

(Confirmation of: Ryan Joseph Cutberth, Abel John Gullixson, Peter Wallace Sundby, Andrew Scott Wade, Autumn Kathryn Wade)

As follows in Jesus' name:

[Jesus prayed...] Father, I desire **that they also**, whom You have given Me, **may be with Me where I am**, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know You, I know You, and these know that You have sent Me. **I made known to them Your name, and I will continue to make it known**, that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them." (ESV)

*This is Your Word, heavenly Father; **sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth.** Amen.* (John 17:17)

Christ is risen! **He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**

In Jesus' name. **Amen**

Dearly beloved by the Lord, especially you, Autumn, Andrew, Peter, Abel, and Ryan, whom He has washed in His precious blood by Holy Baptism, to make you His holy child. The observance of the Ascension of our Lord today is a perfect occasion to celebrate Confirmation. With both of these occasions, we celebrate the work of the present, though invisible Lord Jesus.

When Jesus ascended into heaven, St. Luke reports that as His disciples **were looking on**, [Jesus] **was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight**.

St. Mark records that He **was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God**. Mark 16:19

The right hand of God isn't so much a location, but a position of having all power and authority over heaven and earth.

Jesus Himself tells us why He ascended. He said, "**if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also.**" John 14:3

And again, in our text, as Jesus prayed to His Father, He said, **Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me.**

What a comfort that is for us! That our Lord and God.. and brother who reigns over heaven and earth, not only **desires** that you **be with Him**, but also has the power to make it happen.

But He didn't use the power that we would naturally think of for this task.

He didn't just speak a word, and it was done.

He didn't just command an angel, or 10 legions of angels, to accomplish it.

He Himself came down and took on our flesh and blood in order to unite Himself to us forever.

He was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, so that He might live, die, and rise for us. (Our confirmands know this as Jesus' active and passive obedience.)

How taking on our flesh obligated Him to live a life of perfect obedience to His Father's will.

And since He is not only human, but also God,

His perfect obedience could serve as a substitute for you, in the place of your disobedience.

And His sacrificial and innocent death was the judgment and punishment for your unholiness.

You see, though God created us to be in perfect unity with Himself, creating us in His image, when Adam disobeyed, he lost the *image of God*, (our confirmands know this to mean that

he no longer had a perfect knowledge of God and His will, NOR the ability to perform it.)
And as he is the father of the human race, he passed it down to all of his naturally born children
— to you and me. (Our confirmands will recognize this as our *original or inherited sin*.)

That original sin and corruption makes us spiritually dead and subject to God's wrath from conception.
And because we don't naturally have a perfect knowledge of God,
we don't know God to be a merciful and gracious Triune spirit being,
who **desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.** ^{1 Timothy 2:4}
Instead, our corrupted conscience only knows Him to be a just and condemning judge,
who will punish us, not only for our original sin, but also for our *actual sins*,
those sinful thoughts, hurtful words, and selfish actions that plague our lives and offend God.
We might hope or wish Him to be lenient, but ultimately, we are scared of His perfect justice.
And so it was necessary that God revealed Himself: who He is and what His will is for us.

First, He did this through His prophets as He inspired these chosen men to speak and write His Word.
And so we have, not only a history recounting our origin and why we are the way we are,
but more specifically, we have the history of our salvation, as the Lord reveals Himself
throughout Scripture — as a God who acts and serves and saves His own creation.

In the OT, we read of accounts of how the Lord rescued and delivered His people in their distress.
We read of how He constantly encouraged them by telling them, 'I am with you,'
even though they couldn't always — in fact, very rarely — see Him.
And, truth be told, sometimes they felt like He had abandoned them... but He was always present.
Take for instance, when they were rebuilding the temple after the Babylonian Captivity.
The people were discouraged in their work because their neighbors were threatening to kill them.
So the Lord, through His prophet Nehemiah, encouraged them to continue the work, saying,
"Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." ^{Nehemiah 8:10}
And so they continued in the joy and strength of the Lord, even through their many trials,
and the temple was built, and sacrifices offered there continued to cleanse the people of their sin.

^{Galatians 4:4}

But when the fullness of time had come, the Lord revealed Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ.
Jesus served as our great prophet, speaking to us the Words of His Father and revealing His name,
as He prayed in our text, **I made known to them Your name, and I will continue to make it known,
that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them."**

...

A few weeks ago, we heard about the importance of the name of God, how it makes us holy,
how, when we are baptized, God's name is put upon us, and our sins are washed away,
how He sets us apart from this sinful world as His adopted children through faith.
To know God's name is to know who He is and what He has done for our salvation.

...

And in our text, Jesus reveals His Father once again calling Him, **"Righteous Father."**
In that name, Jesus teaches us that God is righteous, He demands perfection and holiness.
But through Jesus, we also know that the righteous Father sent His Son into the world as our substitute
so that He could declare you righteous also... (our confirmands know this as *justification*).

And so we hear Jesus in our text, on the night that He is to be betrayed, praying to His Father

of the love that they have for each other as well as for His people... and its a unifying, active love.
As Jesus, our great High Priest, prepared for His death the next day
by which He would die, carrying and atoning for the sins of the whole world,
He showed once again, that He is the God who acts to serve and save His own creation.

...

Like the Jews rebuilding the temple in the days of Nehemiah, Jesus doesn't want you living in fear,
— not of God, nor of the things of this world.

And so, as your heavenly Prophet, He continues to make His Father's name and works known to you
through His ministers today.

And as your ascended King, with all authority in heaven and on earth, He bids His ministers
to make disciples of all nations, by baptizing and teaching,
In other words, by giving and revealing to the world God's holy name and saving works.

God's ministers today desire that you have full confidence in Jesus' gracious presence.
And like St. Paul, we desire, that you live in the comfort and knowledge that

**There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus...
for... He.... has made you free from the law of sin and death.** Romans 8:1,2 NKJV

Though Jesus is not visible, He is present to declare to you through the mouth of His minister,
"I forgive you all your sins."

...

With Jesus always with you, graciously present to serve and deliver you,

You need **not be anxious about anything... but in everything by prayer and supplication
with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.** Philippians 4:6-7

He has proven time and time again, throughout Scripture and in our own times,
the care and compassion and love that He has for you.

And as He stated in our text, He desires that **you may be where He is**, that is, always in His presence.

Certainly that means that He desires you to be in paradise with Him for all eternity,
where **He will wipe away every tear from [your] eyes, and [where] death shall be no more,
neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore.**

But that also means that you would be where He is while still on this earth,

that you would be in His gracious presence in Word and Sacrament,

where He continually makes known to you and puts on you His Righteous Father's name
and continually declares you to be His righteous, holy child.

where He regularly gives to you His holy body and blood to confirm onto you the forgiveness of
your sins, and communes with you, that is, makes Himself one with you.

...

**Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure,
whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy
of praise, think about these things.** Philippians 4:8

Consider: what is more honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise
than your Lord's gracious presence with you?

Christ is risen! **He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Soli Deo Gloria