

## 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020 - Prayers for Ascension Day

*A short act of worship for use on Ascension Day.*

### Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,  
You were brought low,  
yet you have been lifted high.  
You were the servant of all,  
yet you are above all and beyond all.  
You were despised and rejected,  
yet your name is exalted above all names.  
Fully human, yet divine  
taken into heaven, yet here by our sides.  
You are higher than our highest thoughts,  
greater than our minds could ever grasp.  
So with all your people in every age,  
we bow before you and  
confess you as our risen Saviour,  
the King of kings, the Lord of lords,  
to the glory of God the Father.

Amen.

### Hymn: At the name of Jesus

At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,  
every tongue confess him King of glory now;  
'tis the Father's pleasure  
we should call him Lord,  
who from the beginning  
was the mighty Word.

Humbled for a season, to receive a name  
from the lips of sinners, unto whom he came;  
faithfully he bore it spotless to the last,  
brought it back victorious  
when from death he passed.

Bore it up triumphant, with its human light,  
through all ranks of creatures,  
to the central height,  
to the throne of Godhead,  
to the Father's breast,  
filled it with the glory of that perfect rest.

In your hearts enthrone him;  
there let him subdue  
all that is not holy, all that is not true.  
Crown him as your captain,  
in temptations' hour;  
let his will enfold you in its light and power.

For this same Lord Jesus  
shall return again,  
with his Father's glory  
with his angel train;  
for all wreaths of empire meet upon his brow,  
and our hearts confess him  
King of glory now.

### Reading: Acts 1:6-11

<sup>6</sup> So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?"

<sup>7</sup> He replied, "The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

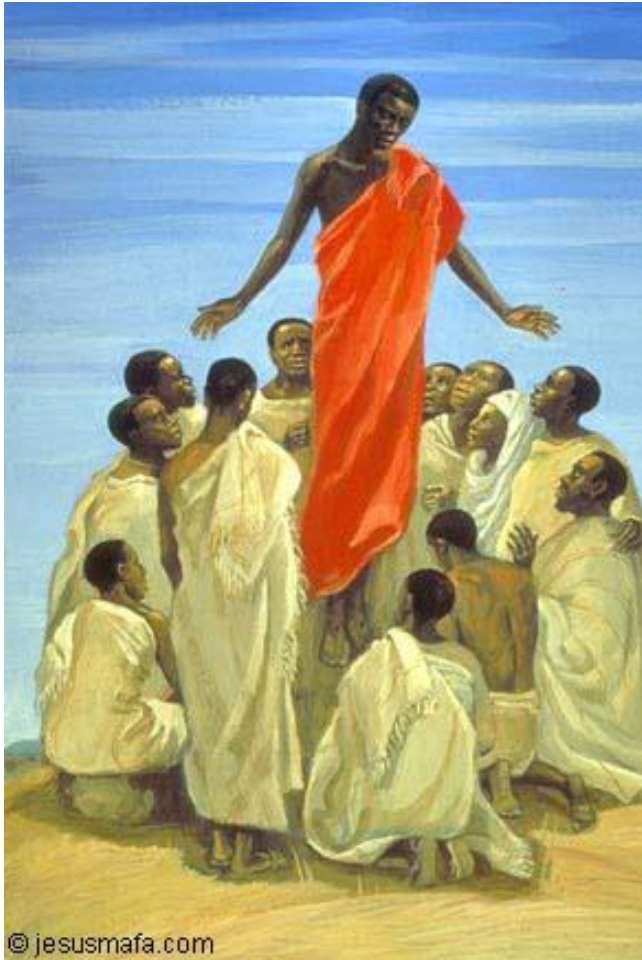
<sup>9</sup> After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. <sup>10</sup> As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. <sup>11</sup> "Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!"

### A Brief Reflection:

We cannot be sure precisely what happened that first Ascension Day, just quite how figurative the language used in trying to describe an indescribable moment, but what matters most is the truth behind it.

For the Apostles it perhaps meant that, for the first time in their lives they saw, the whole picture about Jesus, instead of simply a part. They had gradually come to see him as the Messiah, revered him as a teacher, and worshipped him as the risen Lord, they had not fully grasped the fact that he was one with God. At this moment, as he was taken from them, the truth dawned. In this man, who had walked beside them and whom they had followed for three extraordinary years, they had encountered not simply the Son of God, incredible though that was, but God himself, for Jesus and the Father were one.

The Ascension reminds us that Jesus was not only human like each of us, but also divine: wholly man yet wholly God. Lose sight of either of those truths, stress one at the cost of the other, and we will see only half the picture, missing out on the wonder of God's revelation in Christ.



### **For contemplation**

Jesus Christ ascended into heaven  
First born of a new creation  
Marking the way with his blood  
Shining as a light for all to see  
An advocate in heaven  
Now at the right hand of God.  
Holy Spirit descended from above  
Indwelling presence of God  
Opening our hearts  
to the Good News of Christ  
Leading us into all truth  
An advocate within  
Forever with all who are called  
by God's name.

### **Prayer of Response**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
we greet you as King of kings  
and Lord of lords

We acknowledge your greatness,  
we recognise your authority,  
we celebrate your exaltation,  
we commit ourselves to your kingdom.

Living Lord, open our eyes  
to the meaning of your Ascension.

Broaden our vision,  
enlarge our understanding,  
widen our perspectives,  
deepen our faith.

Equip us for all you would have us do,  
and so we may live to your glory  
and work for your kingdom.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.

### **Final Prayer**

Almighty and everlasting Father,  
you raised our Lord Jesus Christ  
to your right hand on high.  
As we rejoice in his exaltation,  
fill us with his Spirit,  
that we may go into all the world  
and faithfully proclaim the gospel.  
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Order of service leaflet compiled by Rev'd Phil Snelson.  
adapted from resources of Nick Fawcett