

*Lord, without Your Spirit, these words are just words.
Give them Your life, that we may have life. Amen.*

Do you like to travel?

Are you a “plan every detail” kind of traveler, or a “go with the flow?”

I used to want to plan everything out until I went to England once with a friend.

Before we even got there, I had the strongest sense of blessing,
that God had arranged the trip for us. God, our Travel Agent.

A friend of hers offered her the use of her flat while we were in London.

That was fabulous – and after we settled in there, we went out for a walk.

And just around the corner, we were held up by a barricade:

The Queen’s motorcade was passing by. How do you like that?

Two hours in London and we got to see the queen!

After a few days we decided to go to Cornwall – we wanted to see a part
of England we hadn’t been. So we took the train to Penzance.

Someone had recommended St. Just, so we got on a rickety bus going there,
not knowing where we’d end up for the night. On the bus someone told us
about the Manor Farm at Botttalack – so we got out at the stop for that,
walked down the hill and straight into an absolutely gorgeous B&B where they
had filmed the first Poldark series. Our divine Travel Agent had struck again.

A little later, looking out my window, the clouds parted and there was a big
spotlight of sun on the sea. That just seemed like another message: I’ve got this.

This is how the life of faith works, if we let it – God has blessings for us,
as we learn to listen and move in the direction prompted.

We still have to do the moving, but we don’t have to plan every detail.

In fact, the way Jesus trained his disciples, they weren’t supposed to plan much of
anything – not where they were going to stay, not what they were going to eat,
not what they were going to wear for dinner the second night.

*Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whenever you
enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick
who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’*

What if we were to travel this way? What if we were to live this way?

The Christian life is a traveling life, a life on the road, on the move, outside our comfort zones.

It's a life where we are not able to control what's going to be happening.

Jesus would make plans – “Okay, we're going to go on a little retreat, guys,” but then the needs of the crowd for healing and teaching pulled them off course.

After a long day of teaching and healing, the disciples thought it was time to send the crowds home so they could get on their way, but no, Jesus said,

“You feed them.” And though there was obviously not enough food to feed such a crowd, those five little loaves and two little fish just kept not running out. God plans our journeys, God provides the food.

The life Jesus lived was a traveling life, always on the move.

So how did we get so settled and church-centric in our Christian lives?

It's easy to spend too much time in the places we are comfortable –

i.e., our churches, the beliefs we inherited and don't want to examine.

We can spend too much of our faith lives in this building and focused on church.

That's not the life Jesus modeled, and it's not the life Jesus taught us to follow.

I understand the impulse – I love staying home with the cats. Plenty to do there.

But if I never travel, there is beauty I will never see, feelings I will never feel, experiences I will never encounter, people I will never meet.

If I never traveled, I wouldn't have seen the Queen's motorcade

or had that picnic on the beach in Turkey, visited Stonehenge and the

Parthenon, or seen giraffes and gazelles and flamingos, and wild places,

and all the sorts of things we can only encounter if we leave home.

God wants more for us – and that means we need to open ourselves to more.

The same thing with our life of faith: if we really want to experience the love and power and peace and joy promised to us through the Spirit we have to get out

of our seats, go to the places apart, find people who are different from us.

Jesus invites us to be disciples. Jesus said to go out and make disciples.

He did not say to go out and make church-goers, or altar guilds or vestry members.

Jesus did not say to go out and make social workers of all nations.

He said, “Follow me. And if you want to be my disciple, here's what it takes.

Pack light – what you need will be provided. Don't take much –

but do take my love, my power to heal. Give my life – share that freely,

and trust that other people will take care of you.

What if, instead of seeing this Sunday service as our destination, we saw it as
launchpad, the place we come to loosely plan our journey for the week?
To check the Guidebook for the sights that we might see this week,
To reconnect with the people we might travel with;
To stock up on food for the journey in the Word and Eucharist;
To get the equipment we need through the gifts of the Holy Spirit;
To reconnect ourselves with our Tour Guide and Master, Jesus;
To dream of where God might be inviting us to take his love.
And to commit the whole enterprise into God's love and care.

And then when we walk out this door, or turn off our computer,
we're not going home. We're starting a journey.
And every day we can look at our Journey Guide – our calendar or planner,
and say, "This is where God is leading me today.
Where and to whom can I bring love and proclaim God's peace and freedom?"
And how God leading me on this trip today?
How will I turn over everything that worries me and trust in God's enough?"

Then when we come back next week we celebrate the journey we just had,
and recharge for the next leg, and tell each other some stories from the road,
where God brought us blessing, and who we blessed,
where we encountered Jesus in another person, and where we made him known.

God is calling us out onto the road. THIS is not where church is.
Out there is where church is, where we are called to be the Body of Christ.
Out on the road, the "camino," walking together or alone.
We are never completely alone, though – for Jesus is always traveling with us.

Maybe a start toward deeper discipleship is become more aware of him
as our walking companion. And when he suggests a side-trip – take it.
And when he points out a fellow-traveler who needs some encouragement, do it.
And when he says, "Look, that person has no money to buy dinner," share yours.
And so we will go, deeper and deeper, until we find that we are travelers
in heart, mind, body and spirit, on the road with Jesus.

Amen.

Luke 10:1-9

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’