

WEEKLY SERMON

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“That’s All Folks!”

“That’s All Folks!” If you’ve ever watched a Looney Tunes cartoon starring perhaps Bugs Bunny, or Daffy Duck, then you’ll have seen those words on the screen in the final credits; maybe you can even remember the jingle that went with them?

But would you admit to thinking of the ascension of Jesus in a similar way? For you, is Christ’s return to heaven a massive “That’s All Folks!” moment? Does it even feel an unwelcome end to a great story – one that surely left the disciples feeling flat and bereft as they headed back to Jerusalem once again without Jesus?

But far from it! As he finishes his Gospel Luke tells us that the disciples arrived back in the city “with great joy... praising God.” (Luke 24:52,53) And the reason for their joy and praise can be found in the very first verse of the Book of Acts – Luke’s second volume of historical writings. He tells his friend, Theophilus, “In my former book... I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up...”

The word “began” is enormously significant in that sentence. With that word Luke is claiming that his first volume (his Gospel) isn’t the end of the story of the deeds and words of Jesus; there’s much more to come. True, Jesus will no longer be physically present on earth “mighty in word and deed” (Luke 24:19), but now he will continue to speak and work by his Spirit through his Apostles and his Church.

So the ascension of Jesus isn’t the end of the story. Rather it marks the unleashing of the impact of the death and resurrection of Jesus on the world. If Jesus had stayed on earth limited by time and space, then the power of the message of the cross and resurrection would have travelled no further than a few miles around Jerusalem. But following the ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit there were no limits. (Acts 1:8)

We need to be enthused and energised by the ascension. We need to allow its impact to grab hold of our lukewarm hearts and motivate us to be witnesses for Christ. “That’s All Folks!”? You couldn’t be more wrong. Christ has so much more to do through you.

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