**Reading** Luke 24:44-53 - Ascension

When people ask us as Christians what is the Ascension is all about, we tend to immediately respond with “It is the time when Jesus completes his appearances to the disciples after his resurrection and is taken up into heaven” I’ve always thought that it doesn’t’t really get as good a profile as it should though, especially when if you think about it the Ascension of Christ is the only occurrence in Christianity that can rival the resurrection in its significance. After all the Ascension of Christ is the culmination of the resurrection experience, but we only make just one day of celebrating this great wonder.

It is also one of those subjects that can be quite controversial, particularly in regard to its supernatural presentation, yet when you think about it, it’s not surprising that the supernatural should be evident at his departing for it was equally present in his birth, his life and his resurrection.

However, the reality of ascension can offer us a complex array of spiritual joy if we are able and ready to allow ourselves to enter into its realm.

I have always thought that the Ascension was the only fitting conclusion to the life of Jesus on earth, because it was the moment that all who followed him could remember his suffering and his death and finally see the promised conclusion, that his physical work had been done and he was now returning to heaven. The thought of this moment has always made me think of the 1980’s T.V programme called the A team. The A team was about a group of fugitive mercenaries who did good by foiling the plans of bad people, and at the end of every successful job the leader would light up a big cigar and always say the immortal words “I love it when a plan comes together”

For the disciples in the middle of this awesome experience, I imagine that deep down they were feeling the same way. I’m sure they would have being singing and celebrating about the moment that ‘the plan’ had finally come together.

However, this said, only part of the ultimate plan had been completed here, the next part is for us to achieve. In His descent, God brought divinity to earth. In His ascent, He brought humanity up into heaven and in doing so he has eternally linked us to his glory, so inviting us if you like to become part of his A. team.

The disappearance of the physicality of the leader did not mark the end of his work. There is plenty of evidence to show that his power and authority remained strong in the lives of his disciples, back then and of course now and until he returns again. And it is here that we find ourselves today caught up in that exact mystery. As we await the final conclusion, we find ourselves doing all that we can to bear the work of our saviour in the present time.

And it’s a work that purely by its nature can be difficult and challenging, harsh and sacrificial, yet we are drawn to it because we know like the original disciples that deep down it is worth something, it is fulfilling, and it’s a profound joy to be part of.

But this joy is not without its tribulations.

It is a hard life where we stand, and we hold great responsibility in keeping our focus toward Christ and perhaps today as we celebrate his ascension, we might be reminded of another kind of ascension, the kind that we can generate in the here and now.

And this is achieved by simply reminding ourselves that if we choose to be disciples of Christ, we must first become skilled at putting his will before our own. To do this we must find the courage to die to ourselves, seek resurrection and rise above our own little worlds thus releasing ourselves from such temporal expectations so we may be free to be lifted up.

Ascension in whatever form you celebrate it is fundamentally a vast sign of hope, it reveals to us that there is a pattern to the madness and its finality allows us to see that the plan is beginning to come together.

As the Scottish Baptist and teacher Oswald Chambers once said, “At his Ascension our Lord entered heaven and he left the door open for humanity to follow.”

And so, as we wait for our own eternal ascension, let us enjoy the one that has been given to us this day, let us once again re - turn our hearts towards Jesus, re-turn our minds to higher things and re-find the joy of being taken up in the ways of Christ. Amen