

Living the Story

Scripture Reading — 1 Timothy 3:14-16

The mystery from which true godliness springs is great: He appeared in the flesh . . . was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory. — 1 Timothy 3:16

Sometimes the Christian faith is seen as a stale checklist of teachings. The church proclaims that Jesus died and rose again. And then he ascended into heaven. But what difference does that make for our lives?

The ascension of Jesus may seem like a teaching that makes no difference. Compared to his victory over death at the resurrection, Jesus' ascension can seem almost an afterthought.

But the ascension has always been a part of the Christian story. The apostle Paul, summarizing that story here, reminds us that the Lord who "appeared in the flesh" was also "taken up in glory." It is from this whole story—not just part of it—that "true godliness springs" and our lives are changed.

Paul's summary here offers much more than a checklist of beliefs. It describes the wonder and mystery of the Savior whose story does not end in death, or even in rising from the dead, but continues in glory with the Father in heaven. And Jesus' going there makes it possible for us to go there too. With him, we can live in God's presence. And when he returns at the end of time, we will live with our Lord in the new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21-22)!

Jesus, who is "preached among the nations" as the Savior from sin, has ascended to reign in glory. May this give new vibrancy to our faith today!

Prayer

Holy God, if the story of your love for us seems stale, give us a glimpse of Jesus' glory and fill us with the vibrancy of your Spirit. Amen.

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