



# Come and See!

July 15, 2018

## The Word...

Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two  
and gave them authority over unclean spirits.  
He instructed them to take nothing for the journey  
but a walking stick--  
no food, no sack, no money in their belts.  
They were, however, to wear sandals  
but not a second tunic.  
*(from Mk 6:7-13)*

## Pondering the Word...

Mark's Gospel is by far the sparest in terms of details; a friend of mine calls it the "just the facts" gospel. So why is he so specific about the Apostles wearing sandals? In Matthew and Luke's versions (thought to be written after Mark), Jesus specifically says no sandals; in Matthew, the disciples are going out alone and can't even bring a walking stick. Scholars suggest the two later gospels were adapted to distinguish Jesus' missionaries from other missionaries at the time, but the basic message of the three evangelists is the same: disciples on mission are to rely on God and God alone.

But Jesus knows the physical journey is arduous. He sends them out with partners to keep them grounded, a walking stick to lean on when they are weary, and protection for their feet so they can keep moving forward.

Our work in the Kingdom can be wearying as well. Ministering within a support system—even if it's just one other committed person—can provide hope and strength, refreshment when our well is running dry. Reliance on the "walking stick" of prayer will help get us through the ups and downs and keep us from stumbling. And we can't keep moving forward unless we are well protected by the sacraments, the "sandals" that keep our souls from serious harm.

Jesus sends each of us out every day to preach and heal. For what three things do you ask Jesus to help you on your journey?

## Living the Word ...

Consider using this question as part of your morning prayer. Before you even get out of bed, take a brief minute to look at the day ahead. What challenges are you facing? Maybe it's acceptance of a health issue. Perhaps it's quelling the desire to get back at someone or avoiding temptation. Very often, the biggest challenge I face is staying attuned to God's presence as I go about ordinary activities.

Be specific in your prayer: "Lord, I ask for these three things from you to help me on my journey today." Of course, God knows and, if we ask, will give us what we truly need. But by voicing our needs, we become more aware and also get a better understanding of the graces God sees that we need. Give this a try for a week or two and see if it helps you as you go about spreading the Good News.

Personal Reflections and Ideas: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Jul 16:** *“What care I for the number of your sacrifices?” says the LORD. “I have had enough of whole-burnt rams ...Bring no more worthless offerings; your incense is loathsome to me...Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes; cease doing evil; learn to do good...hear the orphan’s plea, defend the widow.”* (Is 1:10-17)

I love verses like this. I love it when God “draws up before our eyes” (Ps 50) the hypocrisy of our hollow platitudes and mouthed prayers; the worship we offer out of obligation rather than praise or gratitude; the insincere sacrifices we make. I love it when God does this for me, when God snaps me to attention and makes me confront my self-righteousness and empty prayers; when I am forced to look at my “comfortable Christianity” that keeps Christ’s widows and orphans at arm’s length. So...What am I going to do about it?

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**Jul 17:** *“Take care you remain tranquil and do not fear.”* (Is 7:1-9)

I see Isaiah handing the trembling King Ahaz a T-Shirt, “Keep Calm and Carry On.” Spoiler alert: He doesn’t. When faced with the armies of Assyria, Ahaz crumbles and elects to align with human might rather than with God’s promise of a future savior. It’s hard to take the long view when things are falling apart around us, to remain a non-anxious presence in the midst of chaos, and yet that is exactly what our faith is all about: trusting in God’s promise, providence, and protection even—especially—when we are under attack. This verse is yet another example of God’s most oft-used message in Scripture: ‘Do not fear. Be not afraid. I am with you.’

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**Jul 18:** *“I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike.”* (Mt 11:25-27)

I saw a Facebook post that made me smile. It was set up like a phone text message. The first text: **Jesus:** “Who do you say I am?” The response: **Theologians:** ‘You are the ultimate Reality, the mystical manifestation of the Godhead, the meaning of the cosmos, the ineffable Absolute.’ After a bit, the counter response: **Jesus:** “What?” ☺ Now don’t get me wrong—I love to read theology and the beautiful language these gifted men and women use when they venture to write about God; I rely on theological writing all the time. But listen to what Jesus has to say today. It is the childlike who most easily open their hearts and minds to understand the language of love that Jesus’ life speaks. It is the simple ones who don’t burden themselves trying to figure things out. It is the ones who just choose to follow the goodness they see. If your relationship with Jesus is primarily in your head, let your child’s heart take over for a while. Follow the goodness. Let him love you.

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**Jul 19:** *“When your judgment dawns upon the earth, the world’s inhabitants learn justice.”* (Is 10:5-7, 13b-16)

As people of the ancient world, the Jews saw God’s judgment in the calamities, both natural and political, that befell them. The only way they could learn justice is to be punished by God. But another idea struck me when I read this. It is often in disaster, in crises, that the real goodness in people comes shining through: regular citizens risking their lives for people they don’t know; volunteers arriving from all over the globe to lend a hand to strangers, even “enemies;” houses of worship opening their doors to other faiths. I don’t believe God punishes us through natural disasters; we inflict enough punishment on ourselves for our evil ways. But I like to think we do experience true lessons about justice and mercy when we are called upon to help others in crisis. And the Lord metes out peace to us, accomplishing his justice through our hands and hearts.

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**Jul 20:** *“Yours is the life of my spirit.”* (Is 38:10, 11, 12, 16)

*“Yours is the life of my spirit; yours, the pulse of my heart. Yours is the light that guides me home; yours, the still, silent dark. • Yours is the depth of the ocean; yours, the breadth of the sky. Yours is the mountain majestic; yours, the willow’s sad sigh. • Yours is the sun and moon and stars; yours, creation below. Yours is the canvas e’er changing; yours, where all beauties flow • Yours is the very air I breathe; yours, my gifts to impart. Yours is the life of my spirit; yours is the pulse of my heart.”* (Elaine Ireland)

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**Jul 21:** *“Woe to those who plan iniquity and work out evil on their couches...thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I am planning against this race...On that day a satire shall be sung over you, and there shall be a plaintive chant...’”*(Mi 2:1-5)

Another translation says, “On that day, you will be mocked.” God’s ways our not our ways, God’s timing not our timing. Going back to Tuesday’s reflection, let’s remember to take a long-view and await God’s judgment and God’s salvation. So if you are struggling with “those who plan iniquity” or someone who is “working out evil,” rely on your faith and do not fear. Pray that God’s judgment will change hearts and minds for good.