

Ascension 2017
May 27-28
Frazee/Callaway

I can think of several times when I went to meet someone, and we just couldn't connect. One of my co-workers wanted to meet with me. I waited for him in my office for 15 minutes; all the while he waited for me in his office.

Another time...In Crookston there are two Chinese restaurants. I arranged to meet a friend for lunch; he went to one and, of course, I went to the other. Both of us figured out what happened, so as I drove to the other, he drove to my original.

Here is the moral of the stories: we cannot meet someone where they are not. This lesson ought to be easy enough to learn regarding people. It is not as easy to learn regarding our savior.

The disciples watched Jesus as he ascended into heaven. What else could they do but stare at the sky? If Jesus vanished from my midst, I certainly would gape at his last location! Two men in white clothes appeared to the apostles.

They said, "Men of Galilee,
why are you standing there looking at the sky?
This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven
will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven."

I hope that you have had the experience of an intimate encounter with the Lord-- a time when you were certain of the Lord's presence, and in his presence you experienced a profound sense of peace and contentment, or an intense sense of mission or duty. These experiences are a gift from God, and never can we recreate them as our own inventions.

As an intimate encounter with the Lord comes to its natural conclusion, we will most likely respond as the apostles did. We are left standing, staring at the sky. We grasp to hang on to the experience. We desperately try to insert ourselves into a timeless dimension where the world goes away and we retain what we long for most—the peace and contentment that can come only from the Lord. If we

hang on too long, angels will appear with the question, “Why are you standing there looking at the sky?”

Why are you standing there? What’s the alternative?

 "Go into the whole world
 and proclaim the gospel to every creature.
 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved;

Every encounter with Jesus is for our own well-being and more. The *more* is his commission. His peace and contentment are not for us alone; they are for the world. The peace and contentment that can be found only in Jesus are intended for people are stuck in the struggle of sin; it is for people who grasp at fleeting pleasures and wake up each morning lonely and empty; it is for good people who have yet to embrace the fullness of the truths of our faith. We cannot stand staring at Jesus when the world is waiting for his paschal love.