

## Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord: Witnesses to Dignity

This year for the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord into heaven, one phrase keeps playing in my mind. That phrase is “He is exalted.” Jesus is exalted and raised into heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father where He judges the living and the dead. What really does this mean, and what effect does this have on us?

First of all, as the eternal Son of the Father, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Word of God is for all time united to the Godhead that is the mystery of the Trinity, but that is considering the divine nature of the Second Person. When the Word became Flesh, the Second Person took on a human nature. He is now not just God, but also man. It is Jesus in his human nature that is raised to sit at the right hand of the Father, that is exalted.

This has profound implications for us. Due to His sharing in our human nature, we have a sharing in His dignity. Let me present this as an analogy. People in England who are born as members of the King or Queen’s family are called royals. They are treated with the dignity that belongs to the royal family. People who marry into the royal family are also treated with the dignity given to the royals. All in the royal family are expected to live in a way befitting of the dignity given them. That is why it is so upsetting for the English when a royal behaves in an undignified manner, unworthy of the position they hold in the realm.

Take this analogy and consider this. Due to the exaltation of Christ, we, who share his human nature, are given the dignity of being brothers and sisters of the Lord. Because the Second Person is the Eternal Son of God, we who have been given a share of his dignity, are sons and daughters of God. What dignity has been granted to us! Ben Fielding and Reuben Morgan of Hillsong Worship in the hymn *Who You Say I Am* captured this brilliantly:

Who the Son sets free  
Oh is free indeed  
I’m a child of God  
Yes I am  
In my Father’s house  
There’s a place for me  
I’m a child of God  
Yes I am

I am chosen  
Not forsaken  
I am who You say I am  
You are for me  
Not against me  
I am who You say I am ©CCLI License #2368115

And He says that we are children of God.

It is this dignity that we have been called to be witnesses to at the Ascension and beyond. When we live according to the dignity that has been given to us, people are attracted to the One who is the source of that dignity.

"Men of Galilee, why do you stare up into the sky. This Jesus who has as been taken up into heaven will return the same way." And the angels say to us, "People, stop wasting your time pining for the Lord, and instead get to work continuing his mission."

The call of Christianity is immediate. There is a whole world of people longing for lasting peace, for meaning in life, longing for dignity, the dignity that only He can give. We can't decide to go into action at some other time, some later on. Jesus calls us into ministry now.

Many times, the call comes through people who need us to reach out to them with a word or gesture when our minds might be on other things. Like children and Teens who ask the most important questions at the least opportune time, we are often called into ministry when we are quite busy with some other situation. We are hurrying to get dressed to attend a party or a meeting and a thirteen year old decides that this is a good time to ask something about smoking marijuana. We are trying to complete a job at work, and a co-worker stops by and mentions that since the baby was born, his wife goes into periods where she can't stop crying. He needs help with this very personal situation. The Lord's time is often not our time. But we have to get into action. We cannot and should not waste the Lord's time.

The number of disciples would not be limited to the eleven who remained faithful to Christ. All who believe in Him would be called to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to the world. That includes us. We need to get into the action. Christians have to be people of action. We were not given the Holy Spirit for our own well being. We were given the Spirit to use the Power of God to bring others to Christ.

We are given the Spirit to do battle for the Kingdom. There is a war going on. It is the war against evil. We need to be engaged. We need to do battle every day. We cannot, as the kids say, zone out, looking at the sky, waiting for the Lord to come back and do something. We need to fight the darkness that terrorizes the world. We need to fight the evil that reduces people to numbers, that leads some to treat others as less than human. We need to be people of the light, the Light of Christ. We need to be People of Dignity, the Dignity of Sons and Daughters of God.

"Stop looking up at the sky," the two witnesses call out to us. Jesus has ascended into heaven so we can receive the Spirit. Now, we need to fight for the Kingdom of God. We need to fight against the darkness. We need to kick open the door

Come Spirit!!

that binds others in slavery. We need to proclaim Jesus Christ with our lives.

So many people long to understand the reason for their existence. So many people are seeking meaning for their lives. So many people are looking for dignity! Dignity is here. It has been given to us. We are to give it to others. We are witnesses to exaltation of the Lord. We are witnesses to Dignity. We are sons and daughters of God. We are who He says we are.