

Ascension Sunday

Evensong

Jesus Christ is the ruler of the kings of the earth

I was driving the kids to school recently. It was an overcast day. Driving around the corner, towards the sun, the light was streaming from behind the clouds, into the world. It was a magnificent sight. The kingdom of God is a bit like that.

The light of the world, Jesus Christ has been raised by God on to a lamp stand. Where He gives light now to everyone in the house.

The Son of God, who died once, to reconcile the world to God, now reigns over all things in heaven and on earth, far above every rule and authority, principality and power. So that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Christ died, once, to reconcile the world to God. Christ is ascended now, to rule the world. God has established his reign of mercy, in, and over the world. The kingdom of this world, has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. And he shall reign for ever and ever. Jesus Christ is the ruler of the kings of the earth.

‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me,’ Christ said, ‘Therefore, go, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember I am with you always, to the end of the age.’

With the Ascension of Christ back into heaven, the loop of God’s action in him is complete: the eternal Son of God, who came down from heaven, and became a human being, has returned back into heaven. In all of this, his pre-existence, his incarnation and death, his resurrection and ascension into heaven, he is the eternal Son of God the Father in heaven. The eternal Son, he is eternally there, giving all of his glory to God. His incarnation and death, was the revelation of his glory. Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life, as the one who took on creaturely form, in order to reveal to us the way of eternal life. Human beings, in conscious self-distinction from God, whom we call our Father, who give to God all of the glory of their life in this world, who take, none of it for themselves, can live in relationship with God in this life, and in the life to come, eternal life.

For all who lay down their life, and give glory to God, the Father, they have eternal life, already now. That is, a participation in the eternal life of God, already now. And an anticipation of eternal life, beyond death, in the eternal kingdom of God. Make no mistake, the resurrection of Jesus, is the promise of our own. But you have to get there first. First, you have to lay down your life in this world. As

Jesus lay down his life in this world. When, stepping down from heaven, and taking human form, and living a life of humility before God, even unto death, in humble obedience to the mission he received from God, he has shown us the way to eternal life. That humble, self-distinction from the Creator God, is the way to unity with God, in this life, and in the next.

And whenever there is that humble, self distinction from God, wherever the way of Jesus takes shape in human life, there the Holy spirit, the Spirit that in eternity binds God the Father to God the Son, in an eternal bond of peace and love, there that same Spirit includes us, within the eternal bond of peace between the Father and the Son. There the Spirit binds us, already now, into the eternal life of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We are loved by God, already now. We are held by God, already now. We are safe in God's arms, already now.

His mighty arm, Jesus Christ, he has stretched out to all the nations.

To reconcile, a broken world, to himself, by the Holy Spirit, the bond of peace, and love.

The two arms of God, the Father of heaven.

Whose heart beats out of love for his lost, and broken world.

Who so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, so that all who believe in him, may not perish, but may have eternal life.

So that we, who live in the security of the kingdom of God, now come in Christ, can say, along with the Apostle, in the midst of the ongoing darkness of this world, that

‘I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord’.

And so affirm, at this time of darkness in the world -

That ‘All shall be well. And all manner of things shall be well.’

Because of who God is, and what he has done, and will do, for us, and for all people, in Jesus Christ.

In the words of the psalmist,

‘O sing to the Lord a new song,
For he has done marvelous things,

His right hand and his holy arm

They have got him the victory.

The Lord has made known his victory;

He has revealed his just deliverance in the sight of the nations.

And all the ends of the earth, have seen the salvation of our God.