\*\*\***

Now, *have* you ever released a helium balloon? That's kind of how I envision Jesus ascending. I remember when we once did a balloon release to kick off Sunday School. I watched the balloons float and float and float. Eventually, they were so small that you couldn't see them anymore. It would be very easy for a cloud to hide him from sight after that. This is one of many reasons that we say heaven is "up". Wherever Jesus was floating was a certain direction, but from the ground, it was up. But you could say he was going "away" too. His physical form ascends into the sky, and it is here on this planet no longer. But what does this mean for Jesus, and for us? He's not here anymore. Where did he go? Paul tells us.

*Ephesians 2:16-23*

As is usual for Paul, he gives thanks at the beginning of his letters for you, but it always turns in to thanks for Jesus.

**\*\*\*read\*\*\***

**So, when Jesus ascends into the heavens, he's going somewhere. He's got a chair ready for him. His Father has prepared his place at his *right* hand. The right hand is where you would sit if you were the most trusted advisor, and the one who would enact the orders of the king. It's where the phrase "right hand man" comes from. But this spot that Jesus goes to isn't just the spot for any right hand man. Where he goes is the right hand of God. He's returning from where he was sent to do God's work, through his death and resurrection. The main work is done, but there's more to come. In a way, Jesus is going to be telecommuting. That's where you're working from home, but you're "at work" through your computer. For Jesus, he's working at home, but his computer is something radically different: the church. We are the electrons flying around Jesus' central processing unit, making the calculations and doing the work that he has set us out to do. But I want us to notice something. Jesus' instructions that Luke records are really a basic of how computers work, how the church works, and how we work. Sometimes, you have to stay in a central place to get the information and "recharge" that you need, and then you go out from there to work. Electrons go to the CPU, we usually leave the home to go to work, and the disciples have to wait in Jerusalem to get their instructions before they can go off to work.**

**We come here to be refilled, to be reconnected to what God has given to us and what God has done for us, and then to be sent off, to go, to do the work that God has called us to. Of course, we're more than electrons in a computer. We're people. And more than that, Paul describes us as the very body of Christ, who fills everything in every way. When we go from this place, we carry Christ with us. Even though his physical body has ascended to the heavens, we are his body here. We are the ones who do his work now, as he sits at the right hand of the Father. But there's one more detail we need to remember. Head back to Acts.**

**\*\*\*read 10-11\*\*\***

**He's coming *back*. When you are a telecommuter, you sometimes need to leave the house to go put the finishing touches on a project. And for Jesus, it's the same thing. On the cross, he said, "It is finished," and it was finished there. But there's the final details, and he needs to take care of those in person. The final details include the resurrection of the dead, the destruction of all earthly authority, and throwing Satan into the lake of fire. Oh, and by the way, replacing your perishable flesh with the imperishable resurrection body. So, on this day, we remember that like the balloon, Jesus floats home to be with his Father. But he's still working here, through us, and one day, he's coming back again, to complete everything, and to give you your eternal life. AMEN.**