

FOLLOWING IN THE STEPS OF JESUS

LIVING A CHRIST-LIKE LIFE IN THE 21st CENTURY

- March 9* “Feasting on Scripture, Fasting from Fear”
- March 16* “Loving the Weak, Helping the Strong”
- March 23* “Carrying Crosses, Abandoning Burdens”
- March 30* “Walking like a Lamb, Roaring Like a Lion”
- April 6* “Standing on Earth, Looking to Heaven”

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2022

The Collects of Holy Week and Eastertide invite us to walk in Christ's steps.

O BLESSED Saviour, who by thy cross and passion hast given life unto the world: Grant that we thy servants may be given grace to take up the cross and follow thee through life and death; whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit we worship and glorify, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (*Collect of Holy Cross Day, p. 321*)

A LMIGHTY and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Collect of Holy Week, p. 150*)

G RANT, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the death of thy blessed Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections we may be buried with him; and that, through the grave, and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection; for his merits, who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Collect of Easter Even, p. 180*)

A LMIGHTY God, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an example of godly life: Give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Collect of Easter 2, p. 191*)

Jesus' feet were firmly planted on the ground.

(Matthew 8.1-3)

(See also Mark 1.40-42 and Luke 5.12-13.)

WHEN he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." And **Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him**, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

(Matthew 8.14-15)

(See also Mark 1.29-31 and Luke 4.38-39.)

AND when Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. **He touched her hand**, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him.

(Matthew 9.27-30)

AND as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." **Then he touched their eyes**, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." And their eyes were opened.

(Luke 7.11-15)

HE went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.” **Then he came up and touched the bier**, and the bearers stood still. And he said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.

(Mark 9.36-37)

(See also Matthew 18.2-5 and Luke 9.47-48.)

HE took a child and put him in the midst of them, **and taking him in his arms**, he said to them, “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.”

Mark 2.23-28

(See also Matthew 12.1-8 and Luke 6.1-5.)

ONE Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. And the Pharisees were saying to him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?” And he said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?” And he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”

(Mark 2.14-17)

(See also Matthew 9.9-13 and Luke 5.27-32)

AS he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him. And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

(John 13.3-5)

JESUS, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

But he also looked up to Heaven for his strength and vision.

(Matthew 14.15-21)

(See also Mark 6.35-44; Luke 9.12-17.)

NOW when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” But Jesus said, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” They said to him, “We have only five loaves here and two fish.” And he said, “Bring them here to me.” Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, **he looked up to heaven** and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

(John 17.1-5)

WHEN Jesus had spoken these words, **he lifted up his eyes to heaven**, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

(Mark 7.32-35)

THEY brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. And **looking up to heaven**, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly.

(John 11.38-44)

THEN Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. And **Jesus lifted up his eyes** and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

What is Heaven?

According to Jesus, Heaven is the dwelling place of the Father.

Matthew 5.16	In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.
Matthew 5.34	Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool.
Matthew 5.44,45	Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.
Matthew 6.1	Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.
Matthew 6.10; Luke 11.2	Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Matthew 7.11; Luke 11.13	If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!
Matthew 10.32,33	So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.
Matthew 11.25; Luke 10.21	I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children.
Matthew 12.50	For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.
Matthew 16.17	Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.
Matthew 18.14	So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.
Matthew 18.19	Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.
Matthew 23.9	And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven.
Matthew 23.22	Whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.
Mark 11.25	Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.
John 6.32	Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven."
John 12.28	"Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."
John 17.1	When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you.

According to Jesus, the Son is from Heaven.

John 6.33	For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.
John 6.38	For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.
John 6.48-50	I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.
John 6.51	I am the living bread that came down from heaven.
John 6.58	This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.
Luke 23.43	And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."
Mathew 28.18	All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Matthew 26.64; Mark 14.62; Luke 22.69	You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

According to Jesus, angels are from Heaven.

Matthew 18.10	See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.
Matthew 28.2	Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.
Luke 2.15	When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened.
Luke 22.43	And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.
John 1.51	And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."
Matthew 22.30; Mark 12.25; Luke 20.36	For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.
Matthew 24.36; Mark 13.32	But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

Jesus experienced and described Heaven as a place above.

Matthew 3.16; Mark 1.10; Luke 3.21; John 1.32	And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him.
Matthew 3.17; Mark 1.11; Luke 3.22	And behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."
Matthew 14.19; Mark 6.41; Luke 9.16	Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing.
Matthew 28.2	Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.
Mark 7.34	And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."
Mark 16.19	So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.
Luke 10.18	And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."
Luke 18.13	But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'
Luke 24.51	While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.
John 1.51	And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."
John 3.13	No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.
John 17.1	When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you.
John 20.17	Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

According to Jesus, Heaven is the place of our eternal reward.

Matthew 5.12; Luke 6.23	Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven.
Matthew 6.19,20; Luke 12.33	Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.
Matthew 19.21; Mark 10.21; Luke 18.22	Go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.
Luke 10.20	Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.
Luke 18.29	Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.

Jesus suggests there is a connection between what happens in heaven and on earth.

Luke 15.7	There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.
Matthew 18.18	Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loose in heaven.
Matthew 16.18,19	You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.,

What is the Kingdom of Heaven?

“The Kingdom of Heaven” or “The Kingdom of God” is the most common theme of Jesus’ preaching. But it is an idea surrounded in mystery.

There are three general categories of interpretation:¹

(1) The Kingdom = The Church

(2) The Kingdom = The dwelling place of God within the individual Christian

(3) The Kingdom = Jesus

¹ Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration* (Ignatius Press, 2007) pp. 49-63.

The Kingdom of Heaven is here.

Matthew 4.17; Mark 1.15	From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
Matthew 10.7; Luke 9.2	Proclaim as you go, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."
Matthew 12.28; Luke 11.20	If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.
Luke 10.11	Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.
Luke 17.20	The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed.
Luke 17.21	Behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.
Matthew 11.12; Luke 7.16	From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence.

The Kingdom is something we can enter into.

Matthew 5.20	Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 6.33; Luke 12.31	But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
Matthew 7.21	Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.
Matthew 18.3; Mark 10.15; Luke 18.17	Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 23.13	Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces.
Mark 12.34	When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God.
Luke 9.62	No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.
John 3.3	Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.
John 3.5	Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."
Mark 9.47	If your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell.
Luke 22.29	You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom.

The Kingdom must be proclaimed and demonstrated.

Matthew 9.35	Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.
Matthew 24.14	This gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world.
Luke 16.16	The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached.
Luke 9.60	Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.
Luke 4.43	I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.
Luke 9.2	He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.
Luke 9.11	When the crowds learned it, they followed him, and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing.
Matthew 13.19	When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart.

The Kingdom begins small and grows.

Matthew 13.31; Mark 4.30; Luke 13.18	The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field.
Matthew 13.33; Luke 13.20	The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.

The Kingdom is an upside-down world.

Matthew 4.23; Luke 8.1	And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people
Matthew 5.3; Luke 6.20	Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 5.10	Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 5.19	Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 5.19	But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 11.11; Luke 7.28	Among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.
Matthew 18.4	Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 19.14; Mark 10.14; Luke 18.16	Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 19.23; Mark 10.23; Luke 18.24	Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 19.24; Mark 10.24,25; Luke 18.25	It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.
Matthew 21.31	The tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you.
Matthew 21.43	The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.
Matthew 22.2	The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son.
Matthew 20.1	The kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard
Matthew 18.23	Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants.

The Kingdom will persist until the end of the age.

Matthew 13.24, 25, 30	The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away ... Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."
Matthew 13.38-40	The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.
Matthew 13.41-43	The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.
Matthew 13.47	The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. So it will be at the end of the age.
Mark 4.26, 29	The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground ... when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

The Kingdom is precious and valuable.

Matthew 13.11; Mark 4.11; Luke 8.10	To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 13.44	The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up.
Matthew 13.45	The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls.
Luke 12.32	Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

The Kingdom of Heaven is still coming.

Matthew 6.10; Luke 11.2	Your kingdom come.
Matthew 8.11; Luke 13.29	Many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 13.41	The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers.
Matthew 16.28; Mark 9.1; Luke 9.27	There are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.
Matthew 25.1	The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.
Matthew 26.29; Mark 14.25; Luke 22.18	I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.
Mark 11.10	Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!
Mark 15.43; Luke 23.51	Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.
Luke 13.29	People will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.
Luke 21.31	So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.
Luke 22.16	I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.
Luke 22.30	That you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
Luke 23.42	And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."
John 18.36,37	Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."

What does it mean to live in the Kingdom of Heaven?

After the resurrection, Jesus' feet were firmly touching the earth but his gaze was directed toward Heaven.

(John 20.11-18)

MARY stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Having said this, she turned around and **saw Jesus standing**, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, '**I am ascending to my Father** and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her.

How can we live like Christ, with our feet on the earth but our gaze directed heavenward?

What else does the Bible say about Heaven and the future of creation?

Christ will come at the end of the age.

(Matthew 24.3-13; 36-44)

AS he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

John foresees a new heaven and a new earth.

(Revelation 21.1-4; 22-27)

THEN I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Whatever the future holds, we can trust that Jesus will be there and we will be with him.

(John 14.1-9)

LET not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. "If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."