

Sermon Draft for October 5, 2025

2025 Lutheran Women in Mission Sunday

Text: Luke 24:44-53

In our Gospel reading for this Lutheran Women in Mission Sunday, we are at the scene of the Ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Think of what has been happening. Forty plus days earlier the Lord was on the cross suffering and dying. He had cried out in anguish, ***“My God, My God why have you forsaken me?”***

Jesus, with his face hanging toward the ground due to the weight of what He was bearing, due to the awfulness of the crucifixion and the strain it put upon His body, due to the whippings and beatings, but even more so due to the wrath vented upon Him by His Father in heaven over sin which was not His own. Jesus in the midst of deep agony breathlessly states, ***“It is finished,”*** then as the Gospel of John records, ***“and He bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”***

It is then Jesus’ side is pierced by the spear, blood and water pour forth signifying fully and completely the Lord Jesus Christ had died. God had died.

Jesus' body then is taken down from the cross, hurriedly wrapped with linen and spices and laid lifeless in a tomb that was not His own. Jesus' followers must have wondered if they would meet with Him ever again. But then, praise be to God three days later, the first day of the week, the first Easter Sunday occurs as Jesus steps forth from the tomb alive! Jesus had conquered death and the grave. He had risen victorious! Jesus had defeated death not only for Himself but for you and me and all believers.

Then, in the time between Jesus' resurrection and the day of our text, His ascension, Jesus meets with His followers, He is alive! He is resurrected! Jesus had conquered the grave. Then we come to the day of the Ascension. Those forty days before this event must have been wondrous and inspiring, meeting with the Lord. Those there that day though must have left wondering, "Where will Jesus meet us next? What joy awaits us!"

Jesus continued teaching and blessings. It was a wonderful time. Then this day. Jesus now ascends into the heavens, **“He parted from them.”** Well, that was a little different than His other times of leaving, but He has always come again. I wonder though where we will meet Him next? Scripture tells us Jesus didn’t appear to them again bodily on earth. But, Jesus didn’t leave them without His presence; He didn’t leave them without Him being a part of their lives. It is as Jesus promised, **“I will not leave you as orphans”** (John 14:18a).

At His ascension, Jesus had given them an assignment to carry out, one which would occupy their time, their talent, and their treasure. The assignment which Jesus gave them has ramifications for us yet to this very day. For we are the recipients of their work, we are those who have heard the proclamation, **“that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his [Christ’s] name to all nations.”**

We know the need for repentance and forgiveness through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have had those occasions in our lives where we have wondered just where Jesus is. Just as those that day who witnessed the ascension may have left thinking “Where will Jesus come to us next?”

We too go through this life with doubts which easily arise from the challenges which come our way. We question how God could love us, care for us. Where is this Jesus of promise? Where will Christ meet me, come to my aid?

We are called to repent and know the reconciling peace with God. By our own efforts and our own ways we cannot reconcile with God. By our works there can be no peace with God. That is why this proclamation of repentance and forgiveness in the name of Jesus is so important.

This very proclamation of repentance and forgiveness has been given to the Church by the Lord Jesus Christ. We, the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, have the responsibility to proclaim the message of Christ, to be that body which proclaims repentance and forgiveness, which shows forth the merciful Christ in what we do and say.

Those who returned to Jerusalem with joy that Ascension Day wondered when they would meet with Jesus again. They met together and recalled the glorious gifts which this Lord Jesus had given them! He came to them in the breaking of bread. He joined with them through the waters of Baptism. He came to them through the Word. Jesus was present with them for He came to them in the Means of Grace. The same is true today. We do not have to wonder where the Lord Jesus is, we don't ever have to search for Him. We don't ever need to wonder if He is present here with us in this life to lead and guide us, to comfort us.

Jesus comes to each of us. He comes to us in the Holy Supper. Yes, Jesus meets with us! He meets us in the waters of Holy Baptism, the Lord Jesus comes to us in this sacred act as we were baptized into the Lord's death and raised into the Lord's life, there we were granted a new life. (Romans 6:3–4) Yes, Jesus meets with us. Through the Word of God the Lord Jesus meets us as He who is the Word made flesh, gives to us Himself in and through that Word. Our lives are tied to Christ, for He gives to the words of eternal life. Life, true life is only given by the Lord Jesus Christ. In His means of grace, the Lord Jesus meets us!

When the Lord meets with us, He then brings to us His gifts. He gives to us His life. He gives to us forgiveness. He gives to us His peace. He gives to us His promises. He gives to us freedom! Freedom to live and express Him in the world. He meets us here in this world that we may know this God and Lord, now and today and to do so with great joy.

We are truly blessed but there are many who do not meet with our Lord to know Him as their loving and gracious Savior. We are blessed to know the forgiveness of sins. We are blessed to know this Jesus Christ who has done all things necessary for our salvation. We are blessed to know we have a glorious home to which we look forward, where we know we will meet with the Lord for eternity. We are the church given the assignment to share what we have and know in Christ so that they would have the joy of knowing this Lord who meets His people where they are to forgive, and aid, and strengthen them, to give them a life of hope and peace.

We have the immense joy of knowing we have a partner in this work. The LWML works to carry the Gospel to those very people who need to meet this Lord Jesus Christ. They are involved in so many ways the world over. They are the ones who gather blankets to take to those who are going through tragedy. They are the ones who put meals into the mouths of those who have gone through disasters as they aid relief efforts.

They are the ones who on your behalf make certain that people in Africa have access to the Word of God. They are the ones who become the very heart and hands of the compassionate, merciful Lord who saves, who meets people where they are and grants them life.

We have the joy of an amazing partnership in the Gospel as we give of our treasures, give of our time, and give of our talents. They support, encourage, and uplift missionaries and places of compassion, spreading for the message of repentance and the forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name.

Through the LWML efforts, their commitment, and their joy in service, their gifts touch so many lives, so many people. They have had such an amazing impact.

Where is our Lord? He is here, in the heart, hands, and voice of His people. He is there in the LWML that as they in their efforts may reach others with the message of repentance and forgiveness in His name.

The Lord is where His Word is preached, and His Sacraments are rightly administered in His name.

Yes, we are blessed, for the Lord continues to meet with His people, to meet with us, and we have forgiveness and life in His name. How blessed and enriched we are!

Amen