

Sermon Notes: May 29, 2022

Focus: Ascension

All Readings

Ascension Day was last Thursday. However, occasionally we transfer readings forward or backward a few days in a way that makes liturgical sense.

Ascension Day commemorates Jesus going up to heaven *after* he walked around in his post-resurrection, Easter body. Also, Ascension Day is the last big day before Pentecost Sunday, June 5, 2022, next week. On Pentecost, we celebrate the Spirit coming down from heaven.

This may be more poetic than you might like, but Jesus' Ascension draws earth up toward heaven. Easter drew heaven down to the earth. Pentecost marries both in the gathered community. It may be a little simplistic, but Ascension is about *Transcendence* and Pentecost is about *Immanence*. More on that later. Next week teaser: There will be an instructed Eucharist at 10am (one service only).

| *Heaven:* I do *not* think there is somewhere in the sky-up-high to go after we die. Maybe our ultimate home is when the sky lives inside of us.

Now personal - impatience Ascension's focus on the transcendent, bigger God is a nice counterweight to my own base-line spirituality. "We're all in this together": That is a go-to slogan for me. I also like: "we are the hands and feet of Christ". Both are rooted in an "immanent" God-with-us. Those are great, but they are made complete by a God who even transcends the universe.

Collar: I sometimes wear a collar in the car so that I am reminded not to unload on my fellow drivers. If my only spirituality was God-loves-me-exactly-as-I-am (immanent), I would never feel compelled to attempt a transcendence to a higher spirituality.

Email: I store drafts of my emails for at least an hour because I don't want to unload on everyone who irritates me. The world won't end if I am a jerk, but I would like my actions to point to a heavenly God. This a bigger picture spirituality. It is a practice that helps keep me out of the weeds of personal drama.

Equipped by both spiritualities An immanent, God-with-us, walk-with-me-talk-with-me God makes us more willing to see the world through another person's eyes. Also, embracing that we are a speck on a speck on a speck of

creation provokes a need for God, who is above all and in charge. When I look *up* to the God above and walk *with* the God for us, I am doubly equipped.

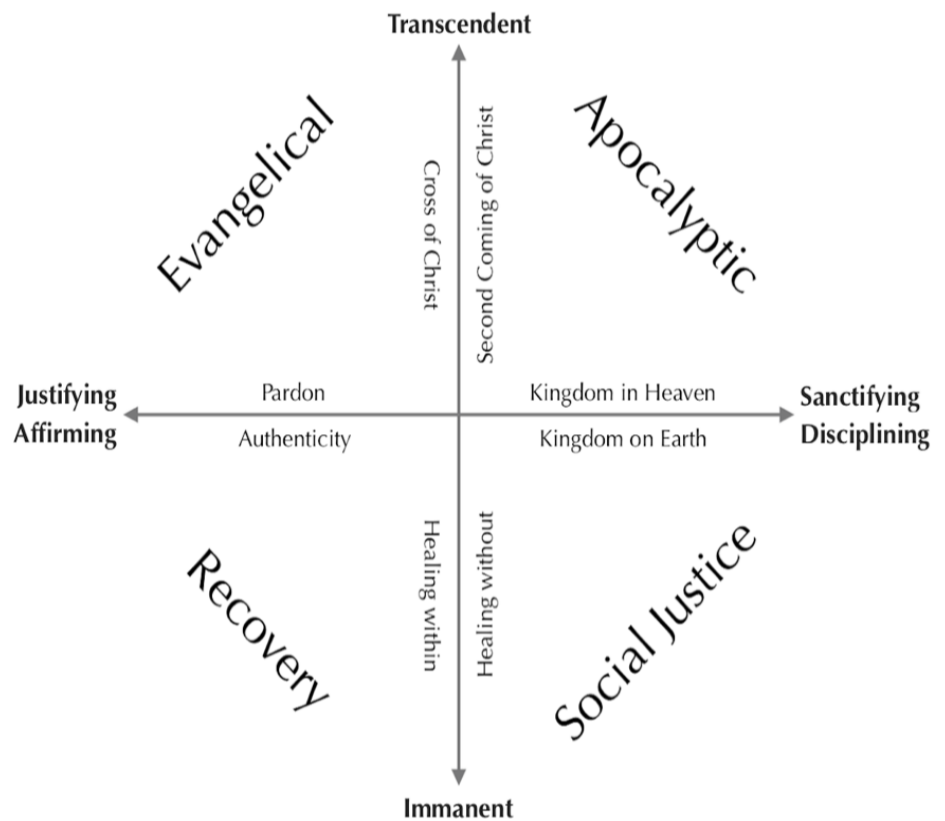
Look up and around Where we look is important. When we look for an expansive creation, a big God, and wide-open potential, we find it. When we look for one-on-one compassion and connection, we find it. Ascension reminds us that our family, church, and community are more than just a collection of individuals. We are citizens of a heaven which resides in us.

The Cross

Think of the cross as a metaphor of both immanence and transcendence. The tall beam starts in the ground and points to heaven (transcendent). The cross' horizontal bar gathers the earth and embraces all of creation (immanent).

The cross embodies the Ascension (pointing to heaven) and the cross embodies the promise of Pentecost (by reaching out to all people). We get to look to heaven while concurrently embracing the world.

This diagram says a lot more than I just did. I find it to be a helpful map to understand my spiritual bias and inclination. So, I will offer it to you, as is. Where do you naturally land, and where is God stretching you to?



Pastor Todd