

Mapquest Jesus  
Mark 6:45-52  
John 8:12

When we were in Jerusalem the last time, we took the opportunity to walk the Via Crucis. Other names are the Via Dolorosa or the Stations of the Cross. Whatever name you want to call it by, it is the traditional path Jesus took as He went to be crucified. As you walk the streets, there are chapels along the way that commemorate each of the Stations.

As I think back on that experience, I realize that for me it was about the 14 stops along the Way. I wanted to be able to see all of the chapels and remember what happened to Jesus at each point. It was not so for Jesus. For Jesus it was about the journey. The things that happened along the way were incidental to the central reason for the journey. His Father was not leading him from one activity to the next as if there were mini-goals to accomplish long the way. There was something more.

Jesus knew something that we don't normally perceive. Oswald Chambers puts it this way, "We have the idea that God is leading us toward a particular end or desired goal, but He is not."

The idea that God is not leading you toward a goal may be troublesome to some of you, especially if you are a person who has been praying to God for something specific. For example, as a minister I can spend, if I want to, an inordinate amount of time seeking to be obedient to God by asking Him to bless a certain ministry or to show me what to do about a situation in the church. On the surface that doesn't sound like a bad use of time, does it. I *should* want to make sure God is involved in leading the ministries of Sunrise church.

Let me change gears for a second. How many of you have used the internet tool Mapquest (or something like it) to get directions to a destination? I use Mapquest fairly frequently – especially to find some of your houses. There are so many neighborhoods going up around here that I can't keep track of all the streets; so, I ask Mapquest to help me get to my destination – to help me attain my goal.

If we were honest with ourselves, this is exactly the way we think of our relationship with Jesus. To us He is Mapquest Jesus. We have in our mind something we want to accomplish and off we go to Jesus asking for the way to get there. Or maybe you have asked Jesus what he wishes you to do as you seek to be in His service. You discern an answer, and you set about doing that activity. You are obedient in doing what you are told to do. But there is a very important question that still lingers in the air: Have you accomplished the goal that Jesus truly intends for you? According to Chambers the answer is no, and I agree.

Think about it this way. I am privileged to be married to a wonderful woman, Sarah. Over the course of our 20 years of married life we have been blessed to have done more things and seen more places than some people will in a lifetime. However, the things that we have done together do not define our marital relationship. Rather, it is the nature of our relationship that gives meaning and purpose to the events of our lives. The relationship is the framework upon which our lives and our family hang.

Likewise, the events of your life – even the ones that Jesus calls you to do – do not define your relationship with Jesus. Instead, it is the nature of your relationship with the Lord that gives purpose and meaning to all the rest of your life.

We build a relationship with Christ by journeying with Him. It is the *journey* that is intended to do us good. For when we spend time with Jesus, when we journey with Him, then God uses that time to accomplish His ultimate goal – to make us more Christ-like.

Jesus reminds us in John:

*"I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." John 8:12*

The next time I find myself in Jerusalem, I think I will spend less time thinking about the individual places and more time walking with Jesus – seeing with His eyes, hearing with His ears and knowing with His heart.

I invite you to concentrate less on where you are going and more on who you are traveling with. If you are traveling with the right person, you will end up in the right place and become the person your Heavenly Father intends you to be.

As you approach the Table, use this time to invite Jesus to be your traveling companion for life.