

Jesus Christ in His Glory
Sermon – Ascension Day, June 2, 2019

Today I would like to explain a sentence of the Apostles' Creed: "He ascended into heaven, and He is seated at the right hand of the Father". Let us see all the blessings of this wondrous confession.

Everything that is happening here today, communion as a visible message and the sermon's message as an audible message, asks us to focus towards heaven. Let us turn our hearts and our minds from this world to the other world, from the visible to the invisible, into the center of Heaven, where God is sitting in His glorious throne shared with His son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The ascension of Jesus is not only a historical fact. It is not only about the miracle, which happened once, as Jesus Christ had gone from this visible world to the other invisible world in front of people's eyes.

Jesus Christ, who is ascended into heaven, now is telling us something extremely important in a very personal way: "My child, I died for you, I was resurrected for you, I saved you and now I am here back in my glory, which I left to come to the earth. Don't forget that your final home is here in heaven with me. I am the way here. I was telling you the truth, and I have everlasting life. One day, I will bring you home."

We need to hear this message because we often forget where we belong.

Sometimes, when we are standing next to a casket, we say sentences like:

- well, we all have to go sometime; we do not have a permanent city here on this earth as we read in Hebrews 13:14 or
- "we are strangers and wanderers." Hebrews 11:13

The truth is that we feel wonderful in our human skin, on this earth, on this planet. Here in Canada, we have such a wonderful, peaceful and comfortable life that we are not longing towards heaven, and we are not taking seriously that one day we, too, have to leave this earth. I met quite a few people who were extremely ill, but they still wanted to stay here. They were holding people's hands, asking them to hold them back here as much and as long they can. However, I also met people who were ready to leave.

I will share a memorable story from my childhood. In grade 5, I had a friend, John, who had five siblings. His mother was such a wonderful, nice and kind person, full

with love and she always had an amazing smile. She was our nurse. They attended the Baptist church. We heard that John's mother had cancer and she would die soon. John told me that one day her mother called all her children, one by one, into her room and talked to each of them for more than an hour. She shared with them their childhood stories and said goodbye to them. She told them that she had to move to God soon, but was asking them to support their father as good children, to be faithful to God, to love our Saviour Jesus Christ, and to keep and practice their faith for their entire lives.

Also, their mother reminded them, the day would come when they all would be together in heaven, and she would wait for them up there.

This story had such a powerful impact on me and, as a young child, I promised to myself, that one day if I will have children and if I might feel that my departure is near, I will say goodbye to my children and loved ones in the same way.

Lately, God brought me through some difficult times when I had surgeries. Every time I asked my children to be faithful to the Lord and, if my time might be here to go home, I would go to the Lord, and wait for them prayerfully.

A few months ago, I received a phone call to come to Simcoe Hospital because my friend, Dorothy, who was 92, was in the hospital, and her days were numbered. She was one of the most faithful members of my former congregation. She never missed a Sunday service or a Wednesday Bible study. She picked up the ladies and gave them a ride to my house where the events were held. Three months ago, I went to see her at Simcoe Hospital on a Wednesday. As I arrived in her room, her daughter informed me that her mother had not talked for a week because she was very tired, and I would not be able to communicate with her. However, Dorothy heard my voice as I was touching her hands; she opened her eyes and greeted me with a big smile. She grabbed my hand, and she was talking fluently. We had a nice visit. We recalled our best memories, then I read from the Bible, we prayed, and I sang her favourite hymns. With a gentle hug and a great smile, we said goodbye to each other, assuring each other that next time we will see each other will be in Heaven, in our Lord's Kingdom, which is prepared for us. As I waved goodbye to Dorothy, she was smiling at me. As I left the room, I was in tears.

Next day she was gone. Gone where? Gone home. Her daughter told me that after I left, Dorothy said to her: "I would prefer that Reverend Frank was my last visit. I do not want to see anybody else, because I want to go with this peace I received

from the Lord.” I know that she will be one of those people who will tell greet me at our Father’s house.

I mentioned that there are people who are afraid to die. Others are ready to go. What is the difference between them?

What do you think?

You are right.

- One knows where she will go; the other one doesn’t.
- One knows that she is saved and has a place prepared in heaven; the other one has no faith in eternal life.
- One had a loving and living relationship with Jesus Christ, and the other one had not.

I told you this once, and I would like to share with you again. If one day somebody would tell you that Revered Frank died, do not believe them. I will not die, but by God’s grace, I will move home, where Jesus Christ is on the right side of our Eternal God. I will change my address only.

Some people are desperate and consider it as a final tragedy if one of their relatives has to go through that invisible world from this visible world. The problem is that we put our life's tent into this earthly world as if we wanted to live here forever. We forget that we are invited to go to heaven. If we do believe this, then every passing minute and hour will bring us closer to the Lord.

I know, that there are even amongst church going Christians some people who do not want to hear about heaven or life after life. This life is enough for them; they think that when they die, all is going to be over. Life is over!

Well, Brothers and Sisters, I am convinced that no one dies without seeing God first. If someone was an unbeliever throughout his entire life, and did not believe in God and His invisible world, when he will be between our visible and for us the still invisible world, he will come to the point when he will realize he was wrong. Where the visible and invisible worlds meet each other, the unbeliever will be forced to find out that God, the Saviour, eternal life, judgment, and everything that he has denied - still exists. He will be faced with all those things he did not want to believe in his life.

A long time ago, I read about a great but unbeliever university professor, who devoted his entire life to science and wanted to serve it until his death. He called

some scientists around his bed to observe the process of his death and then to teach about their experiences, and the way he will die. For a while, he reported on some normal processes of what he experienced on his death bed. Then, once he stopped, and after a long silence, he suddenly got up in his bed and shouted, “There is an eternity, there is God”... and he died

Probably you know that, in the 20th century, Stalin, the Russian dictator, murdered more than 24 million people, because they were believers and did not want to serve a godless, Communist regime. His daughter, who immigrated as a refugee to the United States, wrote a book about her father Stalin. In her book, she says that, when Stalin died, he was fighting with himself for more than a week. He yelled and screamed in his death bed. His last words were: “There is still a God.”

If you asked me what happens at that moment between the human soul and God, I would say it is a secret. Everybody will experience that for him or herself. I believe that God can call a person in his last moment for salvation. However, also, I am convinced that some people will be late. No one can expect that if he has despised the grace of God throughout his life on earth, he will find it at the moment of death. Today is the time to receive God's salvation and His grace. You can already rejoice about the good news that you have a place prepared in heaven by your Lord Jesus Christ.

If you would like to get there, you know which road you have to follow. Jesus said: “I am the way.”

Let us bow our head before Him and glorify Him, who has all the power in heaven and earth, who is worshipped by the angels in eternity and who walk with us and is with us until we will see Him face to face in His glory. Amen