Ascension B 2024

Today, Ascension Thursday, we celebrate not the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry, but a beginning: Go into the whole world, proclaim the Gospel, making disciples of all, carrying on the work Jesus has begun. But the Lord’s first direction was so blunt, so direct and clear: “Go.” The world is waiting. Act on what I have taught you, Jesus said. Put it into practice.

After the disciples watched Jesus disappear into the clouds, two men appeared. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing there looking at the sky?” In other words, “what are you waiting for.” Brothers and sisters, “what are you waiting for, there’s work to do.” There’s a world waiting to be made whole and holy. So, let us go forward together in the ways of the kingdom: transforming the world; casting out the evil of injustice and hatred; encountering those in the peripheries; tending to those who are hurting; being bearers of peace, and bringers of light; minstrels of the Lord, singing joy into joyless hearts; “glorifying the Lord with your life.”

The greatest missionary undertaking in human history was launched 2000 years ago as the disciples came down from the mountain and returned to their responsibilities. And it can happen again. Much of the world is still waiting to hear good news, the good news of Jesus’ message of hope, and redemption, and resurrection. And to understand why all this matters.

The message of this beautiful feast of the Lord’s Ascension is simple: it’s a “now” event: not spending all your time looking up at the sky or gazing at the stars at night; not living in the past or dreaming about the future. Instead, look at what is in front of us. “Go and rebuild My house, which you see is falling into ruin.” The Kingdom of God upon earth needs to be built.

The Ascension was just the beginning. The rest is now up to us.



