

May 16, 2021

Ascension Sunday

WITNESSES TO THE WORLD

They stood, staring into heaven, as the last traces of Christ's Ascension faded from sight. The disciples were left with the promise of the Holy Spirit and Christ's last words: "Be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). They had seen the wonder of God, and now they were tasked to: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Fourteen hundred years earlier, the Jews also stood, gazing up in wonder of God on Mount Sinai. They had witnessed the plagues, the pillar of fire, the provision in the desert. Therefore, Moses commanded them: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

We, too, have seen the wonder of God: in our baptism, in our salvation, in communion, and in the way He has preserved us in our faith. Like the disciples gathered in awe after the Ascension, like the Israelites at the base of the mountain, we are witnesses of what God has done. And we, too, are called to testify.

We begin with our children, teaching them the Word of God, the Lutheran Confessions, and modeling righteous living to them. We are taught these things in our congregations, becoming equipped to reach out to our communities as witnesses for Christ. And as churches are representing God in their communities, we empower those in international ministry to reach the world.

On this Ascension Sunday, may we take the time to reflect on all that God has done, and may we stand as witnesses to our children, our congregations, our communities, and the world.

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