

Travel Light

St. Luke's description of sending the 70 out ahead of Jesus to prepare the way and preach the good news is just a prelude to what Luke tells us later in Acts about the mission of the early Church in the years after Pentecost. Luke's Gospel is Part 1 – Acts is Part 2. You can see his purpose as a great "hour glass." The "whole world" is enrolled before the birth of Jesus. Jesus in his life and ministry moves towards Jerusalem. Jesus dies and, then, rises in Jerusalem and tells his disciples to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit. 50 days after his Resurrection this powerful gift is given on Pentecost and the disciples go out to the "whole world" preaching, teaching, sharing God's love. And so the end of his story is in Rome, the capital of the empire, where Peter and Paul both finish their work.

Today's Gospel gives the Church in every age guidance for mission. Our understanding of mission has changed dramatically these last 40 years. Episcopalians used to think of mission as the ministry of a few called to go to far off places – Africa, South America, Asia. Now we think of mission as the ministry we all share. Each one of us is a missionary-in our families, schools, work places, neighborhoods. Some of us go on "mission trips." Next Sunday we will commission our mission team for their trip to New Jersey to help those who are continuing to recover from Hurricane Sandy. And we have a mission statement-our purpose-that guides each of us at Grace Church to know that we are

- a center for worship and fellowship
- a school for discipleship and stewardship
- a community for healing and outreach

Jesus tells us how to do mission, how to be missionaries, in his charge to the 70; this is a charge to the Church in every age, it is Jesus' charge to us at Grace Church.

*There is so much out there-so much to do- so many opportunities, possibilities. The harvest is plentiful. Some call this a theology of abundance.

*Every one is needed; everyone can have a ministry-just "ask" in prayer, in talking with others- How can I help?

*Travel light because the way is dangerous. Your good intentions can be met by rejection, misunderstanding, in some parts of the world today, Christians are persecuted and killed.

*Be humble and respectful and realize you will not always succeed. You will be rejected and misunderstood.

*Know in our perseverance God is with us and God's Kingdom has come near through our work, our ministries, our missions.

The old saying is that "the will of God will never lead us to a place where the love of God cannot sustain us." God's will and God's love are one.

I love to travel; to go on trips. I find packing to be a fascinating preparation for what I expect to happen. But I know that I can't take everything that I think I might need to handle every possible

situation, condition. I try to travel light with what I pack. More importantly I try to travel light in what I expect.

Jesus wants us to stay open to surprises. You have heard one of my favorite sayings many times, "If you want to hear God laugh tell God your plans..." The 70 returned to Jesus rejoicing in their success. It was just an introduction to the success the Church would find through 300 years of growth even under persecution as the Gospel spread through out the world.

Our names are written in heaven when we travel this life lightly-in our attachment to material possessions-in our attachment to others, even those closest to us-in our attachment to our idea of God. May God constantly surprise us. God's surprises come when we follow Jesus, when we go on mission for Christ and His Church.

Galatians 6:7-16
Luke 10:1-11, 16-20