

**Christ's Ascension and the Mission of the Church**  
The Sunday after the Ascension; June 2, 2019

**I. Christ's Ascension**

*The 5 turning points in Jesus' life-work: Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, Second Coming  
We often overlook the Ascension. It was Thursday. Why must we remember and celebrate it?*

- + Christ's Ascension to the right hand of the Father is His coronation (Ps 68); the Lord is supremely powerful, sovereign over all.
- + His Ascension means Jesus is not limited by the time/space continuum. Jesus is fully God and fully Man. Everything He does has a cosmic scope (Col 1).
- + It means He's available personally, especially in the Eucharist and prayer (Jn 17).
- + The Ascension sets up Christ's Second Coming ("I am coming soon," Rev 22).
- + By His Ascension into heaven, Jesus now directs and empowers the Church to accomplish her mission on earth.

**II. The Church's Mission**

*What is the mission of the Body of Christ on earth? Acts 16:16-34 gives us one look.*

**1**

*"As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling...Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And it came out that very hour."*

**What is our mission?**

- We engage in spiritual warfare, "in the name of Jesus Christ."
- We fight against Satan, especially for the sake of our youth and young adults.

**2**

*"And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, 'These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.' The crowd joined in attacking them...when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely."*

**What is our mission?**

- We follow Christ, not customs, willing to be out of step with the culture.
- We love God with our obedience, even to the point of suffering.
- We value salvation more than money.

**3**

*"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped."*

**What is our mission?**

- We pray and sing in suffering, giving God the glory no matter the outcome.
- We worship and rely on the Triune God alone for His miraculous work.

**4**

*But Paul cried with a loud voice, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.' And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.' And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.*

**What is our mission?**

- We fall down in fear in response to mighty acts of God in the Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- We proclaim salvation to all by grace through faith.
- We trust in the Word and Sacraments as the means of grace and forgiveness.
- We lead our family and friends to Christ.
- We wash the wounds of others, the heart of Christian mission.
- We rejoice in community and hospitality with believers and strangers alike.