

# SERMON

## 2025 Lutheran Women in Mission Sunday

By Rev. Mark Maas, LWML Senior Pastoral Counselor

Sunday

### WHEN WILL WE MEET HIM AGAIN?

As you go through life there are those wonderful chance meetings that have great impact. You had that moment where you met your spouse, or that person who gave you a new insight, or maybe it was that meeting with the one person who by their witness moved you to change the direction you were going in life. Then you are left wondering when you will meet that person again.

In the Gospel reading for this day, Lutheran Women in Mission Sunday, we are at the scene of the Ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Think of what has happened here. Forty plus days earlier the Lord was on the cross. He was suffering and dying. He had cried out in anguish, *"My God, My God why have you forsaken me?"* Jesus, with his face hanging toward the ground due to the weight of what He was bearing, due to the horribleness of the crucifixion and the strain it put upon His body, due to the whippings and beatings, but even more so due to the wrath vented upon Him by His Father in heaven over sin which was not His own. Jesus in the midst of deep agony breathlessly states, *"It is finished,"* then as the Gospel of John records, *"and He bowed his head and gave up his spirit."* It is then Jesus' side is pierced by the spear, blood and water pour forth signifying fully and completely the Lord Jesus Christ had died. God had died. Jesus' body then is taken down from the cross, hurriedly wrapped with linen and spices and laid lifeless in a tomb that was not His own. Jesus' followers must have wondered when they would meet with Him ever again. But then, praise be to God three days later, the first day of the week, the first Easter Sunday occurs as Jesus steps forth from the tomb alive! Jesus had conquered death and the grave. He had risen victorious! Jesus had defeated death not only for Himself but for you the believer.

Then, in the time between Jesus' resurrection and the day of our text, His ascension, Jesus meets with His followers, He is alive! He is resurrected! Jesus had conquered the grave, stating for believers, stating for you who believe today, it's a reality, it is truth, you shall not die but you shall live with Christ eternally! Then we come to this day, the day of the Ascension. Those forty days before this event must have been wondrous and inspiring, meeting with the Lord. Those there that day though must have left wondering, "Where will Jesus meet us next? What joy awaits us! This is great!"

Jesus brought teaching and blessings when He made those appearances, and people rejoiced at His meeting with them. Then this day. Jesus now ascends into the heavens, *“He parted from them.”* Now, they may have thought, “Well, that was a little different than His other times of leaving, but He has always come again. I wonder though where we will meet Him next?”

You through Scripture’s witness have read that Jesus didn’t appear to them again bodily on earth. But, as you know, Jesus didn’t leave them without His presence; He didn’t leave them without Him being a part of their lives. It is as Jesus promised, *“I will not leave you as orphans”* (John 14:18a).

At His ascension, Jesus had given them an assignment to carry out, one which would occupy their time, their talent, and their treasure. The assignment which Jesus gave them has ramifications for you yet to this very day. For you are the recipients of their work, you are those who have heard the proclamation, *“that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his [Christ’s] name to all nations.”* That very proclamation has come to you. For you are those who have heard of the need of repentance and forgiveness through this Lord Jesus Christ. For you have had those occasions in your life where you have wondered just where the Lord Jesus is for you. Just as those that day who witnessed the ascension may have left thinking “Where will Jesus meet with us next?” So too, you go through this life with doubts which easily arise from the challenges which come to you, doubts about the resurrection, and the promises which Christ brings. You question how God could love you, if God will meet with you, care for you. Where is this Jesus of promise? Where will Christ meet me, come to my aid? You are called to repent and recognize there is much over which you need to repent and know the reconciling peace with God. For of your own efforts and your own ways there is no ability in you to reconcile with God Almighty. By your works there can be no peace with God. That is why this proclamation of repentance and forgiveness in the name of Jesus is so vitally important.

This very proclamation of repentance and forgiveness has been given to the Church by the Lord Jesus Christ. You, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, have the responsibility to proclaim the message of Christ, to be that body which proclaims repentance and forgiveness, which shows forth the merciful Christ in what you do and say.

For this message, this merciful heart is what Christ wants people to hear and know, that they may know and live in His gracious hand.

Those who returned to Jerusalem with joy that Ascension Day wondered when they would meet with Jesus again. They met together and recalled the glorious gifts which this Lord Jesus had given them! Jesus did not yet meet with them. He came to them in the breaking of bread. He joined with them through the waters of Baptism. He came to them through the Word. Jesus was present with them for He came to them in the Means of Grace. Dear believer, the same is true today. You do not have to wonder where the Lord Jesus is, you don’t ever have to search for Him. You don’t ever need to wonder if He is present here with you in this life to lead and guide you, to comfort you.

Why?

Because the Lord Jesus yet comes to you. He comes to you in the Holy Supper. Yes, Jesus meets with you! He meets you in the waters of Holy Baptism, the Lord Jesus comes to you in this sacred act as you were baptized into the Lord's death and raised into the Lord's life, there you were granted a new life. (Romans 6:3–4) Yes, the Lord Jesus meets with you. For even through the Word of God the Lord Jesus meets you as He who is the Word made flesh, gives to you Himself in and through that Word. Your life is tied to Christ, for He gives to you the words of eternal life.

Life, true life is only given by the Lord Jesus Christ. In His means of grace, the Lord Jesus meets you!

When the Lord meets with you, He then brings to you His gifts. He gives to you His life. He gives to You forgiveness. He gives to you His peace. He gives to you His promises. He gives to you freedom! Freedom to live and express Him in the world. He meets you here in this world that you may know this God and Lord, now and today and to do so with great joy.

But as you know dear people of God there are many who do not meet with this Lord to know Him as their loving and gracious Savior. You are those who are blessed to know the forgiveness of sins. You are blessed to know this Jesus Christ who has done all things necessary for your salvation. You are blessed to know you have a glorious home to which you look forward, where you know you will meet with the Lord for an eternity. You who know this Lord, you are the church given this Ascension Day assignment to have people meet this Lord, that they would have the joy of knowing this Lord who meets His people where they are to forgive, and aid, and strengthen them, to give them a life of hope and peace.

Dear people of God, it is a monumental but vitally necessary task. You have the immense joy of knowing you have a partner in this work. Your LWML works to carry the Gospel to those very people who need to meet this Lord Jesus Christ. They are involved in so many ways the world over. They are the ones who gather blankets to take to those who are going through tragedy. They are the ones who put meals into the mouths of those who have gone through disasters as they aid relief efforts. They are the ones who on your behalf make certain that people in Africa have access to the Word of God. They are the ones who become for you, in numerous places, the very heart and hands of the compassionate, merciful Lord who saves, who meets people where they are and grants them life.

You have the joy of an amazing partnership in the Gospel as you give of your treasures, give of your time, and give of your talents. They support, encourage, and uplift missionaries and places of compassion, spreading for you the message of repentance and the forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name. Through their efforts, their commitment, and their joy in service, your gifts touch so many lives, so many people. You have had such an amazing impact. What a tremendous heart, hands, and voice are yours as you partner with them in the Gospel.

Yes, through these efforts you aid people in meeting the Lord. Here it is a gracious meeting that they may know where He is, and that He continues to meet people through His church, here God's people gather, for the joy of knowing repentance and forgiveness in His name.

Where is our Lord? He is here, in the heart, hands, and voice of His people. He is there in the LWML that as they in their efforts may reach others with the message of repentance and forgiveness in His name.

The Lord is where His Word is preached, and His Sacraments are rightly administered in His name. Yes, you are blessed, for the Lord continues to meet with His people, to meet with you, and you have forgiveness and life in His name. How blessed and enriched you are! Amen.

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. ESV Text Edition: 2025. The ESV text may not be quoted in any publication made available to the public by a Creative Commons license. The ESV may not be translated in whole or in part into any other language. Used by permission. All rights reserved.