

## **Sermon Given at the Anglican Parish of Kingscliff -St James Kingscliff & St Mark's Pottsville**

**Title:** The Ascended King and the Effective Church

**Scripture Passages:** Acts 1:1-11; Matthew 28:16–20

**Reading:** C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

### **Introduction**

Friends, today we celebrate Ascension Day. Forty days after Easter, Jesus led His disciples to a mountain. There he gave them a declaration and a commission. And then—He left. He ascended into heaven. But his parting words were not “Goodbye.” They were “I am with you always” (*Matthew 28:19-20*).

We gather this morning in a world that feels anything but ascended. Global uncertainty. Wars. Violence. Cost of living pressures. Poverty. Inequality. And the unprecedented killing of Christians by Islamic fundamentalists in Nigeria and other places. It is easy to ask: “Where is Jesus now? Is he really in charge?” Why does evil seem to have the upper hand?”

### **The Ascension Is Not an Absence**

In Matthew 28, we heard that the disciples worship the risen Christ, though some doubted. Then Jesus declares: “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me...*”

Not some. Not partial authority. *All authority*. The work of the Kingdom rests on Christ's authority, not on our ability. That authority includes authority over every terrorist, every tyrant, every tomb, every sickness, every crisis, every persecution. Because Jesus ascended, he is not absent—He is enthroned. He is not far away—He is interceding for us at the right hand of the Father.

The ascension means that the One who was crucified, who rose from the dead, now rules the universe. Evil, death, war, trauma, sin, and injustice have been defeated. Love has the last word. And because Jesus lives, all will be well. And if God is calling you to do a task for him today, believe that you can by the authority of the risen and ascended Christ.

### **The Danger of Earthly Fixation**

But here is the problem. Many of us Christians today have stopped looking up to the risen Christ and to heaven. We are so overwhelmed by the violence in this world, so consumed with fixing everything now, so overwhelmed by the cares and worries of this world, and the unbridled quest for pleasures and comfortable earthly life, that we have lost the eternal perspective.

That brings me to C.S. Lewis who wrote:

*“If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth ‘thrown in’; aim at earth and you will get neither.”*

Think about that. The very Christians who most boldly faced persecution—who went to the lions, who were hunted down by the pagan emperors, who stood before extremists, who died saying “Christ is King”—were the ones most focused on heaven. Because they knew this world is not all there is, they were fearless in serving it.

When we lose the ascension, we lose our nerve. We fight with earthly weapons. We panic. We worry. But when we remember that Jesus has ascended and will return in glory to judge the living and the dead, we gain supernatural courage.

### **The Commission and the Promise**

So what does the ascended Jesus say? *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.”* The Great Commission is a mandate for all of us. In Acts 1, Jesus told them to wait until the Holy Spirit comes, and to become his witnesses to the end of the earth (*cf Acts 1:8*). Even nations torn by war. Even nations where Christians are being killed. Every part of this earth needs the Gospel. Why? Because Jesus’ authority covers those nations and our nation too.

And then Jesus gives the promise that anchors every persecuted believer, then and now: *“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).*

Dear friends, we are not alone. In our fears, Jesus is there. In the prison cell, he is there. In the rubble of a bombed church, he is there. In the quiet terror of your heart this morning, Jesus is there. Give him your hand. Let him enter into you. Or rather allow the Holy Spirit to ‘get cracking in your life.’

### **The Invitation**

Today, Christ invites our hearts. He invites our repentance. We have been afraid. We have aimed at earthly safety instead of heavenly glory. But he has given his all for us—his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension. Let us give him our all in return.

Let us aim at heaven. And then watch how God uses us on earth.

### **Conclusion**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the tomb is empty. The Lord is risen. And he has ascended. He will come again to make all things well. Whatever is not well now in our personal and corporate lives will be well again when Jesus returns. Until then, do not be afraid. You are not alone. Aim at Heaven. And you will get earth thrown in.

May the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, God’s power in us, enable us to be witnesses of the crucified, risen and ascended Christ, until we see God face to face in heaven. Amen.

*The Rev’d Constantine Osuchukwu, AMDG.*  
17.05.2026