

Sunday 11 August 2024 HC 2.1

Hymn - TIS 260 - He Walked on Earth

**He walked on earth, Showing glimpses of heaven
Demons death disease had no hand
The wind and the waves were obedient before Him
Well may they say who is this man**

Chorus

**Behold the Lamb of God
Who takes away our sin
The light of the world the Son of God
Worthy is the Lamb
To receive our praise
And glory and honour and power**

**He turned not His face From our pain and destruction
He drank the bitter cup to the end
He who knew no sin Took the punishment for us
Deserted by God man and friend *Chorus***

**On the third day He was raised up with glory
Reigning on high the risen Son
Now we have life A new hope a new future
Now we cry come Lord Jesus come *Chorus***

The Grace

of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you.
And also with you.

'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

Jesus said: 'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

Lord have mercy on us, and write your law in our hearts by your Holy Spirit.

Sentence of the Day

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. Acts 1:8

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Grant to us Lord, we beseech you, the spirit to think and do always such things as are right, that we who cannot do anything that is good without you, may by you be enabled to live according to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Isaiah 4:6-8

⁶“This is what the LORD says— Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. ⁷ Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come— yes, let them foretell what will come. ⁸ Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.”

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Psalm 105:1-9

¹ Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name;
make known among the nations what he has done.

² Sing to him, sing praise to him;
tell of all his wonderful acts.

³ Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

⁴ Look to the LORD and his strength;
seek his face always.

⁵ Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced,

⁶ you his servants, the descendants of Abraham,
his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.

⁷ He is the LORD our God;
his judgments are in all the earth.

⁸ He remembers his covenant forever,
the promise he made, for a thousand generations,

⁹ the covenant he made with Abraham,
the oath he swore to Isaac.

Acts 1:1-7, 21-24

¹ In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ² until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³ After his suffering, he presented himself to them 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. ⁴ 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. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” ⁶ Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ 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.” ⁹ After he said

this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. ¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? 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.” ¹² Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city. ¹³ When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴ They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

¹⁵ In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) ¹⁶ and said, “Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷ He was one of our number and shared in our ministry.” ²¹ Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, ²² beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.” ²³ So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. ²⁴ Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” ²⁶ Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

This is the word of the Lord **Thanks be to God**

Luke 1:1-4

¹ Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. ³ With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

This is the gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Sermon - Acts 1 - To the Ends of the Earth

Question Time

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the world and the church

Response: Christ Jesus, intercede for us, and in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Scripture Sentence

Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one, so that your Father who is in heaven may forgive your trespasses. Mark 11:25

Prayer of Approach

We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

The Confession

The Spirit of truth comes to convict us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement. Let us open our hearts and confess our sins in penitence and faith, confident in God's forgiveness.

Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent, and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Greeting of Peace

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn - TIS 607 - St Francis's Prayer

Chorus

Alleluia alleluia, Give thanks to the Risen Lord

Alleluia alleluia, Give praise to His Name

Jesus is Lord of all the earth, He is the King of creation. *Chorus*

Spread the good news, o'er all the earth, Jesus has died and has risen. *Chorus*

We have been crucified with Christ, Now we shall live forever. *Chorus*

God has proclaimed his gracious gift, New life for all alleluia. *Chorus*

Come let us praise the Living God, Joyfully sing to our Saviour. *Chorus*

Thanksgiving for Offering

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom.

Blessed be God for ever.

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty Creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary and lived as one of us. By his death on the cross, he offered the one true sacrifice for sin, and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Merciful God, we thank you for these gifts of your creation, this bread and wine, and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit, we who eat and drink them may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread; and when he had given you thanks he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks he gave it to his disciples, saying, Drink from this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded: proclaiming his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming again, we celebrate, with this bread and this cup, his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Renew us by your Holy Spirit, unite us in the body of your Son and bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom, and in whom, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, we worship you, Father, in songs of never-ending praise:

Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen.

The Holy Communion

As this broken bread was once many grains, which have been gathered together and made one bread: so may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.

The gifts of God for the people of God

Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts with thanksgiving.

The Lord's Supper is open to all who love the Lord. Grape juice is available.

Please come to the Communion Rail if you are able, observing appropriate social distancing.

After Communion

Gracious God, we thank you that in this sacrament you assure us of your goodness and love. Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and help us to grow in love and obedience that we may serve you in the world and finally be brought to that table where all your saints feast with you for ever.

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen

Notices

Hymn - TIS 685 - The Power of Your Love

Lord I come to You

Let my heart be, changed renewed

Flowing from the grace, That I found in You

And Lord I've come to know

The weaknesses I see in me, Will be stripped away

By the pow'r of Your love

Chorus

Hold me close, Let Your love surround me

Bring me near, Draw me to Your side

And as I wait, I'll rise up like the eagle, And I will soar with You

Your Spirit leads me on, In the pow'r of Your love

Lord unveil my eyes

Let me see You face to face

The knowledge of Your love, As You live in me

Lord renew my mind

As Your will unfolds in my life, In living ev'ry day

By the pow'r of Your love. Chorus

Blessing

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Sermon - Acts 1

Introduction

Today we are starting on a new sermon series, looking at the beginning of the book of Acts. The book of Acts was written down by the same fellow as the gospel of Luke. Neither Luke nor Acts specifically identifies Luke as their authors, but most authors agree with the early church tradition. Paul mentions Luke a few times in his letters, and he seems to fit the bill. We can therefore consider Luke/Acts as a unified book.

You will notice that they are both dedicated to Theophilus, who could be Lukes sponsor, and in his gospel, he makes it clear that he has carefully investigated everything from the beginning, that we may know the certainty of the things we have been taught. IN other words, he has done his research, and we are able to rely on what he has written for us, both in the gospel, and in Acts.

As we read through Acts, it is important we understand where it fits in the gospel narrative.

You will recall from my series on the gospel that there are four elements of the gospel: creation, sin, Jesus and restoration. In the Book of Acts the Bible starts to look at the restoration element of the gospel - the world after Jesus died and rose for our salvation, and also includes the new heaven and earth we will experience in heaven. Today, we obviously aren't in heaven yet, we are in a sort of intermediate period where we are waiting for it to be perfectly fulfilled when Jesus returns, and Acts tells us about the start of this period.

Now, with that introduction, let's start looking at Acts 1.

Setting the stage

Acts starts with Luke saying, In my former book (that is the gospel of Luke), Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

It is helpful at this point to flick back to the end of Luke to remind ourselves of what it says: *45 Then Jesus opened the apostles minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance for the forgiveness of sins*

will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

This can be seen as a summary of Acts: *repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, and I am going to send you what my Father has promised.*

Acts is all about how repentance for forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name started to be preached to all the nations, and how Jesus sent what his Father had promised.

Completing the team

This is what we will be looking at over the next couple of months, but this week, before the preaching gets started, God has to complete the team.

The 120 or so believers followed Jesus's instruction, they did not leave Jerusalem, but waited there, joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. They had been told to wait to be baptised with the Holy Spirit and receive power, but I don't think they understood what this meant.

Nevertheless, while they are waiting and praying, God leads the apostle Peter to understand that they need to replace Judas and bring the number of apostles back up to 12. Judas had been one of the apostles from the start, but had betrayed Jesus to those arresting him, and ultimately killed himself in remorse. Since the number twelve was highly significant to Jews, representing the number of the tribes of Israel, it was important that Judas be replaced with another apostle. Whoever they chose had to have been with them the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among them, 22 beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us, so that he could become a witness with the other disciples of Jesus's resurrection." The apostles were to authoritatively witness to Jesus, so it was important that they had seen everything themselves.

As it says, they found two men who met the requirements, Barsabbas and Matthias, and for want of further guidance from God, chose Matthias by throwing a dice. Consequently, Matthias is sometimes described as the Patron Saint of Gamblers which I found particularly amusing when I was part of the Church of St Matthias in Sydney.

Conclusion

As we come to the end of Acts chapter 1, the believers, including the twelve apostles, are huddled together in an upper room in Jerusalem, waiting for something to happen, but probably not sure what.

In the same way that Luke has carefully investigated everything that Jesus had done in order to accurately write his Gospel and his book of Acts, so the believers were very careful to reliably tell people about Jesus and what he had done, and made sure that their authoritative apostles had seen and been a part of everything Jesus had done. As it was critical for Luke that Theophilus knew the certainty of the things he had been taught.

John the Apostle, who was also huddled in that upper room with the other apostles, has the same priorities in his first letter when he says:

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched —this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ² The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³ We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ We write this to make our joy complete. 1 John 1:1-4

What the apostles reliably witnessed with their own eyes is the word of life, the word of eternal life. The apostles, including John and Matthias, proclaimed what they saw and heard that we might become Christians, having fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus, and with all other Christians through the Holy Spirit who Jesus sent, and indeed have that eternal life, and the complete joy that comes with that life.

The apostles' witness is reliable for those who hear and believe. As the apostles reliably proclaimed some 2000 years ago, so, we, also constantly in prayer, faithfully proclaim today in this place amongst this people, that we all may have fellowship with God the Father and Jesus the Son, and with all Christians, with complete joy.

Do you hear and believe this reliable word?