

DSC Community Group
Sermon Summary, 04/15/2012

Title: "Out of Sight: The Joy of Jesus' Ascension"
Series: None

Text: Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:4-11
Preacher: Trent Hunter

Why were the disciples filled with great joy when Jesus left?

- Luke has given us two accounts of Jesus' ascension: Luke 24:50-53 and Acts 1:4-11. Luke retold the story with more detail at the front of Acts in order to highlight its importance and set the stage for the story that followed. In Luke 24, the account ends with a note about the disciples' joy in Jesus' departure. John 14-16 tells us that they were sorrowful at the news of Jesus' departure, so what changed? Acts 1:4-11 tells us how Jesus leaving was ultimately a reason for unconflicted "great joy."

1) Because Christ ascended to the Father's right hand (9)

- This is where Jesus said he was going (Lk. 22:63-71), and this is where the apostles preached that Jesus went (Acts 5:30-31). This was also the expectation of the entire Old Testament (Ps. 24; 110:1).
- Why is it good that Jesus is there? 1) His work is finished (Jn. 17:1-4; Heb. 1:3); 2) That Christ is at the Father's right hand means that he is sovereign over all things and over history (1 Pet. 3:22; Eph. 1:20-23; 1 Cor. 15:21-28). That's where Jesus brings us if we are with him (Eph. 2:6-7; Col. 3:1-3); He is leading his church as great shepherd (1 Pet. 5; Eph. 4); He is interceding for us (Ro. 8:34; Heb 4:14-16).

2) Because Christ ascended to send the Spirit (4-5, 8)

- Jesus promised the Holy Spirit just before his ascension and in John 14-16 (Jn. 14:25-29; 16:4-7).
- While the Spirit's purpose is to glorify the Son, our thoughts about him are largely inadequate. The Spirit inaugurated Jesus' public ministry, gave us the Scriptures, opens our hearts to receive them, is the guarantee of our inheritance (Eph. 1), testifies to us that we are children of God (Ro. 8:9-11), brings about Spiritual fruit (Gal. 5), and gives spiritual gifts (Eph. 4; Ro. 12; 2 Corinthians 12; 1 Pet. 4).
- Spurgeon: "Without the Spirit of God we can do nothing. We are as ships without wind or chariots without steeds. Like branches without sap, we are withered. Like coals without fire, we are useless." If the gospel of Luke is, as Luke says, the story of all that Jesus did and said until he was lifted up, the book of Acts is the story of all that Jesus did and said after He was lifted up through his Spirit.

3) Because Christ ascended to gather his people (6-8)

- The disciples' question in Acts 1:6 reveals that they were expecting something big, but were ahead of themselves. Jesus responds with a promise and with a command in 1:8. This parallels Matthew 28:18-20. God's plan for Israel was always a plan for the nations. They expected him to ascend his throne in Jerusalem. Jesus ascended his throne *from* Jerusalem. They expected him to gather his people from among the nations to Jerusalem. Jesus was gathering his people starting *from* Jerusalem. They expected him to restore the land of promise centered on Jerusalem. Jesus extended the borders of his land to the very ends of the earth, moving out *from* Jerusalem.
- Pentecost is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise of the Spirit (Acts 2). Peter's sermon can be summed up in three points: As Promised, 1) The Spirit Has Come to All Peoples; 2) Christ is Exalted, and You Were Wrong to Crucify Him; 3) Christ is Gathering His People, So Turn to Him Now.

4) Because Christ ascended to return in glory (9-11)

- A fascination with the return of Christ is as old as his departure. Jesus is clear that we won't know when, but the angels are clear that we will know how. Jesus will return the way he left, in regal glory (Matt. 24:30-31; Rev. 1:7). Jesus will return the way he left, in a body. Jesus took pains to prove that he had a real body and he will retain that body for all eternity.

Sample Questions

- How do other worldviews view the physical realm, or the body? What does the ascension of Christ have to do with Christianity's view of the physical? How would you describe Christ's body (1 Cor. 15:35ff).
- In this sermon, we considered a number of reasons that Jesus leaving his disciples would be a joyful thing. Which of these reasons caught your attention the most and why?
- According to Christ, which is better and why: being with Jesus in the flesh, or having his Spirit?
- How can Peter's sermon in Acts 2 encourage us in our evangelism of difficult people?