Welcome All (Online)

Women’s breakfast recap

National Day of Prayer, Thurs. 5/1 @ 6pm on Sanctuary

Prayer Requests

* Judy Dunn
* Sue
* Terrie
* Trevor
* Micheal/Amanda

Grace Kids – Special Song

Who Goes Up, Must Come Down!

Acts 1:6-11, Matthew 28:19-20

4/27/25

Last week we celebrated Easter! A time we reflect on the cross, the foundation of our faith and the power of the empty tomb, that can give us victory over anything we face in our lives.

Now Jesus spent 40 days after his resurrection with his disciples, teaching and preparing them for His departure.

Do you know who this person is? This person has the world record for the most valuable and expensive tooth. In 2002, the person’s tooth was valued at $35,700. Albert Einstein kept a picture of this person on the wall in his study alongside of other famous scientists that he looked up to. At the turn of the millennium, a poll was conducted that ranked this person as the 2nd best physicist behind Albert Einstein. Other polls had him in the number one spot. Who is this person? It is Sir Isaac Newton, the famous mathematician, astronomer, and physicist. One of his claims to fame though is his work and study on gravity that produced this famous saying: “What goes up, must come down.” (Toss something up in the air)

As we look at the Acts reading today, we see that this observation and saying is true, with the exception of “What for Who” This morning, I want us celebrate Jesus’ by talking about the One who went up, and how soon will come back down!

The book of Acts is the sequel to the Gospel of Luke. Luke continues the story of Jesus and the Church with the Ascension. Before Jesus ascended back into Heaven though, He appeared to His disciples and others over a period of 40 days speaking about the Kingdom of God. Jesus appeared to the women at the tomb. He appeared to two disciples on their way to Emmaus. He manifested Himself to the Apostles in a locked room, and then again a week later. Paul tells us that at one time that Jesus appeared to 500 believers at once. The disciples and other believers were witnesses of Christ’s ministry, death, resurrection, and these appearances. They had heard and seen the Risen Lord!

At the end of these 40 days, Jesus and His disciples were gathered on the Mount of Olives. As they are together, the disciples asked Him, in Acts 6 “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” Poor Jesus. This is like a Basketball player asking at the last game of the season, in the last half of the game, and on the last play, “How do I play this game? What is offsides? What is traveling?”

The disciples should have known better. Jesus had been trying to show them for the pat 3 ½ years, plus 40 days, yet they are still having a difficult time shaking off the notion that the Messiah would come to establish a spiritual kingdom rather than an earthly one.

So, Jesus answers their question with some vagueness and a redirecting push.

In Acts 7 He says, *“The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

The disciples are commanded to “GO” and share this message in Jerusalem, the Jewish capital. Then they are to go to Judea, which is in Southern Palestine and outside of Jerusalem. Then they are to move up north to the Semi-Jewish Samaria, and then to the unbelieving world! You see a nice progression of geography and ethnicity, as they move from place to place.

* Kind of like throwing a rock in a lake on a calm day. When the rock hits the water, the impact ripples all throughout the lake and spreads. This is like the Gospel message going out into the world.

But after Jesus finishes speaking to His disciples, He is taken from them and their sight.

* **Acts 1:9**

***9 After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him.***

He is going up. Jesus enters a cloud, which is a symbol of God’s presence in the Old Testament, and He is officially gone from their sight. Jesus has gone to take His place at the Father’s right hand, which is a position of power.

The ascension is no small thing or a footnote in the life of Jesus. In His ascension, Our Lord has been seated above everything, everyone, and every power. We do not need to fear those things, nor anything, for He has power over all things and is in control. All of this is done for the benefit of His Church, His bride and body. As the One Who rules over all things, He does what is best for the Church and for Christians. Paul highlights this in Ephesians.

* **Eph. 1:19-22**

***19 I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power 20 that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms. 21 Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. 22 God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church.***

The significance of Christs ascension is one of importance...

* **It’s significant because it marks the completion of his earthly ministry and the beginning of his heavenly reign.**
* **It marks the transition from his earthly appearances to his heavenly intercession, where he now reigns as Lord and Christ, preparing a place for believers and promising his second coming.**
* **It also demonstrates God's omnipotence and validates the fullness of Christ's work. There is victory in it, a preparation for His people, and a promise of His return.**

**Act 1:10-11**

***10 As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. 11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!”***

Quick review on Newton’s saying before we continue. “What goes up, must come down.” We see that this is the message of the angels. The angels come to the gazing disciples. Angels have always come at important events in the life of Jesus. They were at His birth, after His temptation, in the garden of Gethsemane, and at the tomb on Easter morning, and they are here now, showing the importance of this event! The disciples have their eyes fixed in the sky and on the event they have just seen.

So, if we take Sir Issac Newtons idea on that “What goes up must come down, this means that Jesus is coming back! And we know this, not just because of what the angels proclaimed, but also from other verses that were written well before this event!

* Daniel 7:13a

*As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven.*

* Matthew 24:30

*And then at last, the sign that the Son of Man is coming will appear in the heavens, and there will be deep mourning among all the peoples of the earth. And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

* Revelation 1:7

*Look! He comes with the clouds of heaven. And everyone will see him—even those who pierced him. And all the nations of the world will mourn for him. Yes! Amen!*

Church, just as the fact that I showed by tossing my keys in the air and them coming back down, even more so, Jesus will come back down in power, glory, and majesty!

Now I need to clarify something briefly before we continue. When Christ ascended, his promise to return and the event the Angels proclaimed is understood within the context of his Second Coming to earth in order to establish His Throne, not the Rapture. The Rapture, or the church “being caught up” with Jesus in the air, and the second coming of Christ, are often confused and are 2 separate “end-time” events, so it’s important to know which event Christ was referring to when He ascended.

Rapture vs. the Second Coming:

The rapture will be without warning and can happen at any time. Which is why it is important to know your salvation. Not just believing that you’re “a Christian” and thinking you are all set for Heaven. But truly living your life for Jesus Christ and obeying God’s commandments for us. We are told to “be watchful and ready.” Meaning, to stay focused on Jesus and living a Godly life.

It’s important to know that NO ONE knows the exact time when Jesus is coming again in the air.

* Mark 13:32

*However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows.*

Therefore, Jesus may come back tomorrow, next month, next year or 100 years from now.

* A few years back there was a guy who told the date of the end of the world and when Jesus would return. The man was convinced that he knew the date and wanted to tell the world. I think it is pretty obvious how accurate his prediction was, not once, but twice! He should have focused on something else, on something that he did know.

Jesus does reference this event where in Matt. 24 and in John 14

* Matt. 24:40-42

40 “Two men will be working together in the field; one will be taken, the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding flour at the mill; one will be taken, the other left. 42 “So, you, too, must keep watch! For you don’t know what day your Lord is coming.

* John 14:1-3

*Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. 2 There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? 3 When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.*

The Rapture is when “the Church” (true believers) will be taken up in the air with Jesus. It’s worth mentioning why I say, true believers. Because the term “Christian” is so casually thrown around. Jesus despises wishy-washy Christians. “So, because you are lukewarm–neither hot nor cold–I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” Revelation 3:16. It is easy to think you have all the time in the world to “get right with God.” But like I said, the rapture can come at any moment and your salvation is not something you want to be unsure about.

* 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

*“Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”*

The rapture is where the believers will MEET the Lord in the air. Paul tells us in,

* + 1 Thess. 4:16-17

*For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. 17 Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever.*

* + - The Greek translation of the words “caught up.” mean “harpazõ” meaning “to seize upon with force or snatch up.”
		- Another interesting tid bit, the word “church” appears 19 times in the first three chapters of Revelation, but significantly, the word is not used again until chapter 22. In the entire description of the tribulation in Revelation, the word church is absent. The Bible never uses the word “church” in a passage relating to the tribulation.

The Second coming:

This event will be after the tribulation period. Unlike the rapture, it will be known and seen by everyone. The Second coming is after 7 years of tribulation, when Jesus returns to Earth and defeats the Antichrist to overthrow evil. He throws the devil into the Abyss (a bottomless pit) to keep him bound and locked up so that he cannot deceive the nations until the thousand years are over. (The Millennial Reign of Christ.) It’s important to note that during the second coming, the Lord will return to Earth, as opposed to the Rapture where he comes in the air, and we MEET Him in the air. The Second Coming, we will be right behind him as He comes back down!

* + Revelation 19:14

*The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.*

So, to ensure clarity, again, the rapture and second coming are similar and involve Jesus returning, however, it is crucially important to recognize the differences.

* Key Differences:
	+ Location: The rapture takes place in the air, while the second coming is on Earth.
	+ Visibility: The rapture is a private event where believers are "caught up". The second coming is a public and visible event, where everyone will see Christ.
	+ Purpose: The rapture is primarily about believers being united with Christ, while the second coming is about Christ's reign and judgment.

With that said, we should be ready at all times, as both the return of Christ in the air and the Second Coming of Christ to the earth feels sooner than ever!

So, what does this mean for you and me? As I mentioned and am urging today, we need to always be ready for the time he splits the clouds, so we can participate with him in His Second Coming back to the earth and spend eternity with Him! We need to keep watch and focus even more so on Jesus today, because the devil is always seeking to distract us from understanding the signs and closeness of Jesus’ coming with “life issues, dramas, and even doubts!”

In addition to being ready and watching with our hearts purified and a life striving to be like Christ, what are we to do in the meantime as we wait for our Lord’s Second Coming? What did the disciples do? The disciples listened to the Lord and waited until Pentecost. Once the Holy Spirit fell upon them in an extraordinary way, they were His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. As His forgiven and redeemed people who have been given the Holy Spirit in baptism, we have the same calling and task.

We too are to witness about the grace that has been given to us, the love that has been lavished on us, and the hope that has been handed to us. **We are called GO!**

* ***Matthew 28:19***

***Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”***

When we are given good and exciting news in our lives, what do we do? We blab! We’re not quiet! When I became a grandparent I was over the moon and Penny & I told everybody! What about when you get a new job, buy a house or a get new car? We tell people right? We can’t keep that good or exciting news to ourselves.

The news that God forgives us in and through what Jesus Christ did for us is the greatest news that we have ever been given. Can we really keep such a great joy and message inside? No! Are hearts should not be able to contain this news and cause us to tell others through our lives and words.

Closing:

So, since Jesus went up, He is going to come back down, for us, his church, and for one and for all ultimate and final victory. His return is a good thing!

**So, through our faith in Christ, let us be ready and expectant for His coming back and in the meantime GO & tell everyone… “Who Went Up, Will Soon Come Down!”**