

The Journey Continues

“4. The Ministry of Jesus Christ”

“Don’t worry about other people’s opinions of you. God never told you to impress people; only to love them.”

Dave Willis

“Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.”

Matthew 10:14

As the journey of Christ continued he went to many places. We have read about feeding of 5,000 at Bethsaida where he multiplied the two fish and five loaves given by a small boy who had faith that his offering could help. He fed other large groups also in other places. We can assume that he did this to show how God’s love was being used through him and providing food to those who were hungry for his word as well as meeting their physical needs.

He began to send the disciples out to help spread the word. They had to have faith because he commanded how they were to go. He sent them out two by two and gave them authority.

His instruction, in Matthew 10:14, were not easy. At one time he walked on water. Perhaps this was to help Peter who may have been wondering if he could do the same as Jesus. We don’t know, but we do know that it strengthened the faith of Peter as well as the other disciples.

We don’t often hear about the Syrophenician woman’s faith that Jesus could remove the demon from her little daughter. He had gone to Tyre and was trying to get a little rest but the woman found out and begged Jesus to heal her daughter. Again, we sometimes wonder at what he meant when he said to her “*First let the children eat all they want,’ he told her, ‘for it is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.’ Lord,’ she replied, ‘even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.’ Then he told her, ‘For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter.’*” Mark 7:24-30

This is a very confusing passage for us today. Imagine what it must have been then. Christ left the Jewish provinces and went into Gentile territory and didn’t want anyone to know. Why? He talked about feeding dogs. According to some authorities he was telling her that he was sent to the Jewish people first and then the Gentiles. However she does not take this as an insult and gives her assurance that she believes in him as the Messiah. She was willing to be as low as the dogs but she believed.

“Faith is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see.”

Based on Hebrews 11:1

“The soul can split the sky in two and let the face of God shine through.”

Edna St. Vincent Millay

We wonder why he told stories like this instead of giving a straight answer. Jesus used many stories. We tend to remember stories instead of commands. But each one had a very important message. Today we know most of these as Parables. Some are quite long, some are only a few words, but they tell a very important story.

There were many miracles and he even empowered some of the disciples to do miracles. Some of these are given in some detail, others are referenced, but not really emphasized.

Jesus continued to travel to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, Jericho, Bethany and the list goes on.

In Mt. Hermon, he healed a man’s son who had seizures. The father said he had brought the son to the disciples, but they could not heal him. Jesus healed the young man and the disciples asked why they weren’t able to do it. He sort of rebuked them and told them “*Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.*” Matthew 17:14-21

We can assume that the disciples were

confused at this time. I'm sure I would have been. Sometimes they would wonder if he were the only one or if the people they had learned about were also as great like Moses and Elijah. One time He took Peter, James and John on a high mountain. When they were all alone, the clothes of Jesus became dazzling white and Elijah and Moses appeared and were talking with Jesus. Then a cloud appeared and covered them and they heard a voice say to them *"This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"* Mark 9:7 We can only try to imagine how confused the disciples must have been at times.

As he continued to teach the disciples he told them again about his death but they didn't understand. He took them to Galilee again and told them a second time *"The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.* Mark 9:31

He worked with many people in many ways. He often times healed large groups that had gathered, and sometimes we are told about individual miracles like the adulteress, the blind, the lame, and many different sinners just like we are today.

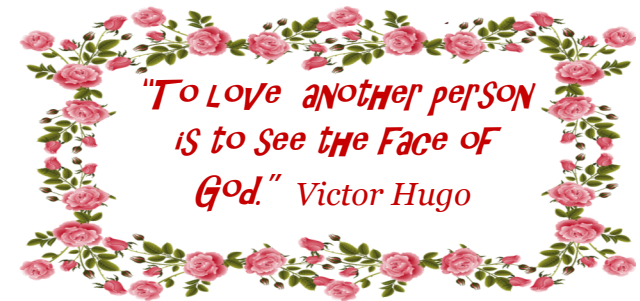
He told many stories like the good Samaritan, the lost coin, the lost sheep, the unmerciful servant, the wise steward, the rich fool. He told the people they must become as children. Many of the parables or the miracles are not recorded by all of the apostles. Some of them are referred to later by other apostles.

It is remarkable how the teachings of 2000 years ago still apply to us today. We have the same sins, and same doubting at times. We still need to be told in story form so we remember.



Everything was not easy for the disciples or for Christ. At one point James and John asked a special favor. They asked *"Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your glory."* They had no idea, perhaps they were just asking in an innocent way to be close to him. Christ replied, *"You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?"* This caused stirring among the other disciples. Christ called them all together and talked with them. He told them *"whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."* Mark 10:35-45

Today, we "quibble" in the church and amongst ourselves; we are no different. We all want to be at the right hand of Christ in our own way. He kept trying to tell them what was going to happen. He tells us today what is going to happen. We often have the same response as the disciples.



Prayer: Father, help me to try to comprehend your greatness and your power to the best of my ability and to seek to tell others how you gave us so much and have so much more to give if we just accept your love today. Amen'

1. Do you believe that Christ was able to multiple food to feed more than 5000 people?
2. Have you put "God in a Box" as J. B. Phillips suggests and limited his power in your mind?
3. What does Christ mean by *"Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts.?"* Do you think that some people might think they could buy salvation from the disciples?
4. Do people sometimes think they can buy salvation today?

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