

Returning Home

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Preacher: Pastor Scott Johnson

[0 : 0 0] Amen. Amen.

Good morning.

Good morning. Welcome to worship this morning. I am up here to do some announcements, but let's begin with the peace of Christ be with you.

Thanks be to God. I have some announcements to share with you that there are lots of announcements in the bulletin. So I invite you to take a look at those and see about the things that are coming up in the next few weeks that might interest you.

It's helpful for those of you who typically attend at 11 o'clock. We'll go back to regular worship hours the Sunday after Labor Day.

[2 : 0 9] So between now and then, one of the things that we will be doing is celebrating the life of Richard Long. That will be next Saturday at 11 o'clock in the morning.

And then later in September, on the 23rd of September, we will be celebrating Betty Gemeinder's life at 11 o'clock on Friday afternoon, or Friday morning, with a reception to follow.

And then on Saturday, Marge Wurtenberger's celebration of life will be later in the afternoon at 1, 1 o'clock in the afternoon with a reception to follow.

So speaking of receptions, Luann Bannis is doing our funeral reception. She's, after COVID, coming back to do those luncheons or cookies and things like that.

And I have two clipboards. And these are, these clipboards are for people that are willing to help in some way anyway.

[3 : 1 9] Like maybe cookies, maybe green bean casserole, whatever it is. Then she's collecting a new list so that she knows who is willing to help in whatever way people can, given what their life is like.

So I'm going to send these along. Just pass them along if you can't help. And don't worry, that's not somebody's lunch on that one. I'm not sure what happened.

I said last night I made chocolate cupcakes yesterday. But it's not my chocolate on that sign-up sheet. As I said, the rest of the announcements are in the bulletin.

Is there anything else that's... Yes. Scott? Pastor Scott? Louis? Yeah. So, uh... So, uh... I'm not sure where this house is located, but...

I think in Buffalo. So, Sandy can help unloading a house and bringing the furniture back this way, back to the church. Tomorrow at 2 o'clock.

[4 : 2 6] So, if you'd like to help out, uh... If you have time tomorrow... Two until... I don't know. It depends on how many people show up. It's 2 to 4, 2 to 6, somewhere in that range tomorrow.

We have a pickup truck that... Uh... There's one pickup truck in the trailer right now, but there's some furniture and household items that need to be brought back here. 2 o'clock show up at the church tomorrow.

Um... If you've got any questions, you want to let somebody know. William Lopez. Uh... Check with him on the way out or get a hold of Sandy. Sandy, raise your hand. That's Sandy.

And 2 o'clock tomorrow, um... Here at the church to go unload a house. Uh... Some furniture and bring it back here if you're available. Thank you. Anything else?

All right. Then let's get this music started. Thank you. Good morning, everyone.

[5 : 34] Good morning. And good morning to everyone online. Faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love. And through our music, we have an opportunity to celebrate the love that God has for us.

The love that we have for God and the love that we have for each other. So I'm going to invite you to stand for opening songs, Evidence, and Shall We Gather at the River. All throughout my history Faithfulness has walked beside me The winter storms made way for spring In every season From where I'm standing I see the events of your goodness All over my life All over my life I see your promises in fulfillment

All over my life All over my life Help me remember when I'm weak Fear and comfort you will leave You lead my heart to victory You are my strength And you always will be I see the evidence of your goodness All over my life All over my life I see your promises in fulfillment

All over my life All over my life See the cross, the empty grave The evidence is endless All over my life See the cross, the empty grave The evidence is endless All over my life I see the cross, the empty grave I see the cross, the empty grave Because of you, Jesus Oh, Jesus Oh, Jesus I see the cross, the empty grave I see the evidence of your goodness All over my life All over my life I see the promises in fulfillment

All over my life All over my life I see your promises in fulfillment All over my life All over my life All over my life I see the evidence of the goodness All over my life All over my life I see your promises in fulfillment All over my life All over my life Why should I feel The evidence is here Why should I feel

[9 : 53] Oh, the evidence is here Oh, the evidence is here With its crystal-tied forever

We will talk and worship ever All over my life All over my life Gather up the river The beautiful, the beautiful river Gather with the saints at the river

That flows by the throne of God Soon we'll reach the shining river Soon our blue grommage will cease Soon our happy hearts will quiver With the melody of peace Yes, we'll gather up the river The beautiful, the beautiful river Gather with the saints at the river That flows by the throne of God You may be seated You may be seated Good morning, church Good morning to everyone who is gathered here And all of you who are gathered with us online as well

This is week four of our series called Quest The Awakened Traveler And we have talked about what it means to leave home We've talked about exploring and encountering other people And today we're talking about what it means when you return home What it means to be an awakened traveler To develop the traveler's mindset And how it impacts you when you get back home So with that on your minds Let us say this opening prayer together As we come into this particular part of our worship Sojourning God Your spirit exists everywhere On every path Inviting us to move with curiosity and compassion toward each other May we see that our home paths Are the unfamiliar paths for someone else With renewed compassion Open our hearts for hospitality So that in our welcoming We will grow together in peace Expand our chances for love

And deepen understanding right where we are Nudge and guide us, we pray Amen These last couple of weeks You've probably noticed That our church was decorated for Vacation Bible School And some of the things that happen When Vacation Bible School ends Is then, wait, you see things that were Maybe there before But you don't remember And Mission Alley out there Has been reestablished And you can see out there There's angel wings There's support for veterans There's Is Operation Christmas Childs out there So please make sure you take some time To visit Our wonderful Mission Alley out there And it just keeps going right down Into the fellowship hall So, having said that

[15 : 19] I'd like to As our finance team Is working through Trying to be missionaries And trying to be evangelists Through this season of life and church I want to invite Amy Folby up To have a word I do I've got it all Is it on?

It's on Good morning, everybody Good to see everybody here My name is Amy Folby For those of you who don't know me I am I've been a member of this church For 25 years or so I am the finance secretary And I've been doing I've been on the finance team For probably 20 years So, it's been a long time It's my ministry And I enjoy that ministry If anybody's ever interested In helping us out Let me know So, my topic today Is why it's important to give And it's kind of an awkward topic It's a little bit difficult To talk about And I thought about What I was going to say And I thought Well, I think I'm just going to tell everybody If they don't give to the church We're all going to hell But I thought No, that's a little too harsh Don't go there Don't scare anybody Make it nice So, and I don't believe that anyway

So, this is what I came up with instead I'm guessing many of you Most of you have a mortgage Or maybe a home equity loan It's something that we dread Every month to pay But we have that And along with our mortgage Hand in hand Our utility bills Everybody has those And we keep up with those bills And not a fun monthly thing But we do it And in a number of years We pay it off And we go out and celebrate That we now own our home That's at least the path That we like to take We think we're going to take So, if you're like me You probably don't think about Another mortgage That all of us own And contribute to And that is Pendleton Center's mortgage Did you know that Our mortgage payment Is \$6,500 a month It's high

And currently Our monthly utility bills Which include the heat Water, electricity, internet They're roughly 30 Sorry \$3,184 a month And they are going up We got a word that Next year They're going to be Bumped up quite a bit So, just our mortgage And utility bills alone Are costing this church \$10,000 a month And our budget Is more than seven times that And the mortgage Of course And the utility bills Don't even include Our ministries Our salaries Our staff Our cleaning services So, you know that We have some high expenses In this church So, your house And your home May be the most single thing That you own You clean it

Hopefully You make repairs You make improvements You update it Maybe you even add on An addition Porch Patio And you pay that Monthly mortgage bill You make it the best You can make it Because it's your place Your respite It's your safety Your personal sanctuary It defines who you are This church This church Your church Our church Is actually God's house And it is equally Maybe even more important Than your own house Pendleton Church God's house Defines who we are Here as a church We pay that monthly Mortgage and utility bills We do make repairs Thank you to our Trustees Appreciate those guys We update it We've added a number Of additions Over the years We're proud to showcase This building And our commitment To keep it Keep it updated

[19 : 53] We honor God's house By keeping it beautiful And sharing it with anyone And everyone Who enters its doors It is the building That makes the first impression To a newcomer Or guest As they walk into it So when we have new people That walk in that front door Over there The first thing they see Is this beautiful building And it's We take pride In the cleanliness And the upkeep of it Word of mouth Is a powerful tool The physical condition Of this building Is important If we stopped maintaining it And updating it It wouldn't take long Before it fell into disrepair Steve Sosnowski Talked a couple of weeks ago About our financial gap Our mortgage and utility Bills are significant And on top of that The last two years We faced a lot of challenges We faced some major personnel changes As everyone knows And we also faced a COVID shutdown

And that resulted in additional hardships And shortfalls financially So we are facing a gap And we are looking at some rough times Ahead of us here Our church family is generous And I think that because we're generous We survived those COVID years Now we need to set our sights On continuing to support our building Our ministries Our outreaches Our youth We need to continue to support God's house Keep in mind this is God's house We are doing it for Him This is what we do for Him To honor Him Don't think that any contribution That you make Goes unappreciated Or doesn't get put to good use No matter how small Or how large Thank you We thank you Thank you Thank you We can't tell you enough How much your contributions

Are appreciated I watched a video yesterday morning It was quite an interesting video It was of a pastor Who was talking to his congregation And actually chiding his congregation Because they hadn't purchased the watch That he wanted six months ago And he was really laying into them Saying you didn't give me that watch That I needed I wanted that watch What's the matter with you?

And I'm not asking you to buy me a watch Or a bike Or a Fitbit Or an all-inclusive vacation Although if anybody feels compelled to do that Come and see me after the service I didn't have any takers yesterday After Saturday's service I am asking you to continue to financially support our church Our house God's house Keeping it beautiful, strong, and growing Next time you go to buy some furniture Change a light bulb Repair that broken door Paint your kitchen Don't forget to think about our church God's house And what you may be able to provide To ensure its existence long into the future Thank you God bless You see where it went With that wonderful testimony in mind

Let us come before God With our gifts and our offerings Amen Why is a father If it aquele one has been approved To such a MAC And what it means Lauren wilke the same That's why I pursue God's house Janelle In a way Find all careers After family Are you disappointed? Are you desperate for help? You know what it's like to be tired and only a shell of your own self.

[24 : 13] You start to believe you don't have what it takes. Because it's all you can do just to move, much less finish the race.

But don't forget what lies ahead. Almost told, brother, it won't be long. Soon all your burdens will be gone.

With all your strength, sister, a wild run free. Hold up your head, keep pressing on. We are almost torn.

This road will be hard. We win in the end. Simply because of Jesus in us, it's not if, but when.

To take joy in the journey. Even when it feels long. Oh, find strength in each step knowing heaven is cheering you on.

[25 : 41] We are almost torn. Brother, it won't be long. Soon all your burdens will be gone.

With all your strength, sister, a wild run free. Hold up your head, keep pressing on.

We are almost torn. Almost torn. Almost torn.

I know that the cross brought heaven to us. But make no mistake, there's still more to come. When our flesh and our bones are no longer between.

Where we are right now, where we're meant to be. Let all that's been lost, let's meet whole again. With each tear, the mystery no longer exists. No more walking.

[26 : 51] We're running as fast as we can. Consider this our second way. We are almost torn. We are almost torn. Brother, it won't be long. Soon all your burdens will be gone.

We are almost torn. Brother, it won't be long. Soon all your burdens will be gone. With all your strength, sister, a wild run free. Hold up your head, keep pressing on.

We are almost torn. We are almost torn. Almost torn. Almost torn. Oh.

We are almost torn. Almost torn. Oh.

We are almost torn. We are almost torn. You're about to die. Thank you.

[28 : 31] Thank you.

You may be seated. As we come together to share our hearts with God in prayer, are there things, people, that you would like to lift up this morning in prayer?

Yes, Carol. I'm going to say something about the nursing home. They're a close friend who's done this last day to your home.

So Joe, who's on comfort care in the hospital. Yes, Amy? I just want to be joy.

My daughter, Hannah, got married last week to her best friend, Nate. And it was a wonderful wedding, and it was a joyous occasion.

[29 : 55] And I just praise God that everything went as planned, and we had a lot of fun. And thank you, God, for letting her get through it.

Amen to that. Yes? Your friend Joanne is having surgery on Wednesday.

Yes? I just want to praise God for a wonderful, restful, enjoyable vacation week that she's been and I've shared in Florida. Thank you. Wonderful.

Wonderful to have vacation. So do you. Thank you. That's a great sunrise. Wow, that's good. On vacation, seeing sunrises. Tom?

Yeah, my father had surgery. He came through his time. He was like, he came back home. Tom's father had surgery and came through it in good shape.

[30 : 57] I want to, I'll get to you, Becky, just a minute. I want us to be mindful this week and last week and next week and the following week that students are going back to school, going back to college.

Some parents are dropping their kids off for a freshman year in college and taking a deep breath and maybe shedding a tear. I remember also the words, it's time for him to go.

Teachers are wondering what the year will bring and please be praying for them as they go into another year and are praying and hoping for a year that looks something like what they remember in teaching.

Yes, Becky. I was going to say my daughter, Reggie, will be coming up to their children in function to join us for a good fortune. Wonderful.

So your daughter? And your daughter's name? Reggie. Reggie. We'll be coming to spend some time. Yes, Louis. I just wanted to pray God for seven disciples who were commissioned yesterday.

[32 : 15] We did disciples' studies course. And it was such a blessing to go through this. And it started, I guess, because COVID was getting going.

And it was very easy that we went through in terms of completing a Bible phase of pre-unition. But people were so strong on the request of the current church.

Wonderful. Any of those disciples here? No, they won't. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you all for giving your time and prayers and lots of reading.

It's a wonderful, wonderful thing. Let's pray. Oh, Lord, what a blessing it is that you know us.

You know the words that we might speak before they move from our lips. You know the love and the worries and some of the brokenness that is in our hearts that we don't speak of.

[33 : 19] Changes may be afoot for those who are with us in worship, whether here in this sanctuary or watching.

And, Lord, we want to reach our hearts and our hands and our prayers out to those who are recovering, to those who are facing surgery and treatment, to those who are celebrating new chapters of life.

Lord, we pray for our children and our teenagers and our college students as they venture into this coming year. And, Lord, may we, like never before, pray for their teachers and the administration, that teachers might be cared for, respected, and honored in their calling to serve you in this way.

heal our hearts, heal our communities, heal our land, that we might be reminded once again who we serve and how we gather to honor you in discipleship, in study, in prayer, in laughter, and fun, and in unity in our belief in you, one God, one Savior, and one Holy Spirit.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[35 : 07] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Today's scripture is from Acts chapter 15, verses 1 through 11, and John chapter 15, verses 9 through 17.

Amen. Amen. Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers, Unless you are circumcised according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.

This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles, and elders about this question the church sent them on their way and as they traveled through phoenicia and samaria they told how the gentiles had been converted this news made all the believers very glad when they came to jerusalem they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders to whom they reported everything god had done through them then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the pharisees stood up and said the gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of moses the apostles and elders met to consider this question after much discussion peter got up and addressed them brothers you know that some time ago god made a choice among you that the gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe god who knows the heart showed that he accepted them by giving the holy spirit to them just as he did to us he did not discriminate between us and them for he purified their hearts by faith now then why do you try to test god by putting on the necks of gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear no we believe it is through the grace of our lord jesus that we are saved just as they are as the father has loved me so have i loved you now remain in my love if you keep my commands you will remain in my love just as i have kept my father's commands and remain in his love i have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete my command is this love each other as i have loved you greater love has no one than this to lay down one's life for one's friends you are my friends if you do what i command i no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business instead i have called you friends for everything that i learned from my father i have made known to you you did not choose me but i chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit fruit that will last and so that whatever you ask in my name the father will give you this is my command love each other this is the word of our lord thanks be to god so would you join me for a word of prayer gracious and loving god we are grateful for this moment

and as we come before you today lord with our hearts open we feel your spirit moving among us gently yet powerfully and lord as we have come with our hearts open and we have prayed and we have sung your praises and we have heard your word give us what you know we need plant that seed in us that will grow and bear fruit for the honor and the glory of your name through jesus christ our lord we pray amen so you heard me say during our greeting time that we are in week four of a series called quest the awakened traveler and if you are a person who is struggling a little bit with leaving your comfort zone then this one is for you now i want to start this by talking about this rather ordinary water bottle now there's a story behind why this has a little meaning for me first this has my happy place on it though i know you can't see it out there but it's a little outer banks uh water bottle and it's we go on vacation the outer banks every year my family and i we've been going there now for 24 years and the reason why this is a thing is you need to know a little backstory i have this vague recollection from when i was about five years old of going to the beach for the first time and i hated it i absolutely utterly hated it now from what i can remember because i don't have this as a burned in my memory story with a lot of detail but some stuff is pretty clear i remember this being a really hot unbroken sun kind of a day i also remember that this was kind of a pond lake situation and the sand was really gritty and kind of rocky and here's the piece that i remember the most is a lot of that sand seemed to make it home with me and made it home with me in places where you don't like to keep saying and i have this burned into my memory and for the longest time i really hated going to the beach which is why one of my best friends when she called my wife and i and says you guys should think about going on vacation with us okay where are we talking and she said the name of the town and i said well what are we going to do we're going to go to the beach and i had to think about it there was there was some hesitancy there for a pretty long time but the key thing is that you had to decide well we're going to have to give this a try we have to leave the comfort zone a little bit that the story that had been burned into my head needs to be given another shot we got to read we got to try this again and as i said we've been going there pretty much ever since and now i'm pretty much a beach guy i love going and somebody asked me after service last night so but what changed what was different you know i don't have a really deep answer for that i think part of it is being a little older when you when we went this time and no small part of it is discovering the importance of taking that shower when you leave the beach so that sand doesn't follow you home the same way i think that made a huge difference but here's the thing though if you're not willing to take those steps think about what you miss think about what you miss if you're not willing to give things that step if you're not willing to take that chance and as i said this is a little silly thing that i brought back with me a few years ago and that's really the point of today's message is why do we try in the first place why do we travel and one of the

[44 : 08] reasons that we travel is that when we go and we bring things back from that experience we are fundamentally changed now of course this water bottle doesn't fundamentally change me but the thing is when you think about all the stuff that you've brought home from your various trips it's not those things but why do we bring those things home right we bring them back because they remind us of those experiences they tell the stories even when we just let our eyes land on them for a few seconds they take us back to that experience and that's important for us we are fundamentally changed when we take those trips and we hear that today and we hear why that's so important in the story that sandy read for us now we're reading a really important moment in church history the passage out of acts is called the jerusalem council this is a big moment in the life of the church and it's laid out pretty clearly it doesn't take a whole lot of deeper interpretation here that as the young church is forming and we're starting to see communities of faith happening in different spots across the country that there's this town in antioch named antioch and in that town some preachers had come to town in the name of jesus and and started to tell the new followers who were not raised in the temple and did not have jewish background that if you want to follow jesus well you need to keep some jewish tradition like he did in other words you need to be circumcised according to the law of moses you all heard that in the passage and that's just one expression of the things we're talking about remember these are really different cultures folks didn't have the same dietary restrictions folks thought differently about sex and fornication folks did different things with their religious experiences than folks did in the temple in temple worship and so we're dealing with folks who have a really different way of looking at this and so some of these preachers in the name of jesus are saying well if you want to follow this if you want to be like us well you gotta do these things and you heard in the passage says well paul and barnabas got into pretty heavy debate with the folks who were teaching that because they had had a different experience and this becomes pretty significant because as the church is growing they're going to keep encountering folks who have these issues they're going to keep encountering this problem and so they pull together the team everybody needs to go to jerusalem and we got to figure this out and so paul and barnabas head on up the way and on the way they stop in some other places and so everybody's reconvened everybody gets back together and the person i really want us to focus on in this story is peter because you heard sandy in there tell us a little bit about what peter had to say now most of us remember that peter had been uniquely commissioned by jesus for leadership singled him out singled him out a couple of times said this is the rock on which i'm going to build my church and then at the end of john says you are going to follow me he was the one and so we get into the story and i'm going to start at verse 7. it says after much debate peter stood and addressed them fellow believers you know that early on god chose me from among you as the one whom the gentiles would hear

the word of the gospel and come to believe god who knows people's deepest thoughts and desires confirmed this by giving them the holy spirit just as he did to us he made no distinction between us and them but purified their deepest thoughts and desires through faith i want us to hold there for a minute so peter standing up and talking to everybody is a big deal because he's peter and everybody knows that but what we don't get in this story is what happens before it because peter has left jerusalem for a while and when he was away he had an encounter kind of like paul had because he encountered some folk who weren't raised jewish he also had a vision given to him by god that said what i have called clean you can't call unclean and peter says i get it now that you're not drawing these lines the same way that we've been drawing these lines and when he goes back to jerusalem he gives this testimony later on in the passage paul stands up because paul has been doing this uniquely like everybody he gets sent and he's out there all the time and he comes back and he stopped in some other cities and he's seen what's happened to people he's seen god at work he's seen god move and so he too stands up and said this is not right we cannot do this and make people think that they have to be jewish in order to be christian and because of that testimony james who is now the leader of jerusalem church stands up and says well yeah this is probably the way we need to go but i want you to hear something and pay attention to that it's the people who had taken the journey who were able to bear witness the people who had left the comfort zone the people who had left the home base were the ones who were able to come back and say god is at work out there and doesn't need our help and we need to recognize that and peter later on says look think about what we're doing you know we as the nation of israel we haven't been so hot at following these rules either why are we going to try and make people who didn't grow up believe in this stuff actually try and do the same thing it's the journey the experience that happens that fundamentally changed them and then when they came back they were in a different place you follow and see and that's what this series is trying to teach us this idea of being what is called an awakened traveler someone who understands the importance of the journey itself is what this is all about and that's important for us especially as being disciples called by jesus because it's real easy to get comfortable and this is one of those times where comfort is really our enemy now it's human nature to want to be comfortable it's human nature to say look i like how this feels i'm gonna stay here and if you've had a life journey we talked about this in the first week if you've had a journey where you've been through some stuff with storms have been after you where you've had to fight through some things and you've had some disagreements and it's been tough and you've had conflict and struggle and you get to a place and you can finally exhale

you know like i like it here i think i'm gonna stay problem is is that that's not how life works and see we make a huge mistake because when we hit that comfort spot and we want to stay there what we've done church is we have mistaken comfort for peace peace and comfort and peace are not the same thing what our brains and our souls and our hearts are really looking for is peace that's very different than comfort now peace is a thing that comes because you are in right relationship with god peace is a gift from god peace is one of those things that happens because you know that no matter what's happening around you god is still god god is with you and what is ever happening around you can't touch you because of who you are in god that is peace that's not comfort comfort is this is nice and soft compared to over there that's really hard comfort and i'm choosing the soft place as i said this human nature it makes sense and there's really nothing wrong with seeking comfort the problem is is that comfort just isn't the way of things all the time and when we value comfort more than faithfulness when we value comfort more than our call then we end up in that place that says well i'm not taking that journey and all the good things that happen on the journey then don't happen because we've chosen comfort and that is where we are being nudged that is where we are being pushed because we could miss out on so much and we can say yeah that's great but you know here is kind of nice i don't need to go over there because here is pretty cool but let me tell you again why that's such a big thing you've heard seen the example with peter and paul how it changed them and this is peter and paul we're talking about two heroes of our faith but all of us have that experience anybody who's ever taken a journey knows that it makes a difference for you we just had a prayer moment where we celebrated it was like to go somewhere and come back home we know what that's like and if you've taken those trips you know how it affects you too and think about what happens if you had never done it how your life would be devoid of some story how there are lessons you simply wouldn't know how your perspective would be very very limited see the thing about taking the journey whether it's a physical journey whether it's an intellectual journey whether it's an emotional journey is two things happen when you do the first thing that happens is if you travel well and if you travel with the traveler's mindset what you develop undoubtedly is a much deeper appreciation for god you develop a deeper appreciation for god because if all you knew was this thing no matter how nice your house is

if that was the sum total of your world if you never saw anything else how would you know about all the different kinds of things god has created how would you know about the human diversity that's out there how would you know what it's like to experience a sunrise over the ocean how would you know what it's like to stand at the top of the grand canyon or on a mountain how would you know the simple joy of sitting in a cafe somewhere what about all the other people you would have never had conversations with or had the opportunity to meet that's what the journey does for you and home is comfortable at least i hope yours is everybody doesn't have that luxury but home is comfortable but there's something inside of us that knows that there is more to life than just this there's a part of our souls that keeps kicking up dust that when we stay there too long it says we need to do something and i think it's that nudge that it's that idea that says come over here and see this go over there and do that because that's what makes the journey so exciting that's what keeps us invigorated and when you can see all the things that god has done just on this little slice of the universe how incredible that is it's pretty amazing second thing that happens when you travel is when you experience all that beauty that's out there in other places one of the side effects of that is it actually makes you appreciate home more because in many ways when you see what's out there you realize there's some stuff that you really just like about home that maybe you don't even appreciate until you get to experience something else i mentioned this yesterday and i'm willing i'm gonna see if it's the same now being from this part of the world that our lovely slice of heaven called western new york if you have ever ordered buffalo wings anywhere else in the world you know that most folk don't get it right that's just one little silly example and when you come on home you're like see this is the way it's supposed to taste that's just one little silly example but i want you to think about all the other ways in which seeing somewhere else has made you appreciate what you have at home and you don't get that lesson it doesn't become as real until you've had a chance to be away from home and that's the journey if you never take the journey that's not made as real for you that's why we think there's this that little part of ourselves that little part of our souls that says maybe we need to see something else maybe it's time to take a walk now the piece of us that we really have to pay attention to is not just simply that sort of

intriguing piece but we have to remember that on a spiritual level that jesus tells us something really important jesus modeled this and jesus commands this and jesus commissions us for this and sometimes we forget that especially when we start to get a little too comfortable now i'm going to read that passage again that passage from john 15.

[60 : 52] sometimes we blow past something in here that's pretty significant because jesus says it again in another place much more directly and there's another piece in this passage that gets much more play and understandably so because it's jesus command but i want you to hear this again and i'm going to read from verse 9 all the way through verse 17 the way sandy did i want you to hear it again my translation is a little different but hear the words again and remember it's jesus who's talking as the father loved me i too have loved you remain in my love if you keep my commandments you will remain in my love just as i kept my father's commandments and remain in his love i have said these things to you so that my joy will be in you and your joy will be complete this is my commandment love each other as i have loved you no one has greater love than to give up one's life for one's friends you are my friends if you do what i command you i don't call you servants any longer because servants don't know what their master is doing instead i call you friends because everything i heard from my father i have made known to you you didn't choose me but i chose you and appointed you so that you could go and produce fruit and so that your fruit could last as a result whatever you ask the father in my name he will give you i give you these commandments so that you can love each other now as i said when you hear that our hearts our brains immediately lock on the commandment that's a good thing that's a right thing there's nothing wrong with that but there is something in here that we miss and it pertains to this idea of why we take the journey i want you to hear verse 16 again you didn't choose me but i chose you and appointed you so that you could go and produce fruit and so that your fruit would last did you hear that important little word two little letters that are really important to all of us and those two little letters spell go we forget that part it's real easy for us to think that okay i got it that jesus has given me what i need and i can land in this place and i'm good now but what does jesus tell us you didn't choose me i chose you and appointed you so that you could go and produce fruit you heard me say during the first week a line that i learned in the church i grew up in quoted it from my pastor at the time great servant of god's name was george fitch and he used this line and it has always stayed with me you cannot stay where you are and go with god at the same time you cannot stay where you are and go with god at the same time that means you have to give up a little comfort you're gonna have to take the journey the thing about taking the journey the thing about going and coming back is to remember that god is with you that god has commissioned you for this and remember that jesus didn't just hang a sign up in nazareth and say everybody come see me

he went to the people he took the journey and we are called to do the same if we had to discover who jesus is by making a pilgrimage to jerusalem our faith would be very different would it not but what did we see modeled for us people who were sent people who were sent into the world and they shared the love of god with those they encountered and someone was sent and found you and did the exact same thing and now that call is out there for each and every one of us to be an awakened traveler to understand that the journey itself is the thing that as we go into the world we get to know god better we get to see god's creation we get to encounter god's children and share what god has done and it makes us who we are called to be that's the journey it's up to us to understand that that is the thing itself to not get so comfortable in one spot that we miss all that god has in store say yes because when you say yes not only do you have that great experience out there but when you come back home home is better because of who you have become remember that trust that and know that god is at work and now remember comfort is not your friend in this but you will know peace by following your call you will know peace peace by taking the journey that's what that's what your heart so give it to it amen and amen loving and gracious god thank you for the gift it is to be able to follow you in the journey to be able to go with you to know you more deeply to know your children to know your creation and your world and to be able to celebrate it and to have it impact us and change us so that when we come home we are different and new lord we thank you for the gift it is to be able to know you in this way to not simply stand pat in one spot but to know with you to grow with you to learn new things not only in physical travel but to reach out in our hearts but to stretch our minds to learn and discover new things that you show us lord let us always be willing to go that we may know you in the way you intend and fulfill the call that you give in jesus most holy name we pray amen i ask you today do you want jesus to walk with you

then come to the table for he is here and we say together i want jesus to walk with me i want jesus to walk with me all along my pilgrim journey lord i want jesus to walk with me the shore of the sea of galilee was the place where jesus called the disciples away from their familiar lives and roles into an adventure a journey that would change their lives and change our world forever after his crucifixion the disciples returned there to the water to walk by the shore because it was what they knew but can you imagine it wasn't ever going to be the same again and it was there that the resurrected jesus met them again and he offered them comfort through what the hospitality of fish and bread and a time together to eat and he meets us even now at these waters and so let us pray merciful god we confess that we have not loved you with our whole hearts and have not loved our neighbors as ourselves through what we have done and left undone forgive us when we return to the familiar in fear rather than promise forgive us when we turn inward rather than become the hosts you would call us to be guide us as we seek to turn around toward greater love lead us to travel in your ways amen know this jesus welcome is always here is always wherever we are he stokes the flames of love and invites us to gather around filling our emptiness calming our fear making home for all all he is our constant companion inviting us to reach out and care to one another traveling toward the kingdom of love in the name of jesus christ you are forgiven glory be to god amen the peace of the peace of the risen christ is with you and also with you the lord be with you lift up your hearts let us give thanks to the lord our god oh god of grace it is right in a good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to you your delight filled the skies and the land with colors beyond the spectrum of our knowing your playful creating offered up humankind with such diversity we can't even comprehend it your breath left waters frothy and lungs exploding with the power of life and prophetic utterances and yet we back away from the promises unable to claim your love is ours but here you are to meet us to speak to us once again always faithful always present in this body at this table and in this body with all of us and so together we proclaim the praise-filled truth of your glory along with all the saints holy holy holy lord god of hosts blessed are they who come in your name heaven and earth are full of your glory hosanna in the highest holy are you and blessed is your son jesus christ he proclaimed freedom for the bound justice for the oppressed and grace for the lost love for the prodigal by the power of this message and the surprise of the

resurrection in the face of the world is immersed again in the baptism of love and redemption through the life and ministry of Jesus Christ so we can imagine and live into a kingdom of love on the night in which he gave himself up for us he took the gift of bread he gave thanks to God who had given it he broke it and he gave it to his disciples saying take this and eat in remembrance of my body which is given for you and then he took the cup and he gave thanks to God for it and said take and drink from this all of you this we drink remembering the blood of Christ poured out for us for the forgiveness of our sins do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me and so we remember and we offer ourselves and we claim a new freedom in this truth Christ has died Christ is risen Christ will come again pour out your Holy Spirit on all of us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and cup make them be for us the vision of your reign realized so that we may be for the world your dream come true by your Spirit open us to each other and to the world making us one in you through Christ in the power of your redeeming grace now let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not to temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever amen you come up front as well as those who are doing the music come up front as well as those who are doing the music you come up you come up you come up you come up you come up you come up you come up you come up

come up please come we will have gluten-free on this station uh package as well as bread and juice and gluten will be over here please come go pause if we do Oh, how He loves you and me

[78 : 26] Oh, how He loves you and me He gave His life, what more could He give Oh, how He loves you Oh, how He loves me Oh, how He loves you and me Jesus to Calvary did go His love for sinners to show What He did there brought hope from despair

Oh, how He loves you Oh, how He loves me Oh, how He loves you and me Oh, how He loves you Oh, how He loves me Oh, how He loves you and me Oh, how He loves me

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[82 : 08] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[87 : 12] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.