

May 12, 2024 – Ascension Sunday

“The Golden Feeling” by Pastor Julio Romero

Gospel: Luke 24:44-53

The story is told of a multi-millionaire businessman who greatly changed the lives of a sixth-grade class in a poor downtrodden township. This was an area where most of the students would not finish formal schooling.

He had been asked to speak to a class of 60 children in the sixth grade. What could he say to inspire these students, most of whom would drop out of school? He wondered how he could capture the attention of these students.

He scrapped his notes and decided to speak from his heart. “Stay in school,” he encouraged them, “and I’ll help pay the college fees for every one of you.”

At that moment the lives of these students changed. For the first time they had hope. Said one student, “I had something to look forward to, something waiting for me. It was a golden feeling.”

Nearly 90 percent of that class went on to graduate from high school.

Every time I read the story of our Lord Jesus’ ascension I ask the question, why did the disciples return to Jerusalem happy and filled with joy after seeing their friend and Lord ascending to heaven? The reason I think this way is because these disciples had seen their friend die, buried in a tomb, and taken away from them. Then they saw Him resurrected and this time they saw Him going back into His heavenly home, the place where His Father has many mansions. He went ahead of them to prepare a place for each of them as He had promised.

Seeing Him depart from them should not have been a happy moment but a sad one. I don’t see any of them feeling good knowing that Jesus was not going to be with them any longer. But He didn’t leave without a promise, without something to look forward to.

It was the promise that soon they were going to be clothed with power from on high and the promise that one day He was going to come back again, that perhaps created that golden feeling in them.

The Lord was not going to be with them, but they were not left without the expectation, the hope, the promise that something was going to happen.

Remember the story I began this sermon with, the story of the millionaire who promised a sixth-grade class that he would pay the students' fees to go to college.

One student said, "I had something to look forward to, something waiting for me. It was a golden feeling." So it was for the disciples, it was a golden feeling to look forward to the fulfillment of Jesus' promise. They had no idea what that power was going to be, but they knew that the Lord Jesus was going to be present in that power.

Somebody said that even though our Lord Jesus is no longer physically present in the world, His spiritual presence is a reality capable of surprising us.

And what a surprise He had for his disciples. Just a few days after He ascended to heaven, the Power of the Holy Spirit came to them. It came in the form of fire, wind and abilities to speak in tongues, perform miracles and more.

These disciples had no idea, no clue in what shape or form the promise the Lord Jesus made to them was going to be revealed to them, but somehow, they knew it was going to be extraordinary and special. That is a reason to be joyful, excited and happy, so they looked forward to that moment. They were waiting for that something the Lord Jesus promised to them.

I strongly believe that when there is nothing to look forward to, life becomes almost tasteless, dull and I may say boring. Every day, we need something to look forward to, something to spice up our days, something to strengthen our spirit, like a social gathering, a vacation, a phone conversation, a visit with a friend, or something really special, which is the manifestation of God in our daily lives.

It can be simple, little things, but with the power to break your routine, to make you smile.

The truth is that no matter what you are waiting for or whatever it is that you are looking forward to, either big or small, what matters is that it is the same God who provides them. We call them blessings, and it is up to us to recognize them as blessings, enjoy them and be thankful.

The disciples, after they saw the Lord Jesus ascending to heaven, went back to Jerusalem happy. They had the promise with them, the promise that power from on high was coming, and that one day he was going to come back.

Their joy is a sign that they were looking forward to the continuation of their relationship with our Lord Jesus even though he was no longer physically present with them.

I realize that this joy was a mutual feeling between Jesus, His disciples and us. The Lord Jesus went to heaven looking forward to the moment we turn our ways back to Him, to the moment the whole world sees Him as our Lord and Saviour, to the moment when there will be peace and justice in the world and our talents, time and treasures are shared with those who need it. Our Lord Jesus went back to heaven looking forward to the moment when we will love one another as He has loved us.

You and I are meant to fill the heart of our Lord Jesus with joy the same way He fills ours, and as we fill the heart of Jesus with joy, we fill the heart of those close to us with joy too. It is a win, win all around.

We want to experience that golden feeling of pleasing God and to look forward to the Lord's manifestation in our daily life, to seeing His promises being fulfilled in us through the presence of His Holy Spirit.

This golden feeling is perhaps what the disciples felt when they returned to Jerusalem after they saw Jesus' ascension to His heavenly home. They went back to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the Temple blessing God.

Here we are, worshiping, praising and blessing Jesus. Let's come back next week to this house of worship to do the same after a week of blessing each and every person we meet, so that we and our Lord Jesus have something to look forward to. **Amen.**

