

Draw Us to Thee

✦ **Walking** (vv.6-9)

✦ **Waking** (v.10)

✦ **Sleeping** (vv.9-10)

In the name of Jesus, our ascended and glorious Savior and King, dear fellow disciples:

Sometimes I wonder why more people did not see Jesus ascend into heaven. He was with His disciples on the Mount of Olives, just across the Kidron Valley in full view of the temple. Maybe it was then as it is now. People were just too busy looking down to look up. That's a huge problem in our Christian life, especially when we're working hard to do the work of the Lord. Sometimes we're looking down so much at our troubles here on earth, we miss the joyful lessons of Jesus' glorious Ascension.

Think of this! Jesus' throne is not like any other. He has the highest view of everything because His throne is in heaven with our heavenly Father. In past months we've followed Jesus' life from tiny baby to crucified criminal to resurrected Savior. But now we get to see Him in full glory as exalted Lord over all. What a blessing it is whenever God uses our children or our duties as pastor and teachers to get us to church. Here we can rejoice in the light of His glorious Ascension to honor Jesus as our Savior and Lord. Here He answers our prayer in that favorite hymn: **Draw Us to Thee**.

✦ **Walking** (vv.6-9)

You know when trouble starts for most people? As soon as they can walk. It might not be too hard to babysit your little brother or sister when they're in their playpen or walker. But once they're loose, especially when they can run, you really have to watch them, don't you? I remember when our kids were little, my sister and her family came to visit. Suddenly I heard my sister Ruth shout, "Katie!" Katie was crying, but she was okay. Ruth saw her running toward the road and Ruth's motherly instincts didn't hesitate. Her shout saved Katie from possibly getting run over by a car.

Sometimes we feel like shouting because we need answers. Paul's was **Walking** all over Asia Minor, from one city to another, trying to spread the Gospel. But everything he tried didn't seem to be working. Check on a map and you can see why Paul wanted to go into "*the province of Asia*." That was westward with very important cities like Ephesus. Paul would get there eventually, but at this time the Holy Spirit somehow prevented them from even talking about Jesus there. So it made sense for them to go up north into "*Mysia*" and "*Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas*." Troas was on the coast about ten miles from the ancient city of Troy. They could not go any farther. After **Walking** for weeks they had nothing to show for it.

Now look up and see why. Jesus has ascended to God's right hand. Jesus rules all things for the good of His Church. Paul and his companions were honoring Jesus. You know how? They did not stop. In spite of setbacks and disappointments they persevered with patience. That's especially hard when you're doing the right thing, but God does not seem to bless it. Maybe they felt like the Israelites trapped with Moses by the Red Sea. But just as God parted the waters for Israel to cross, so Christ parted the clouds to ascend to God's right hand. And He was about to bring Paul across the waters beyond Troas.

✦ **Waking** (v.10)

If you have a baby brother or sister at home, I know what you're thinking when they keep **Waking** you up at night. I remember when my brother Nathan and then my sister Ramona were born. I was really looking forward to when they would sleep through the night. When I became a Dad, I looked forward to the same thing with our babies. Now that I'm a Grandpa, I'm glad to let my kids do all the **Waking** up at

night. I'm happy when I can sleep. As babies, we keep **Waking** everyone up as if no one else is as important as we are. We are conceived and born in selfishness and sin.

Now sometimes I find myself **Waking** up without any kids at home. It's called worry. And worry is a sin. Worry is what happens when your eyes are closed but you're still looking down at all your troubles here on earth. You're missing the glory of Jesus' Ascension when He rose high above all earth's troubles and now controls them for our good. Sharing in Jesus' victory by faith means that we can meet all life's challenges with full confidence that Jesus' victory is our victory. When we find ourselves **Waking** up at night, we should use that wonderful time for praising God instead of worrying. Jesus' Ascension marks the full completion of everything the Father sent Him to do on earth to save us. He has been crowned with glory and honor so that someday soon He can crown us with redemption. Christ has made us kings to rule with Him. Instead of worrying, pray! We rule with Jesus Christ by our prayers.

That night at Troas, I have no doubt Paul fell asleep praying for God to show him where He wanted Paul and his fellow missionaries to go. That's how we pray in China too. We want God to show us the way. God surprised Paul with one of several visions, like dreams at night, when God gave Paul direct revelation about what to do. This time Paul saw a man from Macedonia, just across the water from Troas. The man was pleading with Paul: "*Come over to Macedonia and help us.*" As soon as everyone was **Waking** up in the morning, they knew where God wanted them to go. Dr. Luke joined them. "*After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.*" They thought they should stay in Asia. God called them to Europe!

◆ **Sleeping** (vv.9-10)

Sometimes we miss the great plans God has for us because we're **Sleeping**. It's no secret that one of my biggest challenges was staying awake during sermons, especially in the evening. You're worked hard all day. The preacher is usually tired too. But God does not want us **Sleeping** spiritually. He says, "*Watch and pray so that you will not enter into temptation. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.*" **Draw Us to Thee** so we can receive your blessings from full preparation when you come back again, Lord Jesus. Because you Ascended, we know you will come back in the clouds with all your holy angels to take us home to heaven. Help us to be ready and watching, not **Sleeping** spiritually, unprepared.

Someday we will all be **Sleeping** in death, but because of Christ's Ascension we can actually look forward to that day. Our aim and goal is to go where Christ has gone. All our true treasures are in heaven. Down here cars get wrecked, money runs out, health runs away. Singles sometimes wish they could be married, but the married can find painful loneliness if not one in faith and heart with their spouse. Women want kids, but when they're born, it's hard. When they're grown and gone, it's lonely. Jesus' Ascension lifts us high above worries and troubles to keep us looking up until He takes us home.

Dreams while **Sleeping** can be fun. Recently I dreamed I was in a huge gym where everyone was happy. Anyone who wanted could float in the air, do somersaults and flips without hitting the ground. Someday it will be that easy to join Jesus in the clouds. We won't need a plane or a hot air balloon at all. Jesus says He will come back to take us up in the clouds with Him, flying with the angels. And we won't be **Sleeping** when it happens. For real and for fun we will be with Jesus forever.

But now we have to walk on this earth. And sometimes our plans, even the best of them for God, don't work out the way we want. But that's one more thing we learn from Christ's Ascension. Our plans are way too small at times, like Paul thinking he should stay in Asia Minor. God would use Peter and other missionaries to reach those people Paul cared so much about. But God wanted Paul in Europe. **Draw Us to Thee**, dear Jesus. When things don't go as planned, help us to look up. Help us to gladly submit to your will. When you got Paul to Europe, you brought forgiveness of sins in the Good News to our great great grandparents. Help us to trust that you always have the best plans. Help us crown Christ as King with willing, happy hearts that trust in you. **Draw Us to Thee**. Amen.