**The Ascension of Jesus**

**The Word**

Read together Acts 1:1-11

**The Big Idea**

As we enter 2025, the ascension of Jesus gives us great assurance our beloved status before our heavenly father and great hope in Jesus’ ability to work in all things for our good.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Did you take any time to reflect on your live in the new year? If, so share a couple of your reflections, goals, or hopes for the new year.

2. As discussed on Sunday, the ascension of Jesus is often an overlooked reality in some Christian circles. What questions or issues did Sunday’s message on the ascension raise in your mind?

3. Heading into 2025, what negative messages/voices are you having to contend with? How might Jesus’ ascension reframe or redeem that message/voice with a gospel alternative?

4. Heading into 2025, where specifically do you need to be reminded of the Lordship of the exalted Jesus? How might that affect how you approach that particular issue or situation?

**Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction

 A. Many people in society spend time reflecting and goal setting in the new year

B. As Christians our posture is one of dedication and surrender to God in a new year, praying that his kingdom come and offering ourselves as living sacrifices to his plans.

C. Today let’s consider what the Ascension of Jesus in Acts 1 means for us as we head into a new year together.

II. What the ascension of Jesus meant to him

 A. The ascension is his homecoming

1. Consider Jesus’ great homecoming story (the prodigal son) and the joy and celebration of a lost son coming home

2. Just imagine the homecoming in heaven over a perfectly faithful and obedient son who was sent on a dangerous mission and succeeded at every point, now coming home to his father.

3. If we love Jesus, we should be so happy about the ascension for his sake and the joy and celebration of coming home to his father as the now risen and exalted one.

 B. The ascension is his coronation day

1. Jesus ascension ultimately fulfills many of the promises made to Israel’s kings (see 2 Samuel 7:12-13, Psalm 110:1-2, Psalm 21:1-6)

2. Jesus was already Lord of the universe prior to his incarnation, but now he is the human conquering king, the Messiah (ala Gandalf the Gray vs. Gandalf the White). As the human Messiah, he has now received “All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me” (Mt 28:18)

III. What the ascension of Jesus means to us

 A. Jesus’ homecoming means we now have a safe home in the Father

1. In heaven Jesus is fulfilling his role as our faithful high priest (see Hebrews 4:14, 8:1, Romans 8:33-34, 1 John 2:1)

2. He intercedes on our behalf, praying and advocating continuously based on his once-for-all sacrifice on the cross.

3. Many of us head into 2025 with negative voices/messages in our heads about God’s view of us, but the Ascension tells us those voices aren’t from God, and those aren’t the voices God is hearing. Rather, he is hearing the voice of his Son, advocating and declaring us beloved, forgiven, approved.

 4. So we can approach God’s throne with confidence (Hb 4:16)

B. Jesus’ coronation means he is ruling over all things on our behalf and for our good

 1. God has made him ruler of all “for the church.” (Eph 1:20-23)

2. The early Christians’ basic conviction was “Jesus is Lord.” Jesus’ Lordship did not preclude them from very challenging circumstances, but it meant that he was with them, working in all circumstances for their ultimate good and for his glory.

3. Many of us head into 2025 with fears about the future (known and unknown). But the Ascension reminds us that the human Jesus who loves us and died for us is now in charge and actively ruling on our behalf. And that means that nothing in this world can ultimately harm us but we are safe in the ultimate sense of that word. It means goodness and mercy will go with us all the days of our lives.

IV. Benediction

Hebrews 13:20-21: May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, 21 equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.