

To Him who has risen, who has ascended on high and led your bondage into bondage, to Him who lives and reigns at the right hand of the Father – all glory, dominion, and honor be His. To you who have been made alive, who are seated with Him in the heavenly places – all grace, peace, and blessing be yours.

**PRAY: Dear Lord Jesus, send us Your Spirit of truth, for Your Word is truth, Amen.**

**Be Enlightened ... Know the Power of His Ascension**

In the name of Jesus, dear fellow heirs of His inheritance,

Solar power is defined as the conversion of sunlight into electricity. Using sunlight as power is a valuable area of research because it provides what they call “renewable energy.”

Do you wish you had a source of renewable energy? My mom would always refer to the need for a person to recharge their batteries. Maybe you need a nap. Maybe you need a vacation. Maybe you just need something productive to do.

Where do you get your energy? Have you been running your life on a hamster wheel? When we are most worn out, when we never seeming to get where we want to be, when batteries are low, even the easiest of tasks becomes darkened. The simple task of communication becomes a challenge. We struggle to find patience; we struggle to think through our words and actions. We push and push, work and work, think and think, until there is nothing left. What sort of power will be able to cast out darkness and renew our energy to believe and to live according to God’s will?

**BE ENLIGHTENED ... KNOW THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION.**

Our text for this Ascension festival comes from Ephesians chapter 1, verses 15-23:

***Ephesians 1:15–23 (NKJV)***

**15** *Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,*

**16** *do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:*

**17** *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,*

**18** *the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*

**19** *and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power*

*20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,*

*21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.*

*22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,*

*23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!

**PRAY: Dear Lord Jesus, do not leave us orphans, but send us Your Spirit as You have so promised. Illumine our hearts and minds with a spirit of wisdom and revelation. Amen.**

While sunlight is free, energy is not. Solar panels must be built, installed, and maintained and still they don't last forever. Power being harnessed requires work being done. It comes at a cost.

What is Paul's prayer for you? "That the eyes of your understanding (literally "heart") would be enlightened." And how? "By knowing the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe." And what is this power? This is "the power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places."

This "right hand" does not refer to a literal place any more than "all things under His feet" in verse 22. God does not have a hand or feet, for He is a spirit. For instance, when we say "he's my right hand man" we don't mean anything in regard to where this person is, but who he is. We mean, this guy is my most trusted companion. So when we confess in the Creeds that Jesus "sits at the right hand of the Father," we are not talking about a place or a posture; we are talking about a position and a power. The right hand is the most prominent position of power anyone could possess in God's kingdom. It was granted to Jesus by means of His ascension.

In God's kingdom, this right hand power surpasses all others. It is "exceedingly great, a mighty power." If you are looking to illumine our burnt out bulbs, then this is the source to go to.

This is your light bulb moment. In this knowledge, God is giving you a spirit of wisdom and revelation. God is harnessing His power and putting it to work for the sake of His kingdom.

Paul prays "that the eyes of your heart would be opened." A spiritual sight. That you may know... That you may know the power that is being worked in you who believe, which is the same power worked when Jesus was raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of God.

However the cost of conversion is just too much for us afford. We are like a hamster on a wheel trying to power a factory. The power that was required to turn our darkness into light is an endless run around where we get nowhere. This wheel leaves us empty, powerless, and darkened. And isn't that how we feel when we are drawn away from the light of the gospel?

This is how we become spiritually wiped out. Maybe you face a boss that demands long hours and offers little incentive – except that you get to keep your job. Maybe you face a puzzle at home that just won't fit together: a child, a friend, a spouse, and sibling who just won't fit into the place you want them. Maybe your flesh keeps telling you to give in: a short burst of temper here, lustful action there, a small relapse won't hurt. Pushing, working, thinking, ignoring, ... the hamster wheel get us nowhere and eventually our batteries expire and darkness sets in.

The cost to transfer this light from heaven to your heart required a great and mighty power. It cost God His Son.

Our death became His death; our cross became His cross; our darkness became His. "That you may know..." This is your light bulb moment. From a flicker to illumination. For you do know... **Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,**

**You know Him who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.**

You know His humiliation: He accepted our weakness and stepped into the hamster wheel for us, never giving in, never giving up, and dying for our sins.

**He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.**

You know His exaltation – God worked in Him the greatest power of salvation, raising Him from death to life, from our darkness to be our light, and seating Him in the highest heavens, above every name.

This reign of God's kingdom does not come in terms of earthly power. For our enemies are not earthly. What is it that really lures you to darkness, that pushes you till you can't go any further; who is it that tries to convince you that it is someone else's fault or that things will fit together if you just force them hard enough? It is not your boss. It is not your spouse.

As Paul writes – *Ephesians 6:12* 12 *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

The light that illumines your heart is not physical. As much as the challenges you face might physically or mentally wear you out, the real threat is more than physical or mental. The light that shines casts out the darkness of death and the devil. Know this power of His ascension ... For how does Jesus make Himself known to us, alive and exalted?

We read of it in our Scripture reading, *it was necessary for Christ to suffer and die and rise again ... in order that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached to all nations (Luke 24:46-47).*

You know Jesus alive and exalted by your sins forgiven. He comes to you in the spiritual reign of Word and Sacrament. As Paul writes, *Romans 1:16-17 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. This gospel preached and the Sacraments administered is the power of God's right hand, the place where Christ is found in the Church. Water – Bread and Wine – and the Word preached, here He is King.*

*Romans 8:32-34 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.*

Jesus is not seated in the highest office for Himself; He ascended for your sake, that He would send His Spirit to govern and guide your heart –

***21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.***

And think about this: if Jesus is the head of the Church which is His body, and all things are under His feet – then you who are joined to Him in baptism are likewise far above all principality and power and might and dominion. You reign with Him and in Him. All things work for your good.

Our enemies are not flesh and blood. What this means is that we conquer darkness by faith in Christ. We walk in Christ and treasure the kingdom which comes in the Word.

*Colossians 1:10-13 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,*

Each day is a day of enlightenment. The more and more we learn about our Lord's death and resurrection, the more and more we understand and endure all that the world places upon us.

This is the beginning of your inheritance – to know and to grow, to live in the resurrection of Christ, where He reigns and we trust Him. For He not only reigns over all things in this world, but also in the world to come –

*Matthew 25:34 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

We need to recharge our batteries. Find time to rest, for you mind, for your body. But above all find that much needed recharge for your soul. Know the solar-power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places. Know the conversion of God's Son-light into your own spiritual electricity. Its free. So use it. Harness it. Get off the wheel and soak-in the Son. Amen.