

Getting Ready for Sunday

Devotions for the week of May 22 through May 26

Monday: The Ascension of Jesus is our theme for this coming Sunday. Today we want to read what Luke tells us Jesus said just prior to his ascension to heaven. Read Luke 24:44-49. In this passage Luke tells us that Jesus basically summarizes what he tried to help them understand in his resurrection appearances. He says that he came to show them that he had fulfilled the scriptures, that repentance and forgiveness should be proclaimed to all in Jesus' name, and that the disciples who had seen the resurrection were to serve as witnesses to Jesus' life and resurrection. Most of what Jesus said to them applies to us as well. We can see that Jesus did indeed fulfill so much of what the Old Testament has told us about the coming of the Messiah. As a response to our understanding of what Jesus has done, we too are to proclaim repentance and forgiveness to all in Jesus' name. And while we aren't witnesses to Jesus' physical life and resurrection with our senses, we can see from the response of the disciples that they encountered something life changing in Jesus and along with that, we have our own experiences of Jesus to share as well. Lord give us focus and strength to carry out what you have called us as your disciples to do. Amen.

Tuesday: Today we read the rest of Luke's story of the resurrection by reading Luke 24:50-53. This passage tells us that as Jesus was blessing them he was taken up to heaven. The Apostles and disciples rejoiced at what had happened and went back to Jerusalem to wait to be empowered as Jesus promised. I want you to notice that they didn't start on the mission that Jesus had given them immediately, nor were they supposed to start on that mission. First they had to be clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit that would come in just a few days. We too need to wait for the presence of the Holy Spirit to carry out our mission, but we get the Spirit without having to wait for it, for Jesus has told us that the moment we choose Jesus as our Lord that the Holy Spirit comes to make its home in our hearts. So get to work, it is the job of us as disciples.

Wednesday: Today we read a passage of scripture that speaks about the power that Jesus has as he is seated at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. Read Psalm 47:5-9. While the writer of this Psalm probably didn't imagine Jesus as the one going up with a shout of celebration we certainly can. And as we see him raised up with God we know that our Lord Jesus rules with great power over all of creation. Amen to that!

Thursday: Today we read a passage that again celebrates the power of God shown in and through Jesus our Lord. Read Ephesians 1:15-23. As Paul speaks to the church he reflects that God the Father has shown his wonderful power by first raising Jesus from the grave, but he also shows His power by raising Jesus up to the right hand of the Father's throne, far above all other power and authority. Yes! Lord Jesus reigns! And one day he will return to the new earth where he will reign among us, his people for all time! Amen.

Friday: Today we read the continuation of Luke's story of Jesus' Ascension as he tells us more of what happened when Jesus was lifted up in the second volume of his work in Acts 1:6-11. Luke adds to his story by telling us that when the disciples saw Jesus ascend into heaven there were two angels who appeared asking them why they were just standing there looking up. Basically the angels say, "He'll be back the same way he went up but now your job isn't to just stand there; instead your job is to do what Jesus told you to do, be his witnesses, telling everyone you can about repentance and forgiveness in Jesus by being witnesses to his great life and power. Amen.