

This I Believe: Small Group Guide

Week 4: Jesus' Ascension, Rule, and Return

March 22, 2026

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you felt completely out of control in a situation. How did you respond?

Sermon Summary

This sermon explores how belief in the ascended Jesus generates confidence in our lives. Just as the warm sun melts hard-packed snow, the ascended Son of God can melt away the layers of insecurity that grip our lives. The ascension provides four key assurances: Jesus is in charge, He is present with us through the Holy Spirit, He provides timely help, and He guarantees our eternal existence in heaven.

Key Scripture Passages

- Matthew 28:18 - "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me"
 - Philippians 2:9-11 - Jesus exalted to the highest place
 - Hebrews 4:14-16 - Approaching the throne of grace with confidence
 - John 16:7 - Jesus sending the Advocate
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Ascension

1. Before this sermon, how much thought had you given to Jesus' ascension? Why do you think this doctrine is sometimes overlooked compared to His death and resurrection?
2. The sermon presented four "no question" statements about the ascension. Which one resonates most with you right now, and why?
 - No question who is in charge
 - No question about God's presence
 - No question about timely help
 - No question about our future in heaven

Personal Reflection

3. The pastor said, "Peace is not the absence of trouble, but the presence of God." How have you experienced this truth in your own life? Share a specific example if you're comfortable.

4. What are the current "layers of insecurity" in your life that need the warmth of God's presence to melt them away?
5. The sermon mentioned that believers pray differently than unbelievers—starting with "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done." How does acknowledging God's sovereignty change the way you pray about your specific needs?

Applying the Truth

6. Read Hebrews 4:16 together. What does it mean practically to "approach the throne of grace with confidence"? What holds you back from doing this?
7. The pastor mentioned we receive "double intercession"—Jesus interceding at the Father's right hand AND the Holy Spirit interceding within us. How does this truth change your perspective on prayer and God's involvement in your life?
8. Jesus told His disciples, "It is for your good that I am going away." In what ways is Jesus' ascension actually better for us than if He had remained physically on earth?

Wrestling with Difficulty

9. The sermon acknowledged times when "it feels like God is not there" or isn't responding the way we want. How do we reconcile God's promise of timely help with experiences where prayers seem unanswered or help seems delayed?
10. The pastor asked: "Do you believe that Jesus is in charge? Because when you come to Him in your time of need and you ask very specifically for things to turn out a certain way and it doesn't, do you then doubt that He's in charge?" How would you answer this question honestly?

Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Jesus has all authority** - He reigns and rules over everything in heaven and earth
- ✓ **Ascension ≠ Absence** - Through the Holy Spirit, we have an even deeper presence of God than the disciples had
- ✓ **We have an Advocate** - Jesus intercedes for us at the Father's right hand while the Spirit intercedes within us
- ✓ **Help is timely** - God meets us in our time of need according to His perfect knowledge and timing
- ✓ **Our future is secure** - Jesus' bodily ascension guarantees our bodily resurrection and eternal joy

Closing Reflection

Read together the quote from the Heidelberg Catechism mentioned in the sermon:

"In all my distress and persecution, I turn my eyes to the heavens and confidently wait as judge the very one who has already stood trial in my place before God and so has removed the curse from me. All his enemies and mine he will condemn to everlasting punishment, but me and all his chosen ones he will take along with him into the joy and the glory of heaven."

Final Question: What would change in your daily life if you truly lived with the confidence that the ascended Jesus provides?

Closing Prayer

Pray together using the sermon's closing prayer or have group members pray specifically for the insecurities and needs shared during discussion.