Going Up

Scripture Reading — Psalm 24

Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? — Psalm 24:3

What does it mean to get close to God? Ask that question today, and you will hear lots of answers about practicing religious rituals, being a good person, and “sensing the divine presence.”

At first, this psalm may seem to fit well in that framework: the one who may ascend to God and stand before him has “clean hands and a pure heart.” And most of us would like to say, “That’s me!” But obedience to God requires a lot more than good intentions.

There’s a trivia exercise that says if you think 99.9 percent accuracy is good enough, you could be headed for a disaster. A 0.1 percent failure rate could have a major impact on airline safety, for example, or on the electric power grid, or on our drinking water. Likewise, in our living for God, a really good effort is not good enough. God looks for perfection (see Matthew 5:48).

Though we are made to be near God, none of us has the truly clean hands and pure heart required to approach him. But God has provided One who can: Jesus, the “King of glory.” He has triumphed mightily over the forces of sin and death, and he has opened the way to heaven for us.

As we reflect on Jesus’ ascension, we see that Jesus has gone ahead of us so that we can be near God. Let us celebrate that finished work of Christ today!

Prayer

Holy Spirit, lift up our eyes toward Jesus, who is praying mightily for us today at God’s right hand (Romans 8:34). Purify our hearts and help us to trust in him. Amen.

Devotion topics: Obedience, Purity, Christianity, Sin

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