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Ascension of Our Lord
May 14, 2026
Text: Luke 24:44 – 53
Title: A Place for You (based on a sermon from CPR by Dr. J. W. Saleska)

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Listen again to the words of this hymn's first stanzas:

Up through endless ranks of angels,
Cries of triumph in His ears,
To His heavenly throne ascending,
Having vanquished all their fears,
Christ looks down upon His faithful,
Leaving them in happy tears.

The Son of God has gone home, greeted by triumphant cries from the angels, the archangels and all of the company of heaven. That is what we are celebrating on this Ascension Day, and thanks to His sacrificial work, we can look forward to our own homecoming.

As Jesus was bringing His visual time on this earth to its conclusion, He spoke the words that end the Gospel according to St. Luke in our text today. His Words show us that He is looking forward to His return to His heavenly Father. Jesus is undoubtedly anticipating the victorious welcome that He'll receive from the "endless ranks of angels" and from His Father, perhaps even a warm and loving embrace for the great work that He has done. Maybe Jesus is even looking forward to the Father putting His royal robe on Him, crowning Him with Glory and Honor, and placing all things under His feet as He takes His place at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. He is certainly looking forward to a joyful welcome with the hosts of angels and saints singing His praises. Who wouldn't look forward to that!?

And now, His work has been completed. He has restored the entire universe, and rescued His people once again from bondage and slavery. He has crushed the enemy's head who beat

Adam and Eve with a tree, and He has defeated death by His own death on a tree shaped as a cross. With His death, life has been restored. The writer of Hebrews puts it this way in chapter 12:2, Jesus is "...the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

Tonight's reading from the first chapter of Acts describes the Ascension of Jesus like this, "And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight." Jesus is back home now, and He is preparing a new home for you. That new home is your promised land which He bought for you with His own blood, and He intends to make sure that you get there. His work and His Word promise that there is a place for each of us who are faithful to Him, and His promises are always kept. He has been showing us the faithfulness of His promises since He brought the Israelites out of slavery and death in Egypt to bring them to the Promised Land.

Their slavery in Egypt was really a miniature of the greater enslavement of all humanity, and it is also a picture of the far greater rescue of all humanity. When Adam and Eve fell into sin, the entire universe was plunged into impenetrable darkness. The Garden of Eden became a graveyard, a place of the walking dead. People wandered aimlessly; alone, lost, and alienated from God and from each other, slaves of sin. Lost and condemned sinners must ask themselves, "Who are we? Where are we? Why are we here?" In the darkness of unbelief, life has no meaning or purpose. We humans have no destiny. We do not know who we are. We do not know why we're here. We do not know where we're going. We have no idea of how to escape this place of death. And when it comes to God, as far as we're concerned, He's out of the picture. We don't want Him intruding in our lives, telling us what to do or not to do. In fact, in our heart of hearts we hate God and want Him out of the way, so we can be free to live without

restraint from Him or from anyone else. It's why we take His gift of life and do everything we can to control it, warp it, cheapen it, and destroy it. If salvation is to come, we'd rather it be our own doing. Luther is correct when he says that original sin is the desire to be god. Who on earth would want to rescue people who don't care to be rescued, and who don't even believe that they need to be rescued?

All of the seasons of the Church Year from Christmas to Epiphany; from Lent to Easter; and now from Ascension to Pentecost remind us of how utterly evil we are and of how good God really is. This is the message of the entire Holy Scripture. God the Son left everything behind and came into this land of aimless wandering, and He came as one of us. His lonely pilgrimage in the wilderness of our world is much more than simply being without an earthly home. In our Egypt, He served people who deserved to be left alone in eternal darkness. He trod the winepress alone with no place of refuge, not even in God as He cried out from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt. 27:46) Jesus cried out in that awful darkness and abandonment, as if praying with David in Psalm 22 and in Psalm 51:11, "Cast me not away from Thy presence." He is the genuine Scapegoat of the Day of Atonement, banished from the face of God and wandering in the wilderness of this world, lost and alone.

The cross is where He bore the crushing burden of our sin. The cruelty, the blows, and the stripes that we deserved were laid on Him. He is the real Cain that men, finding, were determined to kill, as if He were the criminal. He was indeed the marked man, despised and rejected. The whole creation was assembled against Him to take away His rightful place and cast Him into outer darkness forever. What an awful wandering and abandonment, and through it all Jesus never lost sight of why He had come, to give you a home of everlasting bliss and fellowship, to give you a place to belong that is your true home.

Through it all, Jesus always knew who He was, the eternal Son of the Father. He always knew His purpose, reconciling the world to God. He always knew His destiny, the right hand of the throne of God the Father Almighty. In spite of being forsaken by God, He always knew He would ultimately be vindicated and restored to His rightful place. And when the Father raised Him from the dead, He put everything under His feet. He is again God the Son over all. Death, Hell, and Satan must all give in to Him and declare Him their Lord. In His death and resurrection, He has crushed the enemy's head. And most remarkable of all, He did it for you. In all of it, Jesus took your place. He did all of His work for you, and He carried your crushing load of sin.

So now we have come full circle. Today we celebrate His return on high to the place that He came from, the right hand of the majesty on high, where He now sits and intercedes for us with the Father. For His sake, the Father has fully and freely forgiven all of your sins, and our wandering for a new home is over. In Him we know who we are and where we're going. It's no big secret because He tells us all about it all throughout His Word. "I'm going to prepare a place for you," Jesus says. He has gone ahead and prepared it, and it's our place, which means we own it. We are like the prodigal son, returning to our Father's house, our true home. There is going to be a great big homecoming celebration, and the party is at His place and at His expense. Our Lord will joyfully welcome us home with open arms, as He was welcomed by His Father on this Ascension Day. He's waiting for us, and because of Him it is a guarantee that we will arrive safely. His Ascension guarantees our ascension, and it assures us that we "...will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Ps. 23:6). Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.