

May 28, 2017

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

-**Today:** We hope to have a morning catechism service (Rev. Hofman LD and an evening reading service. Confession of faith after the morning service.

-**Next Week:** We hope to have a morning catechism service and a **2:30 p.m.** service with Student Witvoet

This week **Wednesday**, May 31, 7:30 p.m. Study Groups meet

Advance Notice: We hope to have our church picnic on June 30

Offerings Today: 1st General Fund Next week: 1st General Fund
 2nd NRCEA 2nd School Fund
 -All the Lord willing-

There are **trips planned for POST-HIGH SCHOOL** young adults, including one for Northern Michigan August 3-5. For more information use the website www.KalamazooRetreats.org Use the password: (*printed only*).

Remember in Prayer:

-Those who have been unable to gather with us for some time, thinking especially of Mr. Decker and Mr. Roberts.
-Our widow and widower, our elderly, and the unborn, prodigal sons and daughters, any others who are unable to gather with us today, are under doctor's care, and all those who have hidden crosses.

.MEDITATION

The Ascension of Christ

"And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight." (Acts 1:9)

Jesus had told the apostles to wait for the promise of the Father. And then, oh miracle of heaven, when He had finished speaking, while they were looking at Him, suddenly a cloud engulfed Him and they saw Him move upwards in the clouds. He went straight to heaven.

What a reception He must have received. What great rejoicing there must have been in heaven. In our life here upon earth the best part of any trip is getting home - now Jesus is home at last.

No more cruelties, no more injustice, no more misunderstandings, no more beatings, no more sweat, blood and tears. Gethsemane is over - Calvary is past - the tomb is empty and the Son of God is home. He has gone from the cross to the crown. He has gone from the sinful earth to the glory of heaven - to the house of His Father.

He had led His disciples out until they were over against Bethany. The last time He had led the disciples this way was on the night of the Passover and betrayal. Then the way led to the foot of the same Mount of Olives, into the Garden of Gethsemane. That night was a pathway of suffering, leading to His sacrificial death for the redemption of a sin-lost people. The morning of Ascension Day is a path, a way of victory, celebrating the completion of the work of redemption. Then pain, crucifixion - but now joy, satisfaction, coronation.

This is the event the dear Redeemer had looked forward to when in deepest agony He prayed, "Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." His Savior heart is filled with that holy joy of which the writer to the Hebrews speaks in the twelfth chapter when he says of Jesus, "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God."

Before He left He told His disciples, "I send the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." And when the Lord Jesus had comforted and encouraged His disciples, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight. In Luke we can read it as follows: "And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." They looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up. Luke tells us, "And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." Oh, the Master had told them in all their misery, "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." There on the Mount all fears and doubts, all anxieties and perplexities are left behind. Despite their personal weaknesses and unfitness; despite their past ignorance and folly; despite the shameful record of their desertion, Christ confirms them in their apostleship, commissions them in His Name to go forth into all the world with the gospel of redemption and gives them the assurance of the outpouring and indwelling of the Spirit after they have tarried in Jerusalem. Above all it was to their welfare that the Lord Jesus, as Priest, lifted up His hands and blessed them. He is parted from them; not only to be nearer and more entirely with them, but He is now ever living to

make intercession for His poor people, and to fulfill all the promises of His Father.

Oh surely, He departed from them. They shall see Him no more as the suffering Savior, but by the light of heaven as the glorious King. Might they not feel as sheep without a Shepherd? No, for they know that their Shepherd is with them. With Pentecost He would fulfill His precious promise - the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

Now we have an important question. For the disciples there came a wonderful time at Jerusalem, but are you really in need for your soul? Listen then: The gospel of the ascended Christ brings us the assurance for His people that "God hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." How is that possible for a lost sinner? Well, God's people may learn from above that only through Him we can be saved from all our iniquities. This is only possible through Him who is at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us, says the Apostle.

When then the shadows lengthen, when infirmities and old age creep upon God's children, when at last they must enter the valley of the shadow of death, that they then might look in the spirit to the Mount of Olives and with the eye of faith view the Savior, blessing them with forgiveness, life, and salvation.

But there is much more. We have to learn by grace to believe Christ's return. He shall come in the air, and take up into heaven all the true believers, both those who are dead and those who are alive. Oh, it is the wish of my heart that the Lord will teach us what it is going to be forever in hell, through our own guilt, but also that we might learn to say by grace, what the old Apostle John wrote in 1 John 3:2-3, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." Don't forget: The ascended Lord comes back!

Rev. A.W. Verhoef (1917-1996)

Notes

Netherlands Reformed Congregation

Sioux Falls, SD



*Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made
the heaven and the earth by thy great
power and stretched out arm, and
there is nothing too hard for thee:
Jeremiah 32:17*

Church Times: 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 or 6:30 p.m.