

LUKE 9:51-62
EVERYONE ON A JOURNEY TODAY

Everyone has had a journey today – just to get to Church:

- How did you travel? Bus, bicycle, foot, car?
- What did you bring with you? Bible, hymn book, teddy, anything else, someone's bringing ice cream?
- What do you expect to do when you leave church? Go home? Something else planned?

There are bigger journeys: eg Holidays

- Where are you going?
- How are you going to get there?
- Who's going with you?
- What are you going to take?
- Adventurous journeys? Camping, canoeing, SU camps?

Let me tell you about my journey this summer:

- Where? I'm going to Cambodia, 8000 miles away, to the city of Poipet
- Who's going with me? 8 other people whom you will meet later
- Why? To visit CHO, a Christian group to whom we send money every month to support 2 teachers. We are going to see their work and also to help them; we are going to help them in some practical ways; we are also going to meet a group of 70 pastors and teach them some of the Bible so that they can teach their churches because there is no-one else to do this for these pastors.

What am I'm going to take with me? Here's my rucksack; let's see what's inside; some things I'm taking with me.

- Mosquito net and Jungle formula – to keep the biting insects away!
- Sun cream and hat – it will be hot!
- Rain coat – it will be the rainy season
- Shorts – again it will be hot!
- Frisbees and bubbles – presents for some children we will meet.
- Bible – 2 reasons:

1) I'm going to teach some people who are church leaders how to understand bits of the bible so I need to take my bible with me!

2) it reminds me that God is with me wherever I go; Psalm 139:1-10 tells us that wherever we go, God is with us: if we go up, into the sky, the heavens, in an aeroplane God is there. If we go down, underground, in a submarine God is there; if we go to the far side of the sea, across the world, to Cambodia, or California, or to other places, God is there, He is with us wherever we go to help us, to strengthen us, to bless us. God is with us, not only when we're in Juniper Green Church, but everywhere we go.

We should be glad about that!

“IT'S HOW WE TRAVEL...!”

Jesus and His friends travelled around a lot, going from place to place, meeting people, healing people, teaching. As they went, they talked together and listened to Jesus; they came to new places, places they'd heard about, but never been to before; they met new people, but it was not always what they expected.

- Perhaps they expected that everyone would love Jesus everywhere he went and were surprised when some people didn't want to know Jesus and His message;

- perhaps they expected that they would always have a place to stay, a nice warm bed and lots of good food, but they had to learn to depend on other people's hospitality;
- perhaps they expected that they could follow Jesus and still carry on with all other things used to do, family, friends etc, but they had to learn that following Jesus was the most important thing they ever did and that everything else had to fit around that.

We have three luggage labels:

Commitment: the three people whom Jesus met 'along the road' were all half-hearted in their response to Jesus; something else came first and was more important and so they're not sure if they'd be committed to following Jesus. Jesus' commitment: "*as the...*" (Luke 9:51) He committed Himself to go to Jerusalem, knowing that it would mean the cross and death; He still made that journey; He committed to do that so that He could be our Saviour, committed He because loves us and wants to do best for us. People are unsure about making commitments today; people will not join clubs, organisations, political parties, churches so much today and that's not because they don't care, or don't believe, but they're just not sure about making a commitment and whether they will be able to keep to it. But it is good to be part of the Church family, to be committed to God and to one another, to follow Jesus all life long and to do that together with other people. We need to go through life with a commitment to Christ.

Courage: this is a brilliant quality. Courage helps us follow Jesus in all kinds of situations and no matter what happens in life. James and John were not happy when people didn't welcome Jesus, they couldn't understand! But Jesus knew that He would have to suffer and die and decision to go to Jerusalem was full of courage. We're afraid that we'll fail and be made to look stupid if we follow Jesus; we're afraid of what other people might say if they find out that we're Christians; we're afraid that we'll make too many mistakes; it seems impossible. But God gives us courage to be the people He wants us to be; He doesn't expect us to be perfect and promises to help us when the going gets tough. Have the courage to take a risk and follow Jesus.

Clear Call: We have choices to make: to follow Jesus or not? Or to follow someone else? What is most important in life? Being rich and famous? Being a celebrity? Being the right kind of person inside, full of faith, love? Jesus had a choice to make: was there a signpost pointing to Jerusalem; another pointing to somewhere else? Was He at some sort of crossroads? He chose to go to Jerusalem because that's what God wanted Him to do, to go to Jerusalem to be the Saviour of the world. Listen hard to the Bible, when we pray, listen to other people and we'll discover what God wants us to be and do, what kind of people God wants us to be. It means being the best people we can be, and doing what we do to very best of our ability for God.

We may not go anywhere; we may stay here all of our lives. Being committed to Christ and one another, being full of courage, being right kind of people – that's the best way to travel; it is how Jesus travelled; God give us commitment, courage and a clear sense of call to be His people.