

## SERMON FOR ASCENSION DAY (LCSA): REV.1,4-8

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The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all +

Let us pray: *O King of glory, Lord of hosts, uplifted in triumph far above all heavens, leave us not without consolation but send us the Spirit of truth whom You promised from the Father, for you live and reign with Him and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

Dear friends of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ + Jesus is the Lord of all – and the King of kings in heaven and on earth. All authority in heaven and on earth are his. Everything is in his hand! On this holy day of his triumphant ascension to heaven we as living members of his Christian Church celebrate the glorious victory of our head and founder Jesus Christ: All glory and dominion be to him! He is the firstborn of the dead and the very first of the new creation. That is an awesome miracle of God right in the middle of our world witnessed to us by apostles and evangelists of the early Church and proclaimed amongst all nations up to this very day. Therefore with all angels and archangels we laud and magnify his holy name, praising him and saying: *Holy, Holy, Holy is our God, the Lord Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of the majesty of your glory* (Te Deum LSB 223) - we praise and glorify him – now and forever: Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

We praise our God for various reasons. Firstly for his vicarious satisfaction paying the ransom for the multitude of our sins by suffering on the cross in our stead, shedding his blood for us and our children and giving up his life so that we godless people would be forgiven and reconciled with God by his grace to live as his very own children and prosper as dearly beloved members of his family. The crucifixion was the final confirmation of his all consuming love for us and all people of this world – even when we were still sinners and enemies of the living God – pulling us all towards him from the ends of the world by his outstretched arms to be part of the innermost circle of his closest friends. That is our history and the firm foundation of our faith by which we are saved by God's grace and mercy. Even from the very foundation of this world God wanted all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of his truth (1.Tim.2,4) – which centers on his burning love for sinners and his mercy for the godless and his forgiving grace. The price for this was paid on Golgotha and the divine harvest of this glorious victory is still being brought into God's kingdom – practically the divine barns - which have lots of room for people from north and south, east and west. That's what Church global missions is all about: Collecting God's universal harvest into his open barns from the ends of the world!

We also laud, praise and magnify him for his victorious resurrection and ascension. See – with this God underlines his victorious rule and universal dominion. This is history. This is fact and reality already. There is nothing yet in the balance or waiting for this or that lucky coincidence. No, God is enthroned and nothing can dethrone him – and he rules in our favor and for our salvation. Therefore there is nothing that can harm us or prevent us from reaching our divine destiny prepared by the Father in

eternity. The fact that our brother Jesus Christ - the supreme judge, the king of kings and almighty ruler - sits at the right hand of God the Almighty in order to rule and reign forever and almightily over all creatures visible and invisible makes us rejoice and sing with loud praises and thanksgiving. This fact of your Lord's reign comforts us in all distress and trouble, because we realize that the misery of this time and age are just distractions from the glorious dominion of our Lord, which one day is to appear visible to all, when he returns again in glory at the end of time. Eventually we too are to be where he already is. He is our head, we are the limbs – and as he has successfully prepared and lead the way, we are confident that he is pulling us ever more successfully to follow him, be where he is and to finally share in his glory, peace and love without end. Because he is ruling without end even now nothing can separate us from his loving care! Because he controls everything nothing can really harm us anymore. Thanks to his gracious reign everything must ultimately serve our salvation and best. That is the good news of Christ's rule in heaven!

Until our Lord and Savior appears in glory for everybody to see, when everybody will proclaim his Lordship and every knee will bow before him, until then he exercises his gracious and merciful rule in his one, holy Christian Church worldwide. He does that through his Holy Spirit and thereby making holy, purifying, strengthening and comforting all who believing in him, distributing life and various gifts and benefits to them, shielding and protecting them against the devil and all sin (cf. CA III).

That is the reason, while we don't dare give up on the Church, on our congregation and even on our own faith. Rather we remain hopeful that the Lord will bless and keep us all in the true faith by his love, grace and mercy. Yes, he will see to it that the Church will be edified throughout the world being a true haven of peace, love, hope and faith in this world, where even our congregation and our people will be prepared for his final judgment through the strengthening of our faith in forgiveness of our sins and maladies, in the upkeep of our love for God and all people and in the upliftment of our hope in his good reign and rule.

Until he comes in glory we wait patiently and in faith, singing his praises now already in hopeful anticipation, loving his gracious appearance in our midst – even if it is hidden in the true presence in his holy body and blood in the most sacred sacrament, confident that he is coming to complete his good work of salvation, sanctification, redemption and healing which he has already started through his most holy gospel in his divine word - when he comes visibly on the clouds at the sound of the trumpet – completing his gracious work in perfection and divine triumph and will finally say the ultimate: It is done. It is finished. It is accomplished. Hallelujah!

We pray: Come Lord Jesus – come soon! Amen.