

Sermon - July 5, 2015, Pentecost 6

## “Traveling Light”

Mark 6:1–13



Dear Friends in Christ,

On Friday June 26<sup>th</sup> the US Supreme Court decided that Homosexuals can legally be married throughout the Country.

Now, being a political and civil matter in the neighboring country doesn't really have anything to do with us, except that there is something that gave me grief, seeing how many in our community, including some Christians, gave them their “amen” to a practice the God calls sin, that has and will certainly erode the country, be it in Canada or the US, or any part of the world for that matter. It's one thing for a nation to throw a party we can't in good conscience attend. It's quite another to see family members in the faith jamming on the dance floor. We thought the rainbow was God's sign (Gen. 9:8-17) not a banner proclaiming sin.

God in His word has told us what makes it to be sin, both in the Old Testament through the Ten Commandments and in the New Testament through His Apostles. In the letter to the Romans 1:24-27, we read: “Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves,<sup>25</sup> because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen.<sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them up to dishonourable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature;<sup>27</sup> and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.”

Then in 1 Corinthians 6:9 we read: “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality...”

Homosexuality is not the only sin we need to be aware of and preach against but anything that is contrary to God's commandments. Although the world already pounces at us with the accusation of hatred and discrimination. And from within Christianity there is a side that proclaims tolerance in the name of love either denying sin or undermining God's Commandment for the sake of acceptance and inclusion.

Our meditation this morning is not regarding homosexuality or the recent political happenings, but rather to show the kind of world that surrounds us, the kind world to where Jesus is calling to share the Good News of the Gospel, a hostile and perverse world.

Our mission is to represent Jesus Christ and proclaim His love, true love. And for that mission we must travel light! In our Gospel, the apostle Mark reports to us that Jesus sent his disciples on that same mission back then. “He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.<sup>8</sup> He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no

bag, no money in their belts—<sup>9</sup> but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. <sup>10</sup> And he said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there.”

Traveling light is what Jesus asked them to do, but why would Jesus do that?

### **I. We travel light because our focus is a job to do.**

Back then Jesus instruction was simple but clear, don't take anything else but your clothes on you and a walking stick, that's all. It doesn't sound attractive does it. That's not the kind of spiritual trip I want to take right now! It's the middle of summer. I'm ready for vacation! How about you? I think you are as well. I think that many of us would agree that we are ready to journey for Jesus—so long as it is a vacation and not a business trip! Especially if you are somebody who had labored or served the church for many years and are now retired. Many think that retirement from employment also means retirement from the church.

I understand that. Sometimes middle-aged as well as veteran members need a break from years of serving in the church. But I don't think, from God's viewpoint, this means we go on vacation as Christians. If we need a break from working for Jesus, that probably means we need to go back to the basics: being in worship and Bible study. When you use your hymnal and your Bible to grow as a Christian, you still are traveling for Jesus.

Even if we're tired, we still can serve in ways that take less time or energy or work. Even if our work seems simple—like praying for others—we are working for Jesus. We still are sharing his love, the love that sent Jesus to die on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. We can share that love until the day we enter eternal life. We travel light, first then, because our focus is that we have a job to do in this decaying world.

### **II. We travel light because we travel in faith.**

We travel light because we travel in faith and if so we don't need a lot of luggage for this spiritual journey. Neither did the disciples. Jesus tells them to depend on God to provide a place to sleep each night and food as well. What Jesus wants is for us to trust God to provide for all our needs, and also to trust in the power he sends us with, the Gospel says: “And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.”

Trusting God to provide is tough as we journey for Jesus. If we say, “I don't travel anywhere overnight without making motel reservations,” we miss the point. Jesus wants us to use our brains and experience when we live as his representatives. What Jesus doesn't want us to do is to put together a backup plan in case he doesn't come through the way he has promised.

Martin Luther said that faith first of all is depending on God to come through with his promises. When we travel through life with faith, we are turning control over to God. We serve to the best of our ability, but the Holy Spirit is making all the real travel arrangements. We travel light because we travel in faith.

### **III. We travel light because rejection does not equal failure.**

We travel light because rejection does not equal failure. In v 11, Jesus warns his disciples about rejection when he says, “If any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you . . .”

There is rejection of the Gospel and the preachers from the world, and also from within the Christian world. The issue of homosexuality and equality in marriage has put

Christians at odds. Some are in favor others against, unfortunately and usually without a clear understanding of God's word and His will, through Law and Gospel.

But it is there, in that environment, that we need to preach the Gospel yet it is in that same environment that we will face rejections for sure. Over this issue and others many are losing even their faith and salvation, rejecting the Gospel of Christ. They simply don't want to hear anything about Jesus. They may not want to admit they're sinners who need a Savior.

For many people, other parts of life are more important: family, work, sports, the boat, the cabin at the lake, or traveling. Of course, all these are blessings from God. But people who make these blessings more important in their lives than God will not welcome messengers like us who say that God needs to be number one.

Because Jesus talks about the disciples experiencing failure, we know we won't always succeed. But all we can do is respond in faithfulness to Jesus call of sharing the Good News, after all is about Jesus and not our own power or our own ventures. But one thing is clear sharing the Good News is not easy and many times not safe.

In C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*, Aslan, the Lion King of Narnia, represents a Christ figure. Lucy, conversing with Mr. Beaver, is curious about Aslan. She has never seen him, but has heard that he is "on the move," and anticipates meeting him. "Is he safe?" she asks. "Who said anything about being safe?" said Mr. Beaver. "Course he's not safe, but he's good. He's the King I tell you."

Jesus is "on the move." The world too, but Jesus is Good and He is the King, and He is taking us with Him, and we wouldn't fail. Even though it is not safe, we can travel light because rejection does not equal failure.

#### **IV. Above all, we can travel light because Jesus sends us with a message to share.**

Above all, we can travel light because Jesus sends us with a message to share and that message is first of all Good News for you and me, because we are sinners. Yes He is good and He is the King, but He is also our Savior. Our text reminds us that we sin when we don't obey Jesus' command to share his Good News, whatever the reason. We sin when we cheer for sin when it wins a battle, we sin when we take God's command lightly, we sin when follow and fight for our own choices, and when we sin we are inheritors of eternal condemnation. But God's Son trades our imperfection for his holiness on the cross. We receive his forgiveness and promise of never-ending life as a free gift.

More than that: this love of God—which makes our life worth living—is a gift we can share with others so they can know their lives also are worth living. That's why we are sent. Even though it's not Christmas, like the angels at Bethlehem, we have "good news of great joy" (Lk 2:10). For all, for all who are living in darkness and sin.

It is the Good News that we received first, it is the Good News that sustains us today. It is the good news that brings us new life, a life that is received through the waters of baptism. Today little Prie through baptism she will be born again into the living kingdom of God, born spiritually and received into God's family, brought into God's way to walk in God's ways towards heaven for there is where God is taking us.

Unfortunately many have taken their baptism lightly. Many have forgotten their baptismal vows and now are cheering after the seemingly happy world. Please remember your baptism. Remember the price God paid for you on the cross of Calvary,

don't take that lightly! Please remember who you are. Please remember who needs to be in your life first and foremost and in whose' ways you need to follow. How sad it is to have been born again in Christ through the waters of baptism and yet throw that away for the sake of worldly things.

Instead follow the call of Christ to share the Good News, just as many did in the past that have brought the Good News to you first.

Go into the world. Go make disciples. Go feed the hungry, go clothe the naked, go visit the lonely. Go love the world in the way of Christ not in the way of the world. By this they will know you are my disciples... Jesus said: "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." (John 20:21)

As we travel through life, sent by Jesus, it's not what we carry in our hands that's important. What matters most is what we carry in our hearts . . . and share through our lives: the love, forgiveness, and peace of Jesus. (V12-13) Yes His love demonstrated on the cross of Calvary, His love that saves! Are we ready to hear the Good News and Christ's call and act on it? This is your time, this is your place!

In the movie the Lord of the Rings, Frodo the hobbit receives a "call" to destroy the evil "one ring" before its power is able to corrupt and destroy all of Middle Earth. This call involves a long and extremely dangerous journey, and the likelihood that Frodo will not return alive. In one scene, Frodo expresses his fear and later wavers in his quest but remembers what Gandalf the wizard had told him previously, lets watch...(video - "We cannot choose the time we live in. We can only choose what we do with the time we are given.")

And so Frodo keeps going in his mission. In the same way, the world ahead of us, filled with immorality, rejections of the Gospel, rejection and even persecution, can make us give up the very life that God gave us in our baptism, it is up to you who would follow and whose voice you are obeying, remember He is calling you to Him, to the forgiveness of your sins, to life eternal, and he is inviting you to be his voice, He is inviting us to travel light, yet filled with love and forgiveness, joy and peace.

In His name, amen.