Sermon: **As he was blessing them, he departed from them and was taken up into heaven**. (Luke 24.51)

Bereavement is not easy – as parent, child, sibling, friend. Part of you would want relationship to carry on.

Cannot be, for we all die. Even Jesus. But for him there was also a resurrection. So why did he not just stay with disciples? Why did he have to leave them?

Ascension is when we recall Jesus taken to heaven, after 40 days. In some ways this was worse. For everyone else we know separation *has* to occur. That had already taken place for Jesus – so why now leave?

TEXT – 2nd part. Imagine what might have happened if he stayed on forever…. But TEXT.

If he had stayed the disciples would never have ‘grown up’ cf children living with parents. They had to take responsibility for things – what things? Kingdom of God.

We learn resilience, skills when carers leave.

TEXT – 1st part. This was why Jesus blessed them. Paul did on leaving Ephesus. Moses did before he died.

But there is more. TEXT – 3rd part. This showed several things –

1. If heaven is where Jesus is, this will be where we will be also. (see John 14.2 **I am going to prepare a place for you. I would not tell you this if it were not so**)
2. In heaven Jesus can be everywhere and every time. The Internet, YouTube clips, etc would not be enough today if he had stayed forever. Jesus is needed everywhere and every time. But how?
3. In heaven Jesus can send Holy Spirit, which is what we celebrate at Pentecost in two weeks’ time.

TEXT. We too are blessed, Jesus has departed from us too, for us he is in heaven. For we are called to be his ambassadors. For the Kingdom of God is now left for us to show. This is both a joyful privilege and heavy responsibility!