

Ascension - Out With the Old

by Erlo Stegen

Erlo Stegen's sermon on the Ascension highlights the significance of Jesus' farewell to His disciples, His suffering in Gethsemane, and the call for believers to recognize their sin and share the Gospel.

Duration: 24:41

Scripture: Mark 16:14

Topics: "Ascension", "Repentance"

Description

This sermon focuses on the ascension of Jesus into heaven, highlighting the significance of his departure after completing the work the Father had sent him to do on earth. It delves into the intense agony and suffering Jesus experienced at Gethsemane, emphasizing the weight of sin he bore for humanity. The sermon challenges listeners to reflect on their response to sin, the need for repentance, and the importance of standing with Jesus in times of trial and temptation.

Transcript

Later he appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table, and he rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, and he said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe.

In my name they will cast out demons and will speak with new tongues. They will take up serpents, and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.

So then after the Lord had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the words through the accompanying signs. So today we want to look at the ascension of our Lord into heaven.

It was forty days after his resurrection. After the Lord's resurrection, he from time to time appeared to his disciples. He'd appear to them and then leave again.

It wasn't like before where he was with them all the time. He would just appear and then leave them again. So over forty days he appeared to them frequently.

But now here with the ascension, we find him here bidding his disciples farewell. He had now finished his work that the Father had sent him to do here on earth. And he was now to return to heaven, to that glory that he had before he came to earth.

And now he was to return to heaven, to sit at the right hand of the Father. And that morning the disciples had said, let us go to the Mount of Olives. So they had prepared some food, some patkos for that journey there.

And then they made their way to the Mount of Olives at Gethsemane. That is where the Lord had suffered so much. No one has ever gone through such pain and trouble.

He was so troubled like no one ever before as the Lord had gone through there in Gethsemane. He went with his disciples. He had gone on that day when he went to pray and he left the eight at a certain point and continued with just three of them, going further with them.

Remember at that time Judas had already left them. But on this specific day all eleven were there. There on the Mount of Olives, right near Gethsemane where the Lord had gone through so much pain.

So the Lord Jesus through his disciples ascended from that place where he had gone through so much agony. Remember how he had taken those three and asked them to stay there for a short while, Peter, James and John. But he then left them at a certain spot and he went a stone's throw away from there and that is where he prayed.

He left them with the instruction that they should pray that they fall not into temptation. And as he continued to go and pray alone, he got to that place and there he fell down. He didn't kneel down like someone who kneels down to pray.

He fell down to pray. In Greek it is literally to fall. He literally fell.

I don't know whether it was because he was so weak already because of all that he had gone through and was going through. And remember how he had prayed, he said, So Father Fitzgerald will take this cup away from me. Remember this cup was the cup of sin.

Your sin, my sin, our sin, the sin of the whole world that he had to drink. And he said, Oh Father, if it is your will, take this cup away from me. But Lord, not my, Father, not my will, but your will be done, he prayed.

But the stress, that agony was terrible. And no angel, no human being has ever or will ever go through such agony as he had to go through. And it was a terrible battle that he had to go through.

He sweated. And he didn't just sweat in an ordinary way, it said that his sweat drops were like drops of blood falling to the ground. Normally when a person sweats, it's perspiration, it's just water that runs down your face.

But with him it was blood that was running down, dripping down. I don't know what clothes he had on. Depending on how warmly you dressed, you also sweat.

I experienced it, even here after I've preached, I often go out and then I am wet with perspiration. But whatever he was wearing on that day must have been filled with blood as well. As a result of his sweating.

After he had fallen down there, he got up. And he went up and down because of the agony that he was in. He got to his disciples.

He found them fast asleep. Because they were also exhausted and they were also going through this agony. And the Lord challenged them, he said, could you not watch with me just this one hour? And so, just like those disciples, so we also were asleep.

We didn't go through that agony which the Lord had to go through. And he said, could you not watch with me just this one hour? And then he went back to that spot again where he fell down again and prayed. And thereafter he got up again and went back to his disciples.

He needed their support. But we gave him no support. He suffered alone.

He came back again. And the second and the third time. Every time found them asleep.

And then the third time he said to them, well get up for the enemy is close at hand. Jesus had to suffer terribly because of our sin. But then we deny our sin, we deny having done it or we justify it or we just take it lightly.

The Mount of Olives, Gethsemane was the place where Jesus went through the worst agony imaginable, where it was like hell itself. Because of our sin. But we take sin lightly.

And we just do it again. And then we cover up our sin. And then we justify the sin we have done.

And then we blame others and point out their wrong and their sin and don't point out our own. There's no regret and remorse for our own sin. So the disciples were there on that mountain, that place where Jesus had suffered so much.

And we don't know how long they were there for, but it must have been quite some time because when he found them there, he came to them, they were busy eating. We don't know what they were eating. But they were there on the Mount of Olives.

And as you probably know, when they ate, they didn't sit at a table like we do, but they lay and leant on their elbow while they were eating. And then the Lord appeared to them. This was now the last time he would appear to them before his ascension.

And you can imagine what that is like. It's like when you say goodbye to your child for the last time. It was in that same place where the Lord Jesus had been humbled, humiliated, where he had been in such terrible agony like no one ever before.

But the amazing thing is that the Lord Jesus ascended from that place where he had gone through the worst suffering and agony, his greatest humiliation, he returned to the place of his greatest suffering. And he had almost died in that place, that agony and that suffering that he had gone through. And he had said that his soul was troubled unto death, so he was at death's door even then already.

So when we go to the place of his greatest suffering, we see him in his greatest victory.

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