

FREE TO DUPLICATE AND DISTRIBUTE



ASCENSION SUNDAY C

29th May 2022

A short act of worship and daily devotions

A Free resource funded by donations from Individuals, churches and **twelvebaskets**.

If you would like to help fund this resources [click here](#).

For more information <https://theworshipcloud.com/terms/free-weekly-resource>

Opening Prayers

This prayer comes with some movements. You are invited to follow the words with your body as you read.

You need your hands and the prayer can be offered seated or standing. The movements can of course be imagined if that is what works well for you.

Loving God

We come to worship you this day – ready to notice your presence.

As we place our hands against our chest we are reminded to love you with all our hearts and we share with you in the silence our feelings as we meet with you.

As we place our hands on our tummies we recognise that we are to love you with our soul.

And we come to you again thinking about your call on us – what drives us and gives us purpose for your work.

We take a moment to roll our hands into balls and think of how we apply all our strength and resolve as we approach you with love.

Finally, as we put a hand on our head we give thanks for all we know, all we can learn & all we can share. Our minds are yours O Lord.

Loving God, as we worship this day we come loving you with all our heart and soul and strength and mind.

Just as the ancients did before us and generations will to come

Amen.¹

You may now wish to say the Lord's prayer in a tradition or language that you are most comfortable with.

Hymn:

313 STF – Thine be the glory - [YouTube](#)

Reading: [Luke 24:44-53](#)

Response to the reading

Last year, as part of the Big Church Sing, our friends at All We Can put together the a retelling of some of the key events of the Easter season, including the Ascension. *Featuring Joanna Adeyinka-Burford from Cbeebies, that re-telling features in a short video.*

¹ Opening prayers written by Jane Bingham

If possible, play the Vine Video (downloadable from here: <https://theworshipcloud.com/view/store/twelvebaskets-vine-video-ascension-sunday-16th-may-2021>)

The ascension is one of the great moments in the Jesus narrative, where we see many witnesses experience a miraculous moment, and a calling – a calling to follow.

Let's reflect on N T Wright's words as he unpicks what this momentous event might mean for us today:

First, it is obvious that without the resurrection of Jesus the evangelists would never have had a story to tell. Thousands of young Jews were crucified by the Romans. Very few of them are even mentioned in our historical sources, except as a grisly footnote. Even those who think the evangelists were in fact very clever inventors of large-scale fictions designed to revive a Jesus movement that might not otherwise have survived the death (and continuing deadness, so to speak) of its founder are bound to admit that even within these cleverly designed myths the resurrection plays the vital role in opening the question up again, so that what looked like defeat, like yet another failure of a kingdom-dream, was in fact a victory.

The resurrection, in short, is presented by the evangelists not as a 'happy ending' after an increasingly sad and gloomy tale, but as the event that demonstrated that Jesus' execution really had dealt the deathblow to the dark forces that had stood in the way of God's new world, God's 'kingdom' of powerful creative and restorative love, arriving 'on earth as in heaven'.

That is why the bodily resurrection matters in a way that it never quite does, even to the devout who insist that they believe it, if all one is interested in is a kingdom 'not of this world'.

The resurrection is, from Mark's point of view, the moment when God's kingdom 'comes in power'. From John's point of view, it is the launching of the new creation, the new Genesis. From Matthew's point of view, it brings Jesus into the position for which he was always destined, that of the world's rightful Lord, sending out his followers to call the world to follow him and learn his way of being human. From Luke's point of view, the resurrection is the moment when Israel's Messiah 'comes into his glory', so that 'repentance for the forgiveness of sins' can now be announced to all the world as the way of life, indeed, as they say in Acts, as The Way.

It is the resurrection that declares that the cross was a victory, not a defeat. It therefore announces that God has indeed become king on earth as in heaven. Luke's Ascension story is commonly misunderstood, but its proper emphases ought to be clear. Heaven and earth are now joined in the person – in the risen body! – of Jesus himself. The one who sits in heaven is the one who rules on earth.

He therefore sends out his followers, equipped by his own spirit, to celebrate his sovereignty over the world and make it a reality through the founding of communities rescued by his love, renewed by his power, and loyal to his name. Jesus' followers, equipped with his spirit, are to become in themselves, individually and together, little walking temples, rescued themselves from sin through Jesus' death, and with the living presence of God going with them and in them.

Jesus is the true Temple, now ruling the world as the one who was crucified; his followers, as Paul would explain more thoroughly, constitute the fuller version of the same thing, so that the dwelling of the living God is now spread increasingly across and around the world, again evidenced not by coercive or violent power, but by the rule of love.²

So where does the Ascension story leave you, today?

Spend a few moments reflecting on these 'big questions', and perhaps find someone you trust to talk about these questions (or others that have arisen for you) during this week.

- How can we live out the gospel in our own lives?
- How does the story of Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension change how we live today?
- Are we, as a church, living up to the possibilities of this story? Are we sharing this story widely and passionately enough?

Blessing

May Christ the Lord, who lived, who died, who was raised from the dead
And who has ascended into heaven, travel with you.

May the Christ who is amongst, around and within us strengthen you in your calling,
And hold you in your grief.

Amen.³

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

Monday 30th May

- If you can, go on a prayer walk. Or ask someone to help you make a journey around your neighbourhood – just the few houses near you would be fine, or go on a longer trip if you'd like to take in a whole estate or community.
- As you travel past each house, pray for the people who live there – just in your mind, or under your breath. Hold their situations, whether you know them or not, in your heart.

Tuesday 31st May

- At some point today, try to have a conversation with someone about prayer. What does prayer mean to them? Try to articulate what prayer means to you.
- Notice how, even in that conversation, you are praying.

² Taken from How God Became King by Tom Wright

³ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

Wednesday 1st June

- God of all blessings,
Thank you for the gift of food to eat,
For the flavours and the smells,
The energy and enjoyment I can get from the food I eat.
 - I'm sorry for all the times I've taken for granted the food on my plate, the ingredients in my fridge, the ready meals in my freezer.
And for all the other blessings I have received that I often overlook or forget to be thankful for.
Thank you Lord, for you are good to me.
- Amen.

Thursday 2nd June

- Today marks the first of two bank holidays in the UK to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee. However you feel about such public holidays, you might like to give thanks for longevity today – for the things that have stood for a long time, that carry wisdom from previous decades, generations and even centuries.
- Thank you God, that you last forever,
Amen.

Friday 3rd June

- Today is World Bicycle Day – and we think about the work of All We Can, supporting a local partner in Uganda to provide bicycles to communities in rural areas, enabling them to access school, healthcare, marketplaces and other services that enrich their lives. Change begins with a bike, and we are grateful for All We Can's work enabling that to happen.
- You could pray a prayer of gratitude for all the simple things in life (like a bicycle, a toothbrush, clean water) that many people in our world can't take for granted.

Saturday 4th June

- The Tiananmen Square Protests are also known as 'The June Fourth Incident', because on this day in 1989, student protests in Beijing ended with troops armed with assault rifles and accompanied by tanks fired on the demonstrators. Death tolls are still debated by historians, and today we pray for all who are brave enough to stand up to oppression and injustice.
- Lord, give us the courage to seek a peace where all have access to justice, not merely the absence of war. Amen.