

There have been times I when have been accused of being blind. It usually happens while I was looking for a certain object, and even though I was told exactly where it was located, I would search diligently and still not find it. Then, the person who told me where it was would come, go to the spot where I was told it would be, and there it was! As the person handed it to me, they would say, "If you would have opened your eyes, you would have seen it." Now, I am not blind. I thought I was using my eyes, and I truly wanted to find that object, but, for whatever reason, it remained hidden from my sight. This can also be said of our spiritual sight, that which we can see only through the eyes of faith. At times we may want some comfort, some assurance from God that everything is going to turn out all right for us. So we pray about it, we read the Bible, but it does not bring us the comfort which we truly desire. What we need at that point in time is to have the Holy Spirit open our eyes to see the promises which God has made to us. That is the prayer which Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers. He prayed: **MAY THE EYES OF YOUR HEART BE ENLIGHTENED...** 1) to know the hope to which He has called you, and 2) to know His incomparably great power for us who believe. May the Holy Spirit take away our spiritual blindness by opening the eyes of our heart.

That truly is the work of the Holy Spirit. Paul had prayed, "**I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better.**" (17) Even though it was Jesus Who died on the cross to atone for the sins of the whole world, it is the work of the Holy Spirit that allows us to believe that Jesus' death was meant for me, personally, as well as for others. Because each one of us were dead in sin by nature, there was no way that we could have ever come to believe in Jesus by ourselves. The Holy Spirit needed to give us our new, spiritual life, causing us to receive the gift of forgiveness which Jesus had already won for us.

When the Holy Spirit does that, creates faith in our hearts, then the eyes of our heart begin to open so that we can see the many blessings which are ours only through faith. Through the understanding which only He can give to us, we begin to see that Jesus did have to die on the cross so that God's perfect justice would remain, for He truly does hate all sin. Yet, in His love, He found this way so that we sinners would not have to die eternally because of our sins. This the Holy Spirit revealed to us in the Word of God — which we call the Bible. It was only there that we ever would have been able to know Who Jesus was, how He was born, how He lived a perfect life, how He suffered and died, and then rose again to assure us that all sins have been washed away. That is why Paul calls Him the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, the wisdom of God that forgives us all sins, which is revealed to us only in the Bible.

When we are brought to faith, when the eyes of our heart begin to be opened, then, and only then, will we begin to see the blessings which Jesus has won for us. It will be as though someone turned a light on in a dark room, the blessings become so clear to us. Because of all that Jesus has done for us by His perfect life, and innocent death, we now have the complete assurance of the forgiveness of all of our sins. We have the joy of knowing that we will be taken from this life to live forever in the mansions of heaven. We have the comfort and peace of knowing that God is no longer angry with us because of our sins, and that we can come to Him in prayer to request any and all blessings from Him. That is the first part of what Paul asked for when he prayed, "**I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints.**" (18)

These are all blessings which we have been focusing our attention on this entire Easter season, for these are all blessings which He has won for us when He defeated sin, death and hell for us on the cross. But today, we are observing the festival of the ascension of our Lord Jesus back into heaven. And the fact that Jesus ascended into heaven gives us assurances of further blessings that are ours, blessings which we will come to know only when the Spirit opens the eyes of our heart so that we can see them. Paul also prayed "**that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened to know His incomparably great power for us who believe.**" (19) We see evidence of that power when God "**seated him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not**

only in the present age but also in the one to come.” (20-21) The same powerful God Who raised Jesus from the dead also took Him visibly back to heaven to continue ruling the entire universe there as the Almighty Creator which He is.

Seated there at God’s right hand even now, Jesus is not just sitting back, waiting for the last day. Instead, He is actively governing everything in heaven and on earth. Nothing happens anywhere without His knowledge and consent. Every power and every title is under Jesus, for He is the One and Only Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

And that brings us great comfort this festival of the ascension. For as the Ruler of all things, the eyes of our heart are to recognize that He rules all things for the benefit of His Church. We are not forgotten by Him, we are not neglected by Him, we are not left on our own until He returns, for He is actively watching over every single detail of all of our lives so that all things do work for the good of those who are His own. And that is why Paul asks God the Father to send the Spirit to open the eyes of our hearts so that we begin to recognize this fact in our lives. Nothing happens to us by accident, for Jesus is in control of even the smallest details. We have the assurance of that because He ascended into heaven to take His place at God’s right hand.

So we need to have the eyes of our heart be opened so that we can see that we have not been left alone in this evil world. On this Memorial Day weekend, we are remembering especially those who fought in wars to protect the freedom of this world. We may be tempted to ask why Jesus, if He was really in control of all things, would allow evil rulers to come to power and to afflict the world, for many lives on both sides were lost. Was He really in control? Absolutely! We may not completely understand the details, but we have seen His loving hand guide His people even through such difficult times. This weekend, we also think of the pandemic which has wreaked havoc on our world. Add to that, we had the destruction which came when the dam was breached and flooded Stanton and Midland. When we look at disasters such as these and the evils that we see all around us today, we may be tempted to ask why these things would be allowed to happen if Jesus really were in control. But again, we dare not look only with our earthly eyes, but with the eyes of our heart that have been opened by the Spirit to see Jesus’ love and concern for His Church as He guides the events of our lives each and every day. As the Holy Spirit brings us closer to Jesus through the same Word which brought us to faith, the eyes of our heart will begin to see more clearly just how our loving Savior is watching over us and caring for us day by day. And as we see more clearly through the eyes of our heart, then we will have even more things for which to thank and praise our Savior for this ascension day. He is always with us and uses His almighty power at the right hand of the Father to bring us His blessings.

So if it is true that children do not always use their physical eyes to see things that are right under their noses, then it is not difficult for us to understand that unless the Spirit opens the eyes of our heart this ascension day, we may well miss many of the blessings which Jesus has won for us, and which He continues to lavish upon us day by day, as He rules all things in heaven and earth for the benefit of His Church, of which we are a part.