

6/1/11

THE EPISTLE LESSON

Ephesians 1:15-23

page 1818

(The ascended Lord Jesus is ruler over all things for the sake of His church.)

15 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, **19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe.** That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

THE GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 24:44-53

page 1644

(Jesus' return journey to heaven)

44 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." 45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. 52 Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53 And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

THE SCRIPTURAL ACCOUNT OF ASCENSION

Acts 1:1-11 page 1690

(Jesus ascends into heaven.)

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." 6 So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are

you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. **8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**"

9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

THE SERMON

“Christ’s Victory Shared with Us”

Ephesians 1

THE PRAYER FOR THE DAY Almighty God, as Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, ascended into the heavens, so may we also ascend and dwell there with Him forever. We pray in Jesus’ name who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

15 Dia. tou/to kavgw. avkou,saj th.n kaqV u`ma/j pi,stin evn tw/| kuri,w| Vlhsou/ kai. th.n avga,phn th.n eivj pa,ntaj tou.j a`gi,ouj

On account of this, having heard the faith from you in the Lord Jesus and in the love for all the saints,

16 ouv pau,omai euvcaristw/n u`pe.r u`mw/n mnei,an poiou,menoj evpi. tw/n proseucw/n mou(

poiou,menoj having made

I have not stopped giving thanks on behalf of you, having made remembrance in my prayers

17 i[na o` qeo.j tou/ kuri,ou h`mw/n Vlhsou/ Cristou/(o` path.r th/j do,xhj(dw,h| u`mi/n pneu/ma sofi,aj kai. avpokalu,yewj evn evpignw,sei aurtou/(

evpignw,sei knowledge

So that the God of our Lord Jesus, who is the father of glory, might give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in his knowledge

18 pefwtisme,nouj tou.j ovfqalmou.j th/j kardi,aj Iu`mw/nD eivj to. eivde,nai u`ma/j ti,j evstin h` evlpi.j th/j klh,sewj aurtou/(ti,j o` plou/toj th/j do,xhj th/j klhronomi,aj aurtou/ evn toi/j a`gi,oj(

pefwtisme,nouj give light, illumination, understanding
eivde,nai know, recogize, understand

having opened / illumined the eyes of your heart that you may you understand / know what is the hope of his inheritance, which is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

19 kai. ti. to. u`perba,llon me,geqoj th/j duna,mewj auvtou/ eivj h`ma/j tou.j pisteu,ontaj kata. th.n evne,rgeian tou/ kra,touj th/j ivscu,oj auvtou/Å

u`perba,llon excell, surpass, go beyond
me,geqoj greatness

And (may know) what the surpassing greatness of his power in you who are believing according to the working of the power of his strength.

20 }Hn evnh,rghsen evn tw/| Cristw/| evgei,raj auvto.n evk nekrw/n kai. kaqi,saj evn dexia/| auvtou/ evn toi/j evpourani,oij

which is active in Christ, having raised him from the dead and having seated (him) on his right hand in the heavens.

21 u`pera,nw pa,shj avrch/j kai. evxousi,aj kai. duna,mewj kai. kurio,tthoj kai. panto.j ovno,matoj ovnomazome,nou(ouv mo,non evn tw/| aivw/ni tou,tw/| avlla. kai. evn tw/| me,llonti\

ovnomazome,nou titles, names

above all rulers and authorities and powers and lords and all names, (above) the things of this aged but also in that which is about to be

22 kai. pa,nta u`pe,taxen u`po. tou.j po,daj auvtou/ kai. auvto.n e;dwken kefalh.n u`pe.r pa,nta th/| evkkhsi,a|(

And having placed under his feet and he gave him to be head over all for the church

23 h[tij evsti.n to. sw/ma auvtou/(to. plh,rwma tou/ ta. pa,nta evn pa/sin plhroume,nouÅ

which is his body, the fulness of him filling everything in every way

18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

INTRO - In August of 1997 I got to participate in a happy event. After 40 years as pastor, Rolland Fritz, former pastor of St. John, retired as pastor of Anchorage Lutheran Church. Oswald Hoffman, the former Lutheran Hour Speaker was the preacher that day. We thanked God for His goodness to Rolland and thanks God for Rolland's faithful service. We looked forward to many years of happy retirement for Rolland and JoAnn. His children and grandchildren were in the area. It was a well earned retirement. In *December* of 1997 I officiated at Rolland's funeral. He died from leukemia and complications. What kind of retirement is that?

I. In our lesson for today we are told of a resurrection celebration of sorts at the Ascension of Jesus. But, in all honesty the disciples did not know what faced them.

A. Jesus had died but risen. Now, before he left for heaven he told his disciples they would be missionaries.

1. **8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."**

2. Though this seemed a time of victory, of sharing Jesus' love around the world, every one of these disciples except 1 would die for witnessing to Jesus.

3. What kind of victory is that?

B. Today's epistle lesson is written to the Christians in Ephesus. After Paul had been there a while with other missionaries, a disturbance arose.

1. During a riot the people of Ephesus seized Gaius and Aristarchus and brought them to the coliseum, threatening harm because of a misunderstanding about what was being taught..

2. Only the intervention of a skillful public servant saved their lives and stopped the riot.

3. So, how is a riot and threatened violence living in the victory of Jesus' resurrection?

C. You can write this down, life is full of struggles that make us wonder about being people of God, that make us wonder about His love and His power.

1. Remember Rolland, why would this happen to a pastor?

2. How about you?

A. Have you put time in at work, only to have troubles. A cousin's

husband recently lost his job after many years with the company in CT.

B. Have you done your best to be a good husband, or wife, or parent, only to have unexpected troubles arise in your family?

C. Have you lived a healthy life only to have illness raise it's ugly head?

3. In all honesty, we live in a world of sin. This rebellion against the creator of the universe has wreaked havoc in this world, and also in the lives of God's people.

4. Yet, knowing about the sin of the world, and our sin, it still doesn't stop us from wondering, "This is the life of a child of the victorious Lord and Savior?"

II. Tonight God tells us that when life seems overwhelming, God has help and strength for us.

A. Look at Ephesians 1 to see what the ascension means.

1. **18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.** The ascension of Jesus shows us God's power that Jesus not only took on the trouble of this world, not only died and rose, but is sitting at God's right hand, ruling.

2. But look at the next two verses. **22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.** Jesus is ruling over everything for his church!

B. (You can write this down) Life may seem overwhelming, out of control, disappointing, but in the midst of life's troubles in this world Jesus is ruling for God's purposes, and He is ruling everything for the good of the church.

1. We won't necessarily understand everything. But we know who is in control.

2. Maybe a better way to say the meaning of the ascension is this old saying, "*I don't know what the future holds, BUT, I know who holds the future.*"

III. This week our team going to Northway to lead Vacation Bible School has met. There are some concerns. The company from which they ordered materials first sent the wrong materials, then sent the right materials to Arkansas. There is a cost involved which may come out of their pockets, and for some this is a concern. And, what is it like to go to an unknown town to share Jesus?

A. In the middle of these questions, we are told **God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,**

1. This group is going forward not having all the answers.

2. The one answer they do have is that God is ruling all things for the good of the church, and He will be with them.

B. That is the prayer of Paul in Ephesians 1.

1. He prayed the people may know the hope of heaven.
2. He prayed they may KNOW the victory of God in Jesus.
3. When we know this hope and power it changes our lives.

CONCLUSION - (You can write this last point down.) Even though the world around us may ignore the Easter victory of Jesus, we can live in hope, in faith, in strength and in love because **God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,s**

power for us (like when he raised Jesus)

He is at right hand, head over everything for the church