

Sermons at the All Saints Anglican Church of Luxembourg

Preached by Rev Alison Heal on Ascension Day, 29th May 2025

Bible passages: Acts 1.4-11, Ephesians 1.15-23, Luke 24.44-53

Jesus, don't leave us alone, again!

Jesus, we saw you suffer, we saw you die. We lost all hope, we hid in fear. Then you returned to us – what joy! “Is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?;” we asked.

“None of your business,” you replied, although you said it kindly. “Wait in Jerusalem and you'll find out.”

Stay with us, Jesus, so we can see your kingdom come!

PAUSE

Jesus, don't leave us alone, again!

Every time you're with us, our minds are opened to understand the scriptures. You told us how everything written about you - in the law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms – has been fulfilled. You showed us how the agony you went through, the misery we lived as you died, were buried, were part of God's plan.

Stay with us, Jesus, so we can keep on understanding God's plan!

PAUSE

Jesus, don't leave us alone, again!

It's not the same when you're not here. We get caught up in the everyday things of life, we forget that God has work for us to do. We go back to earning a living, fishing. The ordinary activities of life begin to take over, the God-stuff seems like it might have been a pious dream, instead of a deeper reality. Our egos begin to resurface, we're seeing the threat in others, instead of the love Jesus showed.

Stay with us, Jesus, so we don't fall back into the ego-traps of busy-ness and suspicion.

PAUSE

Jesus, don't leave us alone, again!

PAUSE

But Jesus went. He took us with him as far as we could go, and then he blessed us. Then he disappeared into the heavens, into the atmosphere around us.

I think that's important. When I see your artists, they do like to show Jesus going up, as if he's going to a far-off space above the clouds. But that's not what happened – you need to understand that the heavens are all around us, they're the air that we breathe, they're the atmosphere which keeps you and me alive and functioning. That's where Jesus went. The heavens are what you might call an alternate dimension, but they're all around us.

PAUSE

So our plea: 'Don't leave us alone, again,' faded a bit. We'd seen Jesus disappear from our sight, he'd left the single location of Bethany, where we were standing. He was no longer in one place, but he wasn't nowhere. He was everywhere!

We worshipped him. There was no denying it, even for us monotheistic Jews – Jesus is God, 'seated at God's right hand in the heavenly places', we'd seen him enter them.

And we went back to Jerusalem with great joy, and we had the courage to go back into the Temple and praise God for all he was doing.

PAUSE

We're still here in Jerusalem, waiting. We know he's with us – the heavens are all around us, as near as breathing, sustaining us every time we draw breath. We're waiting for Jesus' promise – that the God who raised him from the dead will send his Holy Spirit to clothe us in power from on high.

PAUSE

We're not sure how that's going to work out. One thing we've learned – we can't predict the work of God through Jesus our Lord! But there's one thing we know already. When we called out: 'Jesus, don't leave us alone, again,' he wasn't leaving us.

He's in our minds. He opens our eyes, so we can see his Kingdom around us. He's in our lives. He shows us his plan, through his holy word and through worship together. He's in our souls. He saves us from busy-ness and suspicion, as we see other people through his loving eyes. He's in our futures. He plans for us to be witnesses, in our local area, and wider. He's in our hearts. He gives us grace to love and pray for each other. And he offers the same to you.