

Going Up and Getting Down (to Work)

Intro. There is a TV commercial for insurance that has as its tag line, “We *know* a lot because we’ve *seen* a lot.” It shows silly and sometimes unbelievable things it says have happened. It stretches the imagination to think some are real. The disciples had also seen a thing or two, but never an ascension. It may have been unbelievable at first, but what an amazing thing to see. Imagine: the Lord with his hands outstretched in blessing, rising into the sky like an actor on one of those lifts at the theater.

I. After the Lord’s thirty-three years on earth and three interesting years with his disciples, the disciples would no longer experience the Lord in his earthly form. Now what? I wonder if they had a letdown, a time of sadness. They certainly had a

bunch of good memories. The Lord’s mission for them was to take those memories and make them real for people hungry for salvation through healing and forgiveness. The disciples had seen a lot and yet even as the Lord is preparing to leave planet earth, they were still asking if he was going to “restore the kingdom to Israel,” a false expectation for the Messiah. Maybe that’s why the Lord kept telling them not to leave town. He was sending them a gift that they could really use: *Spirit-filled grace* [M.McGlone, NCR]. In this last chapter of Luke’s gospel, the Lord told the disciples they would be “clothed with power from on high.” It is the same thing Luke wrote in the *first* chapter when the angel told Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you...”

(Lk. 1:35). And, “nothing will be impossible with God.”

Concl. As followers of the Lord, we too have seen a lot. The Lord still loves us even as we regularly refuse to get on board with his mission. He just keeps sending other boats, hoping we will finally get it. Unless he ascended to heaven, the disciples would have always depended on him to do the work. We are just that way. We look around and find someone to do the work and we can relax. Ever missed a meeting and been elected to a committee? The final words of the Lord to his friends were they were witnesses to all the things he had done. **Go** and preach to all nations repentance and forgiveness for sin. It was *their* responsibility. We have two accounts of the same event, written by the same author, with the same basic story of the Ascension

and yet slightly different endings. In one, some of the disciples stood staring up at the sky, saying, “Wow! Isn’t that cool?” and waiting for something else spectacular to happen. (It would later!) Others said, “Wow! Isn’t that cool?” rubbed their hands together and joyfully got to work. Those of us still staring up at the heavens have to stop and join those who went right to work after the Ascension. There is no one else who can do God’s work in the unique way each of us can. **At the end of Mass we must stop staring at the altar and and the tabernacle and go out the doors because we too have *seen* a lot, know *some* things and have received the same Spirit-filled grace. We must go to work in the kingdom of God.**

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