



Wednesday Prayer

Ascension of Our Lord – Then he opened their minds

Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” Luke 24:44-49

Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. As many times as I have heard the Ascension Day gospel, this is the first time my attention was drawn to this specific line. He opened their minds to understand. I’ve been engaging myself in so many ways to better understand – the challenges youth experience growing up with the constant pressures of social media, the generational *and daily* inequities our siblings of color experience, the struggle of 6,000 youth each evening in Minnesota looking for a safe place to stay. I totally get the disciples needing to be told over and over by Jesus what’s really going on. Our minds can often be too closed to understand.

Then Jesus goes on to tell the disciples to stay here in the city and they will be clothed with the power from on high. Meanwhile, he’ll be ascending soon. It’s their turn now. Through the power of the Spirit, they will be filled with life and understanding to carry on the work of Jesus.

I just came from the LSS Benefit for Youth, where we gather to learn about all the ways young people are welcomed with open hearts and minds by youth outreach workers, case managers, program staff and many more. Youth who are so often misunderstood due to their circumstances – lack of stable housing, addictions experienced personally or with the person who is meant to care for them, victims of sexual violence, youth discriminated against due to their identity. They are often judged wrongly in our society as we have not *opened our minds to understand*. I will continue to listen and learn, and I will continue to seek out Jesus’ words in the gospels as a means to better understand. Please join me.

Through the power of the Spirit, open our minds to understand and our hearts to do the work of the Lord here on earth. Fill us with patience, kindness and love for all, and especially for the youth in our cities, suburbs and rural areas who are so often misunderstood or judged. May we provide true welcome and safety. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.

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