

THE WORD FOR TODAY

JESUS TAKEN UP INTO HEAVEN (Acts Chapter 1, verses 3-11)

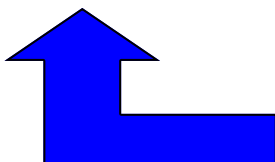


After the resurrection we tend to focus on the first day and week, but here Luke reminds us that Jesus appeared to the disciples often over several weeks doing very normal human things like eating and drinking which reassured them that he really was alive.

Perhaps they were lulled into thinking he would always be there with them. Although this is true in that he would always be with them in Spirit, he could not remain in bodily form. He needed to be there with them for a while so that they knew there was life after death, but they had to understand that this was life in heaven and not on earth. They are, however, left with two promises: the arrival of the Holy Spirit and the return of Christ in glory.

Today we too can be reassured that there is indeed life after death, and the same promises are real for us too, if we just believe.

Follow the words of this passage, beginning on the north wall of this little building. You will then walk round the church building anti-clockwise, pausing at various benches to read and think. There are seven boards to read. We use the New International Version of the Bible, which you can find on the internet under Bible Gateway. The whole “Word for Today” can be found on the church website, www.libertonkirk.net



Turn immediately left to find the first Bible extract on the bench

“After his suffering, Jesus showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.

He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God”

1

What a reassurance it is to us to know that Jesus was definitely alive. Someone who appears over a period of 40 days to a group of people is not a figment of their imagination. Death is not the end—we can be sure of it. We can also be sure that the kingdom of God will one day be a reality throughout heaven and earth—the kingdom Jesus spoke about when he was on earth as a treasure of great worth.



***Lord, thank you for witnesses telling me that you are definitely risen.
Thank you for the hope of a future beyond this life
and for the prospect of your kingdom of love and peace.***

(No. 2 is on the bench just round the corner of the church building you are looking at. This might mean having to walk on the grass if scaffolding is in the way. If so, and if you want to avoid this, take the left-hand path and walk round the church clockwise until you find No. 2)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.’”

2



This mysterious gift of the Holy Spirit— how could the disciples begin to know what it meant? If it was like John’s baptism then it meant a big change— something life-transforming.

With the Holy Spirit you don’t know what it is like until you experience it, because it’s a presence. It’s how we know Jesus is living; how we know his guidance through nudges in the right direction; how we know his comfort; how we know his strength. Our faith gives us this amazing encounter with our Lord as a free gift!

***Lord, thank you for your Holy Spirit,
the channel through which I know you with me day by day.
Keep my faith strong and unwavering to receive this amazing gift.***

(No. 3 is further along this side of the church)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“So when they met together, they asked him, ‘Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?’”

3

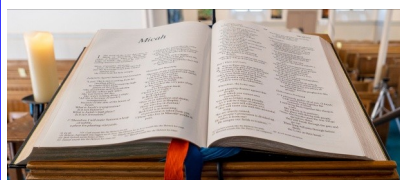


The disciples heard the word kingdom and all they could think of was their own country —was it going to be restored?

We all stay in our own little bubbles, particularly when the world in general is scary as it is at present. We don't see God's big picture. Yet we see his amazing creation all around us. Do we not trust this all-creating, all-loving God to restore his creation to what he originally intended it to be? Perhaps we need to immerse ourselves in his Word and get to know him better so that we can more fully understand.

***Lord, help me to see the bigger picture.
Deepen my faith in your power and in your love for your creation.
Draw me closer to you through the Bible and through prayer.***

(Walk along the back of the church to find No. 4 on the bench)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“He said to them: ‘It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.’”

4

One of the most difficult things to take on board is God’s timing. We sing in a well-known hymn: “a thousand ages in your sight are like an evening gone”, but how do we cope with that? The disciples were not the first to find it difficult—in Psalm 13 the psalmist asks: “How long, O Lord? Will you forget me for ever?”

Perhaps God expects us to be thinking of what we can do to help in the meantime? Jesus did say during his time on earth that the kingdom of God was like a tiny seed which grew into a large plant. As we read on we will find what God expects and how he will help us.



***Lord, help me to accept that your timing is not mine.
Give me patience and an unfailing trust in you.
While I wait, show me how I can help
to bring in your kingdom.***

(Walk further along the back of the church and turn right to find No. 5 on the bench)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

***“But you will receive power
when the Holy Spirit comes on you;
and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem,
and in all Judea and Samaria,
and to the ends of the earth.”***

5

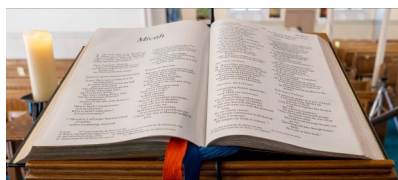


Here is the confirmation that we have a part to play in the coming of God’s kingdom, but God will empower us to do it. He does not leave us alone to figure out how to live our lives in his service and to his glory.

Whether we are his witnesses in Liberton, Gracemount, the Inch, or wherever we live or work, we will not be alone—the Holy Spirit will always be with us, embodying the risen Jesus and giving us the words we need, pointing us in the right direction.

***Lord, help me to recognise the power you provide.
Guide me in my daily life to witness to you and your love
to all those I come into contact with.***

(You will be able to see No. 6 on the first bench before the tower)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

*“After he said this,
he was taken up before their very eyes,
and a cloud hid him from their sight.”*

6

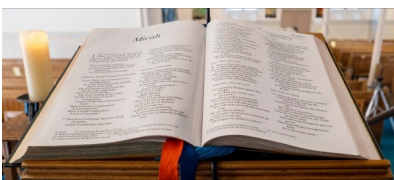
The Ascension of Jesus was very graphic and the disciples must have been totally taken aback by his sudden departure. Yet it had to happen—he could not remain on earth in bodily form. He was no longer visible to them, but crucially they knew he was alive and would remain so alongside his Father in Heaven. They had this mysterious gift of the Holy Spirit, with its promised power, to look forward to.

Jesus is not a God made of wood or stone—Jesus is unique among all gods as a living, breathing God. We know him as our living Saviour by that same Holy Spirit, our gift if we just have faith.



*Lord, thank you for being a living Lord.
Thank you for being my constant friend and guide
through the Holy Spirit in me.*

(You will find No. 7 beside the Covid Memorial and the Cairn, just past the tower)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky?’

7

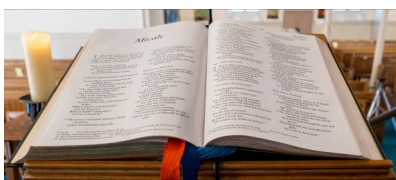
This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Has anybody ever said to you “Don’t just stand there—do something!” We can just freeze when something major happens, including if someone leaves, or dies. We sometimes need someone to get us going again with a reassurance that life goes on and that God’s promises will hold. The first disciples got going in a big way—the church went from strength to strength. It is our challenge now to keep it going!



*Lord, show me what you want me to do for you.
Let my life be lived for your glory and your kingdom
until you come again.*

Liberton Kirk has no minister at the moment, but you can contact us at minister@libertonkirk.net and your request will be dealt with by the appropriate person.



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