

Faith In Community, January 8, 2006
THE JESUS JOURNEY: SEVEN THINGS TO PACK
Start the Journey! John 15

CHARTING THE COURSE

“‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men.’ At once they left their nets and followed him.” *--Matthew 4:19*

“The men who followed Jesus were never the same. Neither was the world.”
--Ken Gire, The Divine Embrace

PACKING FOR THE TRIP:

An Abider accepts God’s grace, is transformed by Christ’s power and love, and demonstrates the Fruit of the Spirit.

What makes a good friend? How do you express friendship with Jesus?

COME, FOLLOW ME . . .

In today’s passage, the disciples’ time with Jesus is coming to an end. What a privilege it had been to share in the wonders of the kingdom of Heaven! What an honor to hear the Truth firsthand, to know His friendship, to walk in the brightness of the Light of the World!

But the eleven friends who shared the Passover meal with Jesus did not understand the radical turn their journey was about to take. Within hours their Master would be arrested, tried and crucified. A new chapter would begin, one for which they were unprepared despite the ancient prophecies and the words of Jesus Himself. They would find themselves, for a time, in a cruel and lonely darkness born of human sin and betrayal.

As they share this last meal, Jesus is directs their thoughts beyond the darkness. Discipleship would soon take on a new, spiritual dimension which Jesus calls “abiding”, or remaining with Him though He would no longer be physically present. In the three years of Jesus’ earthly ministry, his closest friends had come to know Him as the Son of Man, and as “God in the flesh”. Jesus speaks of a time and a promise in which they and future followers would come to know Him even more intimately through the third person of the trinity—the Holy Spirit.

This is not so different from our own experience of Christian faith. We believe, like the disciples, that God is almighty and loving. We too enjoy the friendship of Jesus, Who is the incarnation of God. Then the storms of life hit and we find ourselves in the inevitable crossfire of sin and suffering, and God seems uncaring and far away. We doubt and we fear, unsure whether our former experience of His power and love are real. But we

Read vv. 12-17. What is at the heart of the friendship Jesus describes? How are relationships changed in light of this friendship?

AT THE CROSSROAD

Read vv. 18-27.

What gives you a sense of “belonging”? Why is obedience important to our sense of belonging to Christ and to the Body of Christ?

How do you live out belonging to Christ in a world that is increasingly hostile to His presence?

What resources are offered to the believer to continue to live abundantly in Christ? How are these resources accessed?

STEPS IN MY PERSONAL JOURNEY

Each week during The Jesus Journey, you will be examining the experience of an abiding relationship with Jesus Christ. You will interact with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the context of seven different areas of spiritual growth. In the seven weeks to follow, you will be encouraged to take new steps in the transforming journey of discipleship.

Reflect on the Galatians passage below. Then consider the words listed. How does each represent “abiding” in Christ to you? What “fruits” grow from each? In which of the seven areas do you anticipate your own spiritual growth over the next seven weeks?

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. --Galatians 5:22-23a

Learning

Worship

Praying

Giving

Serving

Relating

Proclaiming

MARKING THE JOURNEY

Share with the class one way you would like to grow in your faith during this series.
Take time to memorize the following verse.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." --John 15:5

CLOSING PRAYER