

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, May 29th, 2022, Ascension of the Lord
Acts 1:1-11, Psalm 93, Ephesians 1:15-23, Luke 24:44-53

I don't know if I was the only one, but when I was growing up and approaching adulthood chronologically, I was under the impression and looking for some sort of switch that would occur in me it would turn me from teenager without any responsibility into a responsible adult.

And I'm still waiting for that switch to occur. Maybe this is what is going on with the disciples, expecting Jesus the Messiah to continue with them and lead them personally for years to come. Scholars have said that the understanding of the Messiah is that a dead Messiah is not the Messiah.

The disciples would have been aware of this understanding and have a hard time expecting Jesus as the Messiah to walk away from them.

Most if not all of us faced a similar situation in our own lives. When we are left alone, when both of our parents are gone. They are no longer there to help; we are now on our own. there is an added weight to the mourning. Not only are we mourning the death of a loved one, in a very real sense our safety net is gone as well.

Even if we didn't need it, it was comforting to have a parental figure there in case we needed them.

Maybe that's the switch. We aren't fully adults are acting as adults until our parents are gone in some form or another. Yes, I'm aware parents may still be alive, but the roles may be reversed, and the child becomes the parent.

Maybe that is the switch I was waiting for. It has happened and I just haven't realized it.

Maybe Paul in Ephesians gives us the answer. The eyes of the heart. This may express the wisdom of adulthood and maturity. It is not just about knowledge and what needs to be done and how to do it, but the eyes of the heart, the wisdom that comes with compassion and understanding. The wisdom that calls us into community giving and receiving support from each other. The wisdom to know that we don't have all the answers and that we don't need to.

Let us do the math, Jesus as the Messiah is not being replaced by one person. Jesus is not asking any one of the disciples to replace him, but he's asking all of them together to replace him.

Maybe just maybe, the eyes of the heart for others and for ourselves is about realizing both our strengths and weaknesses. About what we can contribute to the community and what we need from the community. Jesus' departure means that they can no longer depend on just one person to do it all, but they must come together to accomplish the same things Jesus did before he left.

This means for us taking our place within the community and with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Or to put it another way, the eyes of the heart being enlightened is expressed as giving hope and being able to see the best in others as well as ourselves.

Amen