**Sermon at Bluff, 8 May 2016** (Luke 24.44-53)

**I myself will send upon you what my Father has promised. But you must wait in the city until the power from above comes down upon you.** (Lk 24.49)

Diaries – do you keep one? Lots of special dates – Mothers Day, Ascension Day.

Ascension Day suffers from being on a Thursday (cf Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday).

Important even so - Ascension affirms three things about Jesus.

[1] Jesus’ position (I myself *will* send)

Without Ascension Jesus becomes merely a memory, as in Communion, however distinct.

Ascension affirms that Jesus is still alive. Not mere existence, but a position in the Godhead.

There is no doubt that very early after the Resurrection the disciples treated Jesus as God – not because the New Testament is littered with affirmations, but there is no denial; it is ever assumed. This is astonishing for monotheists which the Jews were. How that is understood need not worry us – leave that for Trinity Sunday in 2 weeks! TEXT.

[2] Jesus’ presence (what my Father has promised)

Pentecost next week – another diary date! Coming of Holy Spirit. But who is this Spirit?

He conveys Jesus’ presence to us. So not only does Jesus have a special position, but in that position he is present with us! TEXT.

In all places, in every situation, in each person. Without Ascension, no presence.

[3] Jesus’ power (the power from above comes down on you)

Harry Potter fighting the basilisk; the Sorting Hat is present - what help is that against a powerful beast? But the Sorting Hat contains a sword which can kill the basilisk! (p 235)

The presence of Jesus is not enough without a present power.

Donald Trump – main fear for many is that he will use his power unwisely.

How should we use power Jesus gives us? Luke 24.47-48 tells us: to preach a message of repentance and forgiveness.
The power is not for our ends but for the ends of the Kingdom of God.

This power is not a once off, but a continual necessity – TEXT.