

MAY 21, 2020
ASCENSION OF
OUR LORD



The ascension leads to the ministry of the church.

ASCENSION DAY BIBLE READINGS

Take time to read and reflect on these Bible passages as part of your Ascension Day observances.

Thursday	Acts 1:1-11	Jesus is taken up to heaven
	Psalms 47	God rules the nations
	Ephesians 1:15-23	Paul's prayer for the church
	Luke 24:44-53	The ascension of Jesus

SCRIPTURE VERSE ASCENSION DAY

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” **Acts 1:8 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for Ascension Day:

Dear Jesus, may your ascension and the giving of the Holy Spirit lead us, your followers, to witness to your love that knows no end. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Ascended Lord, may this food strengthen us to be your servants of faith and love to all the world. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ give you a spirit of wisdom that you may know the hope to which you have been called. (Ephesians 1:17-18)



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HYMN FOR ASCENSION DAY

*The Church's One
Foundation*



ASCENSION DAY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- If you had endless power, how would you want to use it?
- How does God's power show itself in the suffering of Christ?
- How does the church witness to—or sometimes misuse its witness to—the power of God?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Acts 1:1-11.

Paintings throughout Christian history have depicted Jesus' ascension as a moment of glory and a rising up to heaven. The verbal painting of Acts 1 gives real substance to that meaning of Jesus' ascent. The sufferings of Jesus are not forgotten or left in the past (v. 3). God's kingdom is seen in Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection in a way that now embraces Jesus' followers to go out from Jerusalem "to the ends of the earth" (v. 8). For us, the ascension is finally not about "looking up toward heaven" (v. 11), but looking out to faithfully follow the call of God into the world. It is true that followers will not fully grasp the mission as though Christ came to restore national pride and power to Israel (v. 6). Now the mission is to extend God's love and forgiveness to all the world, even if that means the church will experience the suffering the Lord has known. This is the power of Jesus' ascension. How do you experience the power of God in the world? How do you experience the suffering of God in daily life?

Pray: **Ascended Lord, help us to follow you each and every day with faith in you and love for one another that your glory and power may fill the earth. Amen.**

SERVICE

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians he wrote, "I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers" (Ephesians 1:16). Prayer is an important practice of the Christian faith. Prayers are lifted to God in our homes and through emails, calls, visits, worship, and other settings. Who do you know that prays for you and others regularly? Write a thank you note.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

On Ascension Day we hear about Jesus rising up to heaven in a cloud. Make or buy a kite, pack a meal, and go for a picnic near a place where there are few trees. As you are eating think and talk about how the disciples may have felt when they saw Jesus ascend. Then fly your kite and as it rises say, "he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9b).

