

GOSPEL MESSAGE

May 26, 2022

ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

Your Promise Has Shipped

Most of us are familiar with order fulfillment: our menu selection is fulfilled by the kitchen at the restaurant; our online purchase is fulfilled by the warehouse and shipped to our home; our prescription is fulfilled by the pharmacist, who asks if we have any questions about the medication. Unfortunately, we are also familiar with the failures of fulfillment: the food items in the takeout bag are wrong; the goods delivered to our door are damaged; our order is unexpectedly canceled or changed.

Today's gospel passage is not about order fulfillment, but promise fulfillment. Jesus opens the minds of the disciples to see how the events of his death and resurrection are connected to the promises of God as found in Moses, the prophets, and the psalms. God's promises have been consistent all the way along, and God keeps those promises.

Jesus identifies the disciples as witnesses, not just of events, but of the fulfillment of God's promises. He then adds to the promise: they are to remain in the city until power from on high comes to them. After blessing them, Jesus ascends into heaven. The promise continues and the witness grows.

Sometimes the promises of new life in Jesus can feel far off. Our experiences of failed fulfillment can lower our expectations, even of what God is able to do in our lives. Certainly the disciples had their moments of doubt and struggle, times when their hope in God was disappointed. The gift of witness was not given to individuals but to the community, that the whole might carry along the parts.

After the ascension, the disciples returned to Jerusalem and worshiped Jesus. Their response to God's fulfilled promises was to witness and worship. Today we gather to worship the God who fulfills promises. From that worship we go out to witness to what God is still doing to bring life into the world.

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