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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
May 17, 2015  
Sunday after Ascension

Scripture Lessons: Ephesians 1:15-23, Luke 24:50-53

Hymns: 212; 221; 738; 223:1,5

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord  
and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Psalm 110

1. The LORD said to my Lord,

“Sit at My right hand,

Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”

2 The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion.

Rule in the midst of Your enemies!

3 Your people shall be volunteers

In the day of Your power;

In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning,

You have the dew of Your youth.

4 The LORD has sworn And will not relent,

“You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”

5 The Lord is at Your right hand;

He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath.

6 He shall judge among the nations,

He shall fill the places with dead bodies,

He shall execute the heads of many countries.

7 He shall drink of the brook by the wayside;

Therefore He shall lift up the head. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.  
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, Our Risen and Ascended Lord, dear fellow Redeemed:

**INTRO:** What are Big Days in One's Life?

We often look at this from a very subjective perspective. We think of birthdays and anniversaries. We also celebrate graduations. They stand out because of the achievement that was involved leading up to that day. A great deal of focused effort is required over a number of years for one to graduate at any level, but the challenge and pressure may indeed increase exponentially as one advances to higher degrees and even professional certificates.

One of the aspects of observing Ascension Day may be seen as Jesus achieving a goal, fulfilling a difficult and even dangerous mission, and then going home! That would indeed be cause for all of us who love Jesus to rejoice and celebrate the day year after year. This a great and marvelous truth, but there is more substance to Jesus' ascension than marking a successful safe homecoming for the Son of God. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, King David, centuries before Jesus was even born into the world, revealed what a wonder of grace is found for us in Jesus' Ascension. So on this occasion as much as any other we sing --

**THEME: Alleluia! Celebrating the Blessing  
of Jesus' Ascension!**

The first great blessing that David, the king of Israel, lays before us is that –

### **I. Jesus Rules over All the Earth.**

**Psalms 110:1-2** The LORD said to my Lord, 1. "Sit at My right hand,  
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." 2 The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!

In the opening words of our text King David acknowledges that the God of our salvation has made the Messiah, who was to be David's descendent, David's Lord, that is David's Master. Jesus used this

passage to silence His critics concerning the divine majesty of the Savior who was to come into the world. This is the clear intent of David's words. David is acknowledging that the One who was to be born of his family line, whose kingdom David had been told was to be an everlasting kingdom, was the One who would be David's Lord. These words of David prophesied of the exaltation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of David to the position of power and majesty at the right hand of God. This passage speaks to the wonder of the Jesus' Ascension. God exalted Jesus of Nazareth, the Man who had been born of the Virgin Mary, to the very throne of God with all might and dominion in His hands until the day which God the Father has determined when this world's time of grace comes to an end. Then all of Jesus' enemies will be in complete submission before Him.

That sounds great! We might even rejoice for Jesus to be so highly honored, but what's this mean for us? What's it mean for me? When we celebrate Christmas we know our Savior was born. On Good Friday we know Jesus redeemed us by paying the price for our sins. On Easter we know that Jesus' resurrection declares us to be at peace with God, and that we too shall rise from the dead to everlasting life. Why should I care about Jesus' ascension? I'm afraid that too many of us have lost sight of the answer to that question. We may not even regard this as a day of great significance for us and our salvation. We have mentioned in our service that it marks the successful completion of Jesus' mission as our Redeemer, but that is only the beginning. The point David made with his words of prophesy was regarding Jesus' power and authority.

Our text notes the rod of Jesus' strength coming out of Zion. The rod of Jesus' strength is the complete and total and devastating victory which Jesus won over the devil. He crushed him. The devil's power over us was torn down to nothing. Oh, for sure we still face temptations, but no longer can the devil even think of successfully accusing us of sin and guilt before the divine tribunal of God's justice. Jesus has established a perfect righteousness for us which God has credited to us, which we own in our hearts, which empowers our lives so that we might live in righteousness and purity forever.

This power of our Savior extends to all the earth. Of course the world will still mock and ridicule us. Yesterday morning a scholar spoke on public radio in a most condescending way regarding Christians who believe what the Bible says. He said progress in religion in America will be made once Christians get over their fear of having an adult conversation about religion which acknowledges that what science has discovered is true. It is not Christians who are afraid to have this adult conversation. It is the scientists themselves that ignore the very laws of nature in their obsession to deny the existence of the one true God, the Creator of all, and the Redeemer of this world, and the Sanctifier of those who will be saved. This is not only the truth, but this is the victory which Christ secured, and which is established forevermore by Jesus' ascension.

And yes, this impacts us in our manner of life. David says of us:

**Psalms 110:3** Your people shall be volunteers In the day of Your power; In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth.

We are privileged to serve the Lord. We serve the Lord with gladness. A literal translation of the second half of this verse is difficult but what it communicates to me is the kind of excitement that comes with a fresh start with a new life. That is exactly what we have in Jesus who ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. He did all that He did so that we might rejoice in the life which has secured for us, and which the Spirit of God has implanted in our hearts, that we might serve the Lord with gladness, even as He continues to serve us at the right hand of God.

## **II. Jesus Serves as a High Priest who Rules.**

**Psalms 110:4** "The LORD has sworn And will not relent, 'You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.'"

These words of divine proclamation are of great significance for us. The influence which the Lord Jesus has before the throne of God is very secure. It is as secure as it could ever be. It is forever. The God of our Salvation has sworn that Jesus, to whom the Father has granted all authority in heaven and on earth, will also serve with that power as Priest forever. A priest has two basic functions.

The first is to offer up sacrifices for the people. The second is to make intercession for the people before the throne of God. The basis of that mediation before God is the sacrifice Jesus made for sin once and for all when He offered up Himself (Hebrews 7:27). So we are assured that Jesus' mediation before God is effective. Paul wrote of it also in --

**1 Timothy 2:5-6** "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself a ransom for all."

It is not just Jesus' influence that is important or pertinent to us in our position. It is also His power. The importance of the Jesus being different from the Old Testament Priests is brought out here for us by the Holy Spirit. Jesus is High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was a king, the king of Salem. He was the king of peace. He was a king about whom we know of no beginning and of no end. Jesus is all these things not only in figure but in reality. He is the One who reigns. He reigns to bring us peace. He reigns with this gift of peace **forevermore**. This is assured because as King Jesus is also Judge. We are assured by Jesus' own words saying, "**The Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son**" (John 5:22). Jesus who ransomed us from sin and death is now also the final arbitrator of our case.

God has sworn and will not relent that this power has been entrusted to Jesus as our Priest and king, the priest who rules over all and judges all. Indeed --

### **III. Jesus Shall Return with Judgment and Justice.**

**Psalms 110:5-7** "The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. 6 He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries. 7 He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; Therefore He shall lift up the head."

The prophecy brings us back to the significance of Jesus being at the right hand of God. The reference directs our thoughts to the final judgment. The mighty of this world, the despots who reign

with terror, those who oppose the gospel of Christ, who would put to the sword those who confess Christ, these shall stand before the Lord Jesus on the last day. They shall be subject to the judgment of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He shall reign forever and ever.

This picture is spelled out in more detail in the Revelation of Jesus Christ to Saint John.

**Revelation 19:15-16** “Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”

The mighty of this world cannot stand before Jesus our risen and ascended Lord. His power is superior to all in this world. His might and dominion knows no bounds. This statement should strike fear in the hearts of those who oppose the Lord, but they persist in the arrogance of their unbelief. In the end they shall fall before Him whose Word is sharper than any two edged sword, and will bring upon the rulers of this world the fierceness and wrath of almighty God.

This should not cause us consternation or fear. This is an assurance of the ultimate victory which shall be apparent at the last day. For us it is a comfort to know that the Lord does remain in control, and the only reason, the only reason that our Lord holds back on this judgment is because:

**Psalms 145:8-9** “The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy. 9 The Lord is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works.”

and

**2 Peter 3:9** “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise (*to return in judgment*), as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

And so we wait for the Lord's return. We watch for His coming with great anticipation for with His coming will be the fulfillment of our final redemption when our bodies shall be glorified and we shall live before our Ascended Lord forevermore, basking in His grace and glory.

**AMEN.**

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.