

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Sep 24th 2014

“Take nothing for the journey...”

The authority Luke speaks of is the authority of relationship. Jesus gave his apostles the authority, to “cure diseases... proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick.” Jesus offered nothing beyond themselves; who they were in relationship to him. He offered them no healing herbs, no potions, no medical skills, no additional anything. He sent them off with “... nothing for the journey, neither walking stick, nor sack, nor food, nor money,...no second tunic.” But neither did Jesus say anything about his expectations or results. In fact, he says, “...as for those who don’t welcome you, shake the dust from your feet.” He does not say to stick around, try and try again, or be persistent. He says to keep going, to keep moving on, to stay faithful to the mission, the journey. Stay faithful to me, to us, to what we have together. Don’t get bogged down in stuff or baggage. It is not about the quality of the hospitality offered; rather it is about faithfulness to Jesus himself. Staying faithful to the relationship.

This is not about the ‘what’ and the ‘where’ of the sending. It is not about success or failure. It is about relationship and the journey itself. It is about being sent – again and again in whatever my vocation is at the time. It is about living out of the relationship I have with Jesus. It is about having the freedom to go in spite of uncertainties. It is about freedom from success or failure, people, places, and fears. It is about journey and mission, freedom, response and responsibility. Relationship. It is about inner movement, inner change, as well as physical relocation. It is about the relationship between Jesus and me. It is about trusting who I am in the heart of God and that what I have been given is enough for my journey. It is always about trusting the relationship.

The paramount relationship throughout all of scripture, Hebrew and Christian, is the relationship between Jesus and Abba, his father. Hebrew scripture relates Yahweh’s frustrating ongoing invitation to the Hebrew nation to be in relationship with Yahweh. In the end, Jesus, the incarnation of the intimate Trinitarian relationship comes to show, teach and invite me – all of us – into that intimate relationship. Over and over again Jesus speaks of and refers to his relationship with ‘My Father.’ From the time he is a young boy found preaching in the synagogue, to his baptism, the Transfiguration – up to and including his death, Jesus testifies to his relationship with his Father. His Father likewise reveals their intimate relationship. In his ministry, Jesus speaks with the ‘authority’ of this intimate relationship with Father. From this intimacy Jesus generously bestows his authority on the disciples and to me. Food for my journey.

Forever and always it is about relationship. Intimate, loving relationship. Jesus’ intimacy with Abba overflows. It is Jesus’s invitation to me to be in intimate relationship with Jesus and through Jesus to intimacy with Abba. From that intimacy flows human intimacy. Intimate Love blesses me with the freedom to live fully and stay faithful to my journey. To live in the fullness of The Intimate Relationship.

The Good News: God’s invitation of intimacy is forever and always. To love and to be loved fully and richly is God’s invitation – to me.

