

*Today's reading*      Luke 24.44 - end

As you will have read in previous thoughts, I have had the privilege of leading groups of pilgrims to the Holy Land on a number of occasions. On each occasion we have followed the pilgrimage of Palm Sunday, from Bethany, over the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. At the top of the Mount of Olives we pause at the chapel that celebrates Jesus teaching on prayer, with the Lord's prayer on tablets around the walls in many of the world's languages.

From there we go across the road to the small building, in the custody of a Muslim family, that marks the place from which our Lord reputedly ascended to heaven. There is even an imprint in the rock there that is said to represent Jesus' final footprint on earth. You'll perhaps have gathered a note of scepticism as to the historicity of the footprint etc., but it does seem to me that there is profound theological significance in the location.

Luke, of course, has two bites at the cherry on this one, with his Gospel concluding here and then the Acts of the Apostles (Luke's second volume) beginning here. The similarities and differences between the two accounts are, of course, of interest. The theological significance of ascendance and transcendence are significant too. But for me the location is significant.

Luke puts the location remarkably close, if not actually at, the location in which Jesus taught his disciples to pray. Prayer has an absolutely fundamental part in Jesus' earthly ministry and therefore, it seems to me, prayer must be at the heart of our ministry.

Ascension day begins a special period of prayer in the life of the Church in Britain as we join together in praying 'Thy Kingdom Come'. There are lots of resources for this prayer initiative online, here <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/>

and I encourage you to use that wonderful resource in your daily prayers during this period from Ascension to Pentecost.

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