

# The Messenger



*Bringing God's word straight to your door!*



## Continually Surrounded

*"The LORD's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him. Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!" Psalm 32:10, 11*

God controls and allows every detail of our lives. Nothing happens without His knowledge and approval. Every day, little changes in schedule or small irritations occur. Every day, we can choose to let these obstacles upset us, or we can rest in the knowledge that God lovingly ordained them as small irritants to help us look to and rely on Him. For example, we can grumble about the frustrating traffic jam that is keeping us from getting somewhere on time, or we can remember that God knows about our deadlines and view the time sitting in traffic as an opportunity to pray. We can complain, or we can rejoice. May we allow the knowledge that we are continually surrounded by God's unfailing love to permeate our lives and chase away our complaints and fears.

### VERSE OF THE WEEK



### PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Holy and righteous God, you are the author of life, and you adopt us to be your children. Fill us with your words of life, that we may live as witnesses to the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## **Why Does Jesus Ascension Matter...by Dennis Boyd**

The Apostles were all together in one place and it was ten days after Jesus had gone back to heaven. Before he had left them, He had made a promise that the Holy Spirit would come to them and give them the power to tell people everywhere about Him. After Jesus rose from the dead, he spent forty days on earth before returning to heaven. Acts 1 tells us that after His suffering He showed himself to the Apostles and gave them convincing proof that He was alive and for those forty days He was on earth before He ascended to the Father.

Forty days does seem like a long time, but during that time, Jesus was still here on the earth following his resurrection and continually appearing to his disciples. With this, He showed them He was alive and taught them about the kingdom of God. It wasn't until the fortieth day that Jesus finally ascended into heaven.

Why might that matter? Well it certainly matters to us that Jesus died on the cross for our sins; and it matters that He rose from the dead, but what does it matter that He ascended into heaven? His ascension means quite a bit ... first of all it matters because with His ascension, He returned to the Father. We know that God is a trinity, and from the beginning of time the Father, Son and Holy Spirit always lived together in perfect union.

But then the unimaginable happened. God the Father sent his Son, and Jesus left the glories of heaven to enter our broken and sinful world. He left the Father's side to come to our side. He took on flesh to live a human life within this human world, and then he died on the cross for our sins. When we look at that empty cross it symbolizes His death ... and so too the empty tomb tells us He has risen. When we see the empty earth it tells us that He has ascended to heaven. For these reasons we see that ascension does matter because before He returned to the Father He had told all to "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." (Matthew 4:17). When He ascended, He gave us the Holy Spirit to glorify Christ and to lead all believers into all truth.

The night before He died on the cross we see in John 14 that He told the disciples that He would ask the Father to give us another Counselor to be with us forever which would be the Spirit of truth. He knew that the world might not accept Him, because it never saw Him or saw what He'd done on earth. Remember what Jesus said to the disciple Thomas when He told Him how blessed are those that believe without seeing Him and when we read in John 14, He was telling each of us not to ever let doubt ruin our faith.

Ascension should matter today for all Christians because with it, we know Jesus will come again. When He left earth to return to the Father, he did not leave us permanently ... He promised he would return to us. We also see in John 14 that we shouldn't let our hearts be troubled, but to trust in God and also in Jesus. He told us that in His Father's house were many rooms and that He was going there to prepare a place for us. He told us that after He went back to the Father, He'd come back and that He'd take each of us to be with Him in Heaven. There is a place in Heaven and we will get there when it is our time.

Ascension does matter to me because I know that when He ascended He let me know that even though I would be living in a world of trouble and distress that I need not worry because I'd be with Him in Heaven for eternity. I know there will be times when I will be discouraged but, though His ascension, I now have hope.

## The Word of the Lord...

### **First Reading: Acts 3:12-19**

<sup>12</sup>[Peter] addressed the people, "You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk?"<sup>13</sup>The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. <sup>14</sup>But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, <sup>15</sup>and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. <sup>16</sup>And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

<sup>17</sup>"And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. <sup>18</sup>In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. <sup>19</sup>Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out."

### **Psalm 4**

<sup>1</sup>Answer me when I call, O God of my right!  
You gave me room when I was in distress.  
Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer.  
<sup>2</sup>How long, you people, shall my honor suffer shame?  
How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies?  
<sup>3</sup>But know that the LORD has set apart the faithful for himself;  
the LORD hears when I call to him.  
<sup>4</sup>When you are disturbed, do not sin;  
ponder it on your beds, and be silent.  
<sup>5</sup>Offer right sacrifices,  
and put your trust in the LORD.  
<sup>6</sup>There are many who say, "O that we might see some good!  
Let the light of your face shine on us, O LORD!"  
<sup>7</sup>You have put gladness in my heart  
more than when their grain and wine abound.  
<sup>8</sup>I will both lie down and sleep in peace;  
for you alone, O LORD, make me lie down in safety.

### **Second Reading: 1 John 3:1-7**

<sup>1</sup>See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup>Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. <sup>3</sup>And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

<sup>4</sup>Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. <sup>5</sup>You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. <sup>6</sup>No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. <sup>7</sup>Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

### **Gospel Reading: Luke 24: 36b-48**

<sup>36b</sup>Jesus himself stood among [the disciples] and said to them, "Peace be with you." <sup>37</sup>They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. <sup>38</sup>He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup>Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." <sup>40</sup>And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. <sup>41</sup>While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" <sup>42</sup>They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup>and he took it and ate in their presence.

<sup>44</sup>Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." <sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, <sup>46</sup>and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup>and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things."



## Hymn of the Week by Lucy Jacob

### **We Are an Offering**

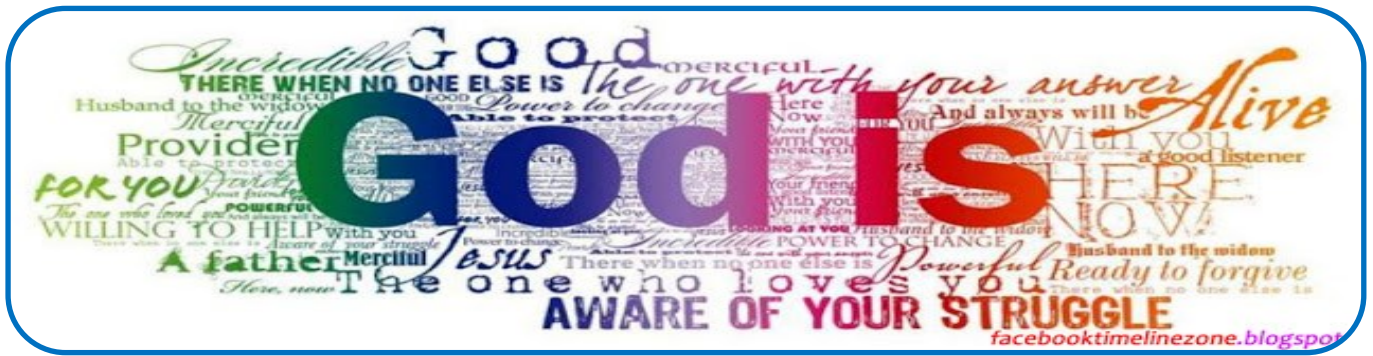
We lift our voices; we lift our hands;  
We lift our lives up to you: we are an offering.  
Lord use our voices; Lord, use our hands;  
Lord use our lives; they are yours: we are an offering.  
All that we have; all that we are; all that we hope to be,  
We give to you, we give to you.  
We lift our voices; We lift our hands;  
We lift our lives up to you: we are an offering;  
We are an offering.

This is a praise and worship song that reflects on the expanding 1 Chronicles 29::14b –“ For all things come of you, O Lord and of your own have we given you”. It also echoes Paul’s appeal for Christians to be living sacrifices (Romans 12:1) Text and Music was written by **Dwight Liles**

Dwight Liles is an ordained minister in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and lives in Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee, with his wife, Denise. He has had several hundred Christian songs recorded in a career spanning thirty years. Perhaps the Dove Award winning songwriter's best-known work is "We Are An Offering," a standard at churches the world over. Proficient on piano and guitar, Dwight's diverse catalog includes southern gospel, rock, rhythm and blues, pop, and country hits, including nineteen #1 songs. He has written or co-written many classic Southern Gospel songs. His songs have been recorded by such artists as the [Cathedral Quartet](#), [Legacy Five](#), and [Karen Peck And New River](#). However, the majority of his compositions have been recorded by the [Gaither Vocal Band](#).

When I sing this hymn I feel the Spirit moving. It touches my heart and soul with love received through the saving grace of Jesus.

Lucy Jacob



## Joke of the Week

As we were leaving church one Sunday, the preacher was standing at the door, as always, to shake the hands of the congregation. He took one man aside. The pastor said, "You need to join the Army of the Lord!"

My friend said, "I'm already in the Army of the Lord, Pastor."

Pastor questioned, "How come I don't see you except at Christmas and Easter?"

He whispered back, "I'm in the secret service."



Have Faith  
that things will work  
out, maybe not  
how you planned  
but how it's  
meant to be...





the Lord will  
Fight for you  
you need only  
to be still

exodus 14:14