

Let us pray together: Open our eyes to see your Spirit in our life. Open our hearts to receive the blessings you send each day. Guide us with your wisdom so that through us Christ may walk on the earth once again. Amen.

When was your last vacation? Where did you go? Did you go away to get away – from the summer heat? Did you go for an adventure?

Vacations used to be time away, time to rest and rejuvenate. Vacations were downtime. And they still are for many of us. But there’s a new type of vacation out there that’s attracting travelers of all ages. It’s called adventure travel. People attracted to adventure travel are not looking for downtime but are seeking to get out of their daily routine and experience the world in a new way. These adventure travelers desire to get up close and personal to their surroundings when they travel. Sometimes they go on what might be considered risky, arduous and exciting trips. They may go mountain biking in the Rocky Mountains, following a physically demanding schedule. Or they may go whitewater river rafting through the Grand Canyon. From the pictures I’ve seen, that’s pretty exciting – and dangerous. Though Linda and I have not been white water rafting on the Colorado, we have enjoyed the excitement of white water rafting on a river in Oregon. It is exciting and has a bit of danger to it. These adventure travelers may go hiking through Ireland or Scotland lodging each night at a B & B where they meet the locals as they dine in the town’s pub. Adventure travelers are interested in meeting the local people, getting close to nature and, often, challenging their physical limits.

The travel industry divides adventure travel into two segments: hard and soft. Soft adventure travel is getting out in the wild, but not venturing too far from the evening buffet. Think an African safari where you ride in a safe, secure vehicle to view and photograph the animals, but are back at your camp in time for the evening meal. A hard adventure, on the other hand, involves physical activity, like mountain climbing, cycling or hiking a section of the Pacific Coast Trail.

As you can imagine, or as you may have experienced, when taking on adventure travel, it’s best to have a guide. Most of us can find our way from the hotel room to the beach, but when you are whitewater rafting on the Colorado River or hiking through Scotland, it’s best to have a guide. Guides can help you plan the trip, pack the right supplies, provide maps, monitor your progress, and many times, lead the way so you don’t get lost.

You might say that the disciples who had been following Jesus for a few years had been on a hard adventure. They had hiked up and down the hills of Galilee. Travelled through the desert in Judea. They had been in storms on the Sea of Galilee that had caused them to fear for their lives. They had confronted terrifying demons and had seen miracles that were beyond belief. Their time with Jesus certainly wasn’t relaxing and calm. It was an adventure!

The disciples had been with Jesus from the beginning of his ministry. And Jesus had literally guided their every step. He had kept them safe on their hard adventure. But now Jesus was about to trek to the cross, die, be resurrected by God and then return to God. Jesus would be leaving his friends who had come to depend on his guidance and direction.

In today's scripture, Jesus tells the disciples that he is leaving them and that they are about to encounter a harder adventure if they are going to travel to remote parts of the known world to spread the word about God's love and Jesus' life.

Did the disciples completely comprehend what Jesus was telling them? From what we read later in the Bible, I doubt it. The disciples were sad that Jesus was leaving them and that was probably their focus. They were most likely wondering what they were going to do without their leader guiding them.

Do you need a guide with you at all times when you are on a hard adventure? Hiring a guide in the past usually meant having a person accompany you on your journey, showing you the route, with you following in the guide's footsteps. That may not be the case today. With today's modern electronics travelers can be tracked by GPS, connected via radio or satellite phone. Today's guide can monitor your progress without being there physically.

Isn't that what Jesus is telling his disciples in today's scripture? Jesus will not be their on-the-ground guide any more. Jesus promises them another guide, a new guide, who will help them, who will guide them as they take Jesus' message to the world. This new guide will not be there with them physically, but will show them, and us, the way, the trail to take, and warn of danger. Let's look at four ways this new guide, the Holy Spirit guided the disciples then and guides us today.

First, the Holy Spirit guide will help us travel light and avoid sin. The Holy Spirit will help us keep from putting unnecessary items in our backpack as we travel. Many of you know people who travel with a heavy backpack because they believe they need to work harder at being good to cancel out the sin in their lives. They live believing they can save themselves. That's a heavy burden to carry on your journey. Especially, when you understand that Jesus has done all the work necessary to save each of us. When we understand that, the path is easier to travel. Your burden is light. Following the Holy Spirit Guide, you'll find that all you need to do is simply do the work God and Jesus has called each of us to do. Travel light!

Second, the Holy Spirit Guide will help us with doing good, being righteous, as Jesus calls it. I just noted that the Holy Spirit will help us to travel light, to keep unnecessary items out of our backpack. The Holy Spirit Guide will also help us travel efficiently by showing us how to pack only those items necessary to do God's work.

What does following a righteous path look like? It looks like traveling the path Jesus took - living, loving and serving – with a heart that loves Jesus. If we follow the Holy Spirit Guide, Jesus promises that we will do even greater things. Jesus say this in John 14: 12 - **Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.**

Third, the Holy Spirit guide will help us with our route, the path we are to follow. The Holy Spirit knows that what the world thinks is important really isn't. The world thinks that material things measure success, that greatness is when people are your servants. The world thinks that the one with the most toys wins and that wisdom comes from being highly educated. The world values popularity, power and position.

The Holy Spirit helps us to understand that the path God asks us to travel is not the world's ways. When you are guided by the Holy Spirit, success is not measured by what you've accumulated. When you are guided by the Holy Spirit, the greatest among you is a servant to others. God says the wisdom of the world is foolishness. By understanding how God looks at things, the Holy Spirit will help you and me to make good decisions, to keep us on the path God wants us to be on.

Fourth, the Holy Spirit Guide will help us with the truth. Jesus says in verse 13: **But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.** I closed last week's message with the words: The time has come for us to come together as disciples, individually and as a community, to testify from our hearts to the truth about what we have seen and know. The Holy Spirit Guide will help us do just that – testify from our hearts to the truth about what we have seen and know.

As Christ-followers we know that God loves us and forgives us and wants us to follow Jesus' example of how to live. If we want to live as Jesus' disciples with willing and loving hearts, then you and I will follow Jesus' way, his truth, travel his path - in spite of the dangers, twists and turns ahead. To accomplish this, this hard adventure, we will need a guide. Jesus provides that guide to each of us, the Holy Spirit.

On this Pentecost Sunday, we remember that the Holy Spirit guide did arrive and launched the disciples on a new adventure. You and I are on that same adventure, a hard adventure like Jesus lived with his disciples. You and I know that following Jesus has never been about getting away from it all. It's about experiencing the world in a new way each day. It's about getting up close and personal with your surroundings. It's about meeting the local people, getting close to them. It's about following the way, the truth and the life of Jesus. Why? So, we can change the world for God's glory. It may not be easy travelling this path. It may be a hard adventure, but it is the only adventure that matters.