

Proof of His Ascension (Luke 24:50-53)
Cumberland UMC
May 24, 2020

⁵⁰When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵²Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

There are some occurrences in Scripture that leave me thinking, I wonder what it would have been like if I had the privilege of being there when a particular or specific event had taken place? As I read today's passage of scripture, that very thought came to mind for me. If I had been one of the followers of Christ alluded to in Luke 24:50-53, how would I have dealt with that experience? Would I be shocked, taken aback or dumbfounded? These are legitimate questions for each of us to consider. The experiences that others encountered in Scripture were special in many instances. Often, we have a tendency to forget that these individuals were similar to us. They were created in the image of God, yet they were human and they had feelings like us.

Historically speaking, we know that this event was a major act that took place in relation to Jesus Christ. Forty days had gone by since Christ was resurrected. Everything that Christ had shared with his followers had come to fruition. Here is yet one more thing that God uses to help legitimize the deity of Jesus Christ. Based on Luke's account of this experience for Christ's followers, they were able to witness something that had to stick with them for the remainder of their lives. This moment would be etched in their minds so that they could share it with others.

Years later, we still place great emphasis on this special event that occurred with followers of Christ. We do it so often and sometimes without even understanding the significance of what we are doing. How many times have you recited the Apostles Creed and stated, "He ascended into Heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father, Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." We have those words

memorized and we can say them with the quickness.

Would you agree with me that the words we utter when we are reciting the Apostles Creed are powerful words? They have deep meaning and purpose for each of us. The initial followers of Christ as depicted by Luke in this gospel were privileged to get a close-up view to Christ's ascension. Neither of us had the privilege of being there with Christ's followers on that special day, but I was blessed to get a vivid picture of the sky about 13 years ago when I returned to Norfolk, Virginia for a ship's reunion. In viewing that picture, I often imagine the scene depicted in Luke 24:50-53 as Jesus' followers witnessed Him lifting up His hands to Heaven before them. As He lifts up His hands to God the Father, Jesus is mindful that those who follow Him will need covering for the journey ahead. Not only would they need His covering, but they would need His blessing. He gave them exactly what they needed. Jesus at that moment, was making provision for His followers. You do realize that we also have access to what they have!

I said earlier in the message that I wished that I could have been there at Christ's ascension. Obviously, that was not possible. Today, even though we did not have the privilege or opportunity to be there to witness His ascension, Luke tells us that it did occur. Our faith helps us to affirm that it occurred because when we gather together, every now and then, we remind ourselves that Jesus did ascend to Heaven. I hope that you're glad that He did because when He did, it substantiated yet another claim of His that He is the Son of God or God Incarnate. That's proof enough for me that He is who He says He is. There is no one else like Jesus, no one!

If you are convinced that He ascended to Heaven on that special day, you too will do like the earlier followers of Christ did, you will worship Him and be joyful that you have a relationship with Him. That's proof enough for me to continually worship Him wherever and whenever I get a chance. We have proof of His ascension, therefore we should praise Him!