

The Beginning of Travels

"3. The Ministry of Jesus Christ"

"As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a Dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'"

Matthew 3:16-17

"God's love is like an ocean. You can see it beginning, but not its end." Rick Warren



When we accept Christ as our Savior, we have a wonderful feeling of joy and love. Our burdens are lifted and we have a loving person to talk with. Imagine the joy the disciples must have felt as they journeyed with Christ and talked with him physically. Sometimes we know they were confused. Sometimes we are confused. But the journey has a wonderful end for each of us.

The mission of John the Baptist was ending. People were questioning why he was baptizing while Christ was also baptizing. To settle their discussion John said *"I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him."* and then later he told them *"For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for*

God gives the Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands." John 3:27-28

Shortly after this, John was imprisoned and killed. His journey here ended. The journey of Christ took him to Galilee and he met a Samaritan woman at a well and asked her if she would give him a drink of water. The woman questioned *"You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?"* Christ answered her with another one of his somewhat confusing comments. *"If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."*

The disciples had been in town and returned to see him talking with the Samaritan woman. They were surprised, but did not question him. Christ told her to go get her husband. Eventually as a result of this meeting at the well many Samaritans believed the woman and said *"We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."* John 4:42

Christ went to Nazareth. As he opened the book to read he read *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."* Luke 4:17-19. He also told them *"Ye will surely say unto*

me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself" but they did not understand and then he told them "No prophet is accepted in his own country." He continued on through Capernaum, Bethsaida, Galilee and several other towns, and returned to many of them to continue his journey to tell as many people as possible about his Father's love, and he healed many people through his miracles.



"Go Ye into all the World and Preach the Gospel to All Creation." Mark 16:15

In Capernaum he was teaching and a man filled with demons started yelling *"Ho! What business do you have here with us, Jesus? Nazarene! I know what you're up to. You're the Holy One of God and you've come to destroy us!"* Jesus said quietly to the demons *"Quiet! Get out of him!"* Jesus became the talk of every conversation.

Maybe we should all be preachers! Or are we? Charles Schulz once said *"Cartooning is preaching. And I think we have a right to do some preaching. I hate shallow humor. I hate shallow religious humor, I hate shallow sports humor, I hate shallowness of any kind."* Schulz lived this in many ways, but the one that comes to mind is the Bible reading in "Charlie Brown's Christmas." and the ending with "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing."

Christ went to the home of Simon Peter. His mother-in-law was sick but Jesus healed her and she got up and made dinner for them. Now everyone with any kind of ailment was coming to Jesus. The next day he left and people followed him. He healed many but told the disciples *“Don’t you realize that there are yet other villages where I have to tell the Message of God’s kingdom, that this is the work God sent me to do?”* See Luke 4.

Shortly after that he was visiting another town and he met a man filled with leprosy who recognized Jesus and believed in him. The man said *“If you want to, you can cleanse me.”* Jesus healed him, but asked the man to keep silent because he knew large crowds would be coming to be healed. When they did, Jesus had to withdraw to a quiet place for prayer. He did this often so he could rest for the rest of his journey. By now large crowds were following him from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, and Judea and other areas across the Jordan. When he saw the large crowd of people, estimated to be at least 5,000, he called to his disciples and he began to teach. The teaching that day has been called “The Sermon on the Mount.” He taught like one with authority and he gave them the beatitudes and told many of the teaching in story so they would be able to remember them. Again, Jesus was exhausted and withdrew for a time of prayer, but many were astonished at the truths he told them.

As we read about the travels of Jesus, we realize that he talked with all classes of people. He was ridiculed and mocked. He was loved and idealized. But he was also working very hard to finish his journey in the time he had here on earth.

We have a journey also. We have people who love us, and some who may hate us. We have people who praise us, and people who ridicule us. We find some tasks easy and some hard. We find that sometimes it is easy to witness for Christ, and other times we find it difficult and almost impossible. We back off and sometimes pretend we don’t really know Jesus as our Savior.



Jesus didn’t promise the journey would be easy. The people we met today are like the woman who met him at the well to John the Baptist who gave his life because he loved.

John Peterson, who is credited with putting the Bible into contemporary language called THE MESSAGE tells us part of what Christ told the people gathered on The Sermon on the Mount. It tells us what was expected of the people then and what is expected of us today. He translates Matthew 5:13 as *“Let me tell you why you are here. You’re here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness?”*

“Do all you can to preach the Gospel and if necessary use words!” - Francis of Assisi

Prayer: God, sometimes I forget that you came for everyone, not just those people who look like me, and not just those people who go to church or claim to be Christians. Help me to realize Your love is there for everyone and it is my job to tell them about Your love and help them also to have the knowledge that they are Your people and You love them as much as you love me. Amen

1. Can we learn a lesson from John the Baptist, who in so many words said what we hear today that we must decrease and Christ must increase?
2. Are you a miracle?
3. How did Christ let the woman at the well know that he was really the Son of God and all-knowing?
4. Explain how this applies to us today. *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”* Matthew 5:16

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