

Twenty miles south ... As we have been studying the dip the long journey from beginning to mastery ...and following Moses and the Israelites...something keeps ringing in my ears...multiple times when the journey was seemed to hard for the Israelities, when trouble or trial or bad circumstances completely overwhelmed them...the Israelites wanted to go back to Egypt...the land of their slavery ... the question is why do people then and now choose this as the option?

Because in the land of Slavery...they had some kind of security...do you know nothing is as secure as. Slavery...they knew where they stood...their identity...they had food and water and shelter...they endured a way of life...it was fairly predictable...it was hard for them...but they were familiar with it..., but there was surety to it...

On the other hand Freedom scared the daily lights out of them.... And Freedom scares us ...When we are free all we know is we are on the way....We don't know don't know if we will get there. We don't know how we will get there... We certainly don't know if we will arrive... Freedom is scary with so many choices...

Yet that is exactly what God wants us...

***Galations 5:1** It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*

- **Why? For it is in the journey of Freedom that most of our encounters with God take place. It is also on the journey we discover where we need to grow**

When Moses led the people out of slavery to that promised land, the same dynamic occurred ...he did not lead them the quickest way to the promised Land but took them through the Sinai desert...twenty miles south toward Elim...

***Exodus 13:17** When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, "Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt." ¹⁸ But God led the people round by the way of the wilderness towards the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle...*

- **He did not lead them by the coast for the Philistines lived their ...they were free but knew nothing of fighting for their freedom....they would have simply been conquered by the Philistines and made slaves to a new group of oppressors...**

- **How many of us are familiar with that scenario...’but God lead them twenty miles south into the wilderness...toward Elim**
- **On the way he parts the Red sea killing their Egyptian oppressors...he fought for them**
- **After they cross they run out of water...God does a miracle...and they end up twenty miles south of where they thought they were going....**

Ex 15:27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water.

- **And that in a nutshell is the story of long stretches of our journey... regularly finding our selves twenty miles south of where we thought we would be... often out of resources...except for God**

*****Freedom happens when you abandon how you think it ought to be and you embrace what actually is...and doing that your realize your resources are scant...you need God!**

Marriage is a great example but this is true for all people at all times..., **I think I will start doing Marriage counseling for couples a year after their wedding ...after they thought they reached the promised land at their wedding...but find themselves now twenty south of where they thought they would be ...they might even begin to miss Egypt!**

Because Now they begin to understand the true cost of having a marriage they truly want... the laying down of your life becomes a reality!

The great challenge of our faith is to learn to follow God...as he takes us regularly twenty miles south of where we thought we should be.

The central challenge for us followers of Jesus is giving up the expectation of Knowing where we are going...

Following Jesus is like jumping into a stream heading in a certain direction, but the direction may change, the water may get rough, the current strong...we won't know until the end what entering the stream at the beginning means...

But all our growth takes place in the journey on the stream not when we reach its destination...

One of our most frustrating things about Jesus is he just wont settle down... He is constantly moving us away from the places we would rather stay...

Elim was not the land of promise but in a wilderness it had 12 springs and plenty of Palm trees, and pharaoh was no longer hounding us. it had twelve springs and many palm trees...it seemed like a good enough landing place and they stayed there a while...and was in a wilderness land pretty darn comfortable...and they were not being pursued any longer by Pharaoh...

God does not settle for our watered down dreams that accept life the way it is...and some false ideal we hold of what the promise land should feel like and look like and operate....He keeps pushing us toward a promise we cannot not yet see...or understand

God on the move again...which means we are on the move...

Exodus 16:1 The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt. ² In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. ³ The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."

- **Twenty miles off of what God was doing...**

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. ⁵ On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days."

⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt, ⁷ and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?" ⁸ Moses also said, "You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD."

⁹ Then Moses told Aaron, "Say to the entire Israelite community, 'Come before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.'"

¹⁰ While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the LORD appearing in the cloud.

¹¹ The LORD said to Moses, ¹² "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, 'At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.'"

¹³ That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴ When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. ¹⁵ When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was.

Moses said to them, “It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat.

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Exodus 16:31 The people of Israel called the bread manna. It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey.....

³⁵ The Israelites ate manna forty years, until they came to a land that was settled; they ate manna until they reached the border of Canaan.

What is the key to following the Lord! Manna!!! God gives us enough everyday to follow him everyday! eat enough from God daily!!

Liaren it happens to all of us....even My the mother of Jesus ...who knew him probbly better than anyone....

This story about Mary.... Mary had Jesus. She gave birth to Jesus. She nursed him and raised him. She knew him. Better than anyone. Then she lost him.. She couldn't find him anywhere. Jesus had gone missing. He wasn't among the friends and relatives who had traveled to Jerusalem for Passover and who were now returning home to Nazareth. Jesus had always been reliable and trustworthy, but now he was inexplicably absent. Concern gave way to panic as Mary and Joseph rushed back to Jerusalem to search for their missing twelve-year-old son. *Luke 2: ⁴¹ Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. ⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. ⁴³ After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends.*

- For three days Mary and Joseph frantically searched Jerusalem. It must have been agony...

⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.”

- Our sympathies are naturally with Mary. After all, twelve-year-old boys aren't supposed to disappear for three days without telling anyone.
- But this isn't just any adolescent — this is the divine Word in boyhood. Jesus is unapologetic. He doesn't offer an excuse.
- So they found Jesus in the Temple, sitting with the rabbis immersed in theological conversation.
- What he *does* say are the first recorded words of Christ:

⁴⁹ *“Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?”* ⁵⁰ *But they did not understand what he was saying to them.*

- ***They were literally, emotionally and relationally... twenty miles from where they thought they would be....***

Mary was forced to re-evaluate what she thought she knew about Jesus. Years later Mary would be twenty miles south of Jesus again.

When Jesus began his ministry around the age of thirty, he left Nazareth and moved to Capernaum. But Jesus' family didn't understand what he was doing and wanted to force him to return home. Apparently they thought he was out of his mind (see Mark 3:21).

Mark 3:20 Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. ²¹ When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.”

When they found him in Capernaum, a message was brought to Jesus:

Mark 3:31 Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.” ³³ “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked. ³⁴ Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.”

- After seeking and finding him again, she had to again rethink what she thought she knew about him, his way his direction...
- Mary would be twenty miles south of Jesus one more time. . She would lose him on Good Friday... Again for three days she wandered in Jerusalem.. only to find him on Easter Sunday. After that Mary would have rethink Jesus in the ultimate sense.

Finding Jesus, Twenty miles south of Jesus, Finding Jesus. Rethinking Jesus. This is how we make spiritual progress. This is the **only way** we make spiritual progress!

We think we've got Jesus figured out. We think we know the crowd where Jesus can be found. We think we know where we can always locate Jesus. Then one day...he's not there! And we have to go searching for him. "Seek and you shall find." But when we find Jesus after losing him, he's...different. That's when the rethinking (repenting) starts. It's the only way we make spiritual progress.

I've had the experience of what feels like losing Jesus several times in my three plus decades of trying to follow Jesus. It's distressing. But it's also the way of progress.

So what are we to do....it is all about the Manna on the journey...

Enough Jesus to take us through each day...he is our manna....there is not too little and there is not too much...but enough for each day...then then regularly finding ourselves twenty miles south of where we thought we would be, where the Lord would take us...then rethinking Jesus....the journey becomes the greatest education we could ever hope for!!

end

[Atim please add this just in case](#)

- **Abraham and Sarah had to leave the security their home in the Ur of the Chaldees to journey toward the promised land....**

12:1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. ² "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.^[a]³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

- **Beautiful, motivational compelling promises....And At the end of Abraham's life all he owned was the burial plot he had purchased for Sarah.**

Gen23:1 Sarah lived to be a hundred and twenty-seven years old. ² She died at Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to weep over her. ³ Then Abraham rose from beside his dead wife and spoke to the

Hittites. He said, ⁴ “I am a foreigner and stranger among you. Sell me some property for a burial site here so I can bury my dead.”

- **He considered himself a wanderer and a foreigner...he wandered throughout the promised Land never owning any of it...twenty miles south of where he though he would be...**
- **But the end of his story is not the important part....it was the journey...all of his spiritual growth, all the steps in their conversion occurred along the way...**
- **It was their long journey with God that is important...**
- **It was in their freedom that they learned to follow God to trust God...to love God. end**