

Proper 9 B
July 8th, 2018
St, Mark 6:1-13
2 Corinthians 12:2-10
St. George's Episcopal Church
Fr. Chris

Travel Light

“He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics.”

Travel light. This is good advice as many of us are preparing to travel this summer for a vacation. It is also good advice for any endeavor you wish to undertake. And it is vital advice for living a good, happy, fulfilling life: Don't carry with you a lot of stuff you don't need. Don't let the stuff of travel burden you down so that you lose ability to travel and tire yourself out from the weight of stuff you are carrying with you. Remember the purpose of the journey. Remember why you are traveling. Remember what you want to see and do.

Travel light. Keep it simple. Stuff often complicates your life. Stuff burdens you, and slows you down. Simple helps you to focus on what you are doing. Most of the stuff we drag around with us, we don't even need or use.

When I was much younger and had to do a big project, the first thing I would do is assess what I needed in terms of supplies and goods to accomplish the task. Mind you, I did not really think about doing the task, as much as collecting lots of office supplies and tools to do it. You can spend a lot of time and money on preparing to do something, and not get much done. Trust me, it is a great way to procrastinate about a project you want to put off for a variety of reasons. If Jesus sent me out on a mission, later that day He would find me in Staples picking out office supplies, or maybe in the bookstore looking for a manual on how to do it. I don't think he would be very happy with me for not listening to His instructions to travel light!

While I no longer do this at work, I still like to “get ready” in my personal life by buying things. This is how stuff grows in your attic and basement. We think that this thing will be really cool to us for our home or vacation, and when the time rolls around, we never use it and then toss it, excuse me, save it in that great black hole of our universe, which at first seems to offer us an infinite amount of storage space to put stuff in. I think we all know, that no matter how sizable the closet, no

matter how big the basement, no matter how large the attic, no matter how grand and gargantuan the garage, they fill up so fast that we find ourselves building storage sheds for what overflows from the garage in our yards and then rent even more space in storage facilities when that is not enough. Storage units are one of the fastest growing businesses in the country, but they simply didn't exist before 40 years ago-anywhere. No need to wonder why, because our stuff is growing faster than we can store it! And this happens to double in our mid-to later-life when we inherit all our parent's stuff that we are too sentimental or emotional to discard, and our children decline to take it from us.

So our stuff costs us money to store, and it becomes a burden as we travel through life. Eventually, we become slaves to our stuff instead of its master. And the words of Jesus sound very appealing as advice: Travel Light!

Travel light: I have been forced to do that in my house. When you downsize to live in a one-bedroom condo, there is little room to hoard a lot of stuff. You have to pare down your possessions: it's either you or your stuff. I keep thinking of the line in the movie, "High Noon:" "...a tumbleweed skitters across the road between them. There are no shadows. And the sheriff says, 'This town ain't big enough for the both of us.'" And we all know what happened next! I can hear the stuff speaking to me: This condo ain't big enough for the both of us!

Travel light. As many of you know. Last year I got rid of my big travel trailer because it was beginning to really be a chore to take care of and pay for it. The work outweighed the enjoyment and downtime it was supposed to provide me. Just emptying out the thing caused my storage units back home to swell and overflow with stuff, even after I gave away a ton of the stuff that was in it. It was like moving out of a big house with tons of boxes of stuff packed up with what I had accumulated there over the years, and things that I wasn't that ready to part with because they cost me so much money and "I wasn't sure I wouldn't use them, need them again in the future." (Those famous last words spoken for holding onto 'stuff'.)

Travel light. When you own a small trailer, these words make sense! I replaced the old ark with a tiny teardrop trailer. About 11 feet long, with a sleeping compartment in the front and a kitchen out back in the trunk of the trailer. As the manufacturer says, "we provide you with everything you need and nothing you don't, to make your trip smooth. complete and happy in a simple, small camper." There is no "extra space or storage." You really have to think about what you really need to bring, and get rid of any excess. You have to pack carefully, we quickly learned, shedding pounds, no, tons of stuff we do not need to take with us.

Now everything we take and pack must have a purpose, or it doesn't come along with us. If we don't use it on one trip, it likely won't come with us the next time. Trust me, it quickly becomes apparent if you bring too much stuff, and it bogs you down. You can't find or get to what you need, shuffling through the excess stuff. And every "little" pound adds a "little" to the expense of the trip, as the extra, unnecessary weight decreases gas mileage and slows you down driving up a steep hill. You quickly learn the difference between a want and a need.

And then there is the anxiety that builds worrying about your stuff, whether on the road, or living at home. Will thieves break in and steal it? Will I forget something valuable on a counter somewhere? Will I lose something valuable as I go about? Yes to all of those! We all have lost things traveling about. We all have forgotten things that it is too late to retrieve when we go back. And most of us have experienced the thief who would take our stuff. Travel light. There is less anxiety. Less fear.

Accumulating stuff can cost us our relationships—when we work an extra job to support and care for having all our stuff, it robs us of our time with our friends and family. When we do get home or have some free time, we are too tired to do anything!

Things are nice, but they can be a burden, especially when they start interfering with the purpose of your life and your work! Stuff starts to cost us money to store it, and money to finance the acquisition of it. And servicing our stuff can cost us that most precious of all our commodities: our Time.

It really is important to lighten the load you are carrying through life. Jesus gives us wise advice to keep it simple and travel light. Leave the stuff you don't need behind. Don't hoard things that others can make use of. Go sell what you have and give to the poor. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Our treasure is our time, our love, our family and our friends. Our treasure as Christians is the things we do for others and the world as we express the love with which we have been loved by God.

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal." AMEN