Recently Bill, Audra, Mackenzie, Sam and I travelled with 51 others from the Lebanon area to WVA.

As we prepared for this Habitat for Humanity work week we were unsure of some of the logistics and of course the weather so we relied on packing lists...of names and phone numbers of the drivers,

list of the 56 people and their phone numbers, then there was the list for food, snacks, juice, tea and water – lots of water-

individuals made their lists too to be sure they had the proper kind and amount of clothing for the work site,and later the lodge,

ponchos, caps, gloves and work boots, sunscreen, sleeping bags, flip flops and flashlights you name it ...the list goes on and on.

And no matter how good a list we make, it just seems that at the end when it is time to leave you get this nagging feeling like you’ve forgotten something.

maybe it was only your toothbrush or maybe it was your pillow?

...whatever it is we tell ourselves that we can make do and if necessary we can always buy what we need once we get there, right?

Well in our gospel reading today **Jesus** purposely sends His disciples out telling them to take "nothing for their journey" except a staff...no bread, no bag, no money.

And since they didn’t have Walmarts, Rite Aids or even grocery stores this would be an even greater stresser.

It is to this point that Mark speaks.

When we worry about a completed packing list about whether or not we brought **enough of** or the **right type of**....we have become too focused on the **what** rather than the **how**.

We lose sight of the fact that we are going as God’s feet and hands and voice.

But we always have lists, we can't help it....You come here each Sunday to praise and worship God. You probably have a mini list in your head from the time you wake up to the time you set in the pew.

It may not be a full blown list or even one that consciously occupies your mind but what if I asked you to sit in a different pew in a different part of the sanctuary?

Would that affect your ability to concentrate on the rest of the worship service?

What if I asked you –right now- “to stand up, leave your seat *and* *everything* behind...your purse, wallet, even your phone?

And if you didn’t have anything of those things .... leave behind – your shoes.

 how do you think that would affect your concentration for the next half hour or so?

Would you be distracted by this separation?

–would this view from the new pew make it difficult to concentrate?

 Pause

To tell others about Jesus means having our head on straight, not letting earthly desires or our needs get in the way. which is a less than stellar way of saying of Mark is saying.

either way Mark wants the reader to know that needing too much detail of too little significance can hinder a disciple’s need to be acutely aware of God.

Jesus wanted the disciples to focus less on their own needs and more on the needs of others. It was a test of faith. A time to rely on God knowing that God fills in our weak spots with His strength....and gives us all that we need.

God goes ahead of us preparing the way

in her book **Jesus Calling** Sarah Young writes in the first person as if Jesus is speaking;

“Remember that I go before you as well as with you into the day. Nothing takes Me by surprise. I will not allow circumstances to overwhelm you **so long as you look to me**.” (p185)

Jesus goes with us as we are armed with the holy words of scripture, we have everything we need in order to fight evil in this world.

We already have the freedom to go and do God’s Work.

We live in America ...it is that very freedom that allows us to share our Faith.

but first we accept God’s grace – we acknowledge our sins and we humbly ask God to forgive us.

I met a young man....

We Begin by cleansing ourselves asking God to create in us a clean heart....so that we can be close to God.

Martin Luther King Jr pleaded with American Christians saying our highest loyalty is to God, and not to the mores or the folkways, the state or the nation, or any man made institution.” (1321)

..., we are merely the hands and feet of God...we a the vessels, the clay pots...

We cannot let the upsetting events of recent weeks shape us into something we are not

...unfortunately there will always be arsonists and racists, patriots of various stripes, there will be political and spiritual warfare in our own back yard...

Christ is the only power strong enough to overcome these and all conflicts.

There are passages in the Bible that not only respond to today’s challenges, but give us clarity. There is hope and power exploding off these pages...

like fireworks, sparks of light shooting upward and outward to give us solace and stamina. Last night the fireworks was sensational and so powerful it pounded

That is God will do for us each time we go to Him...

We cannot let this fast pace world destroy our inner peace.

We must counteract negative earthly news with heavenly Good News!

We must carve out as much time in our day for reading God’s Word as we do reading human news!

When we are preoccupied with the clashing values of this nation what does that do to our ability to think rationally as a Christian?

Through what kinds of lens do we view the world if not through the Bible?

Karl Barth suggested, we hold “the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other." But interpret newspapers from the Bible.'"

[nacreouskingdom.blogspot.com/](http://nacreouskingdom.blogspot.com/)

There are countless beautifully written letters from God that will thunderously pound our hearts like fireworks

from Genesis to the book of Revelation.

 the Psalms for example.

I reposted on Trinity's FB page something that appeared this past week entitled reading the Psalms together in 184 days. Wouldn’t it be nice if Christians joined in reading the Psalms together for the next 6 months?

In the first two chapters of the Psalms...we hear

*“Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers...and in chapter 2...Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?”*

And the Psalms respond

Just knowing These words speak to us now as much as they did to David long before Jesus was born gives us some comfort.

The Psalms contain some of the greatest healing words, combined with an affirmative trust and faith in God who overcomes all things.

There has always been strife – there has always been turmoil – and there has always been pain. Let God comfort you.

Dust off the ashes of hatred, put on Christ.

Rather than allow the reeling effects of recent decisions ---whether right or wrong in our mind---rather than allow fear to enter into our hearts as racism, disrespect for humanity and violence crowd in around us, move onward and upward with Jesus.

...interpret any and all actions through the lens of scripture...to gain a better more proper perspective.

Like moving to another pew ...because no matter where you sit you can always see the cross.

Pause

What does God have to do in order for us to take him seriously?

What can He do that He hasn’t already done?

We have been given the gift of Grace.

A gift we neither deserve nor earned.

This is God’s great gift to us.

Karl Barth once wrote, that these six little words are enough.

We don’t need long lists, we only need the tunic on our back and these six little words...My Grace is sufficient for you. Put that on your list today

Amen