

disciples or attending for my own benefit?

Again this isn't to give anyone a guilt complex, after all we are chosen. We are Jesus' brothers and sisters. We are Jesus' friends, who know what's on his heart and soul so we can together go and make new friends. Bringing people into that wonderful person to person relationship we have with Jesus characterised by his

love. His love which flows from the depth of his being, changing us, changing the world.

This week my prayer is to stop and ask Jesus to reveal to me if I've wandered off and done my own thing. To show me where he is walking that I might go with him. I don't want to take another step in any direction if Jesus isn't leading, and walking with us down that way.

Let us pray.  
Jesus thank you for coming and revealing yourself to us. Stop us if we are wandering off doing our own thing. Show us how to continue to love each other as we are loved by you. Show us how to go and make disciples of you. Jesus we don't want to go off without you, we want to follow and live personally with you. Amen.

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## Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am

Pastor: Tim 0427326553

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Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

16 October 2011

## IF YOU DON'T GO—WE WON'T GO

Exodus 33:12-23



The setting for our reading from Exodus this morning is the Children of Israel preparing to leave Mount Sinai, heading for the Promised Land. It comes after the Children of Israel have really messed things up with the LORD by making and worshipping a golden calf.

This was while Moses was up on the mountain receiving the law from God's very hands. Moses received much, much more than the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were just a brief summary so people could have a quick and easy guide to help them in making decisions.

The decisions we make of course have outcomes. When you

ask someone to marry you and they say yes, those decisions have outcomes. When I choose to drive on the left hand side of the road that decision has an outcome. When I choose to read the bible in an attempt to get to know Jesus more personally that choice has an outcome. So the LORD chose to give his people a summary of his will so that they could make choices that reflected him, that kept a healthy and strong relationship with him, their God, and with each other.

The whole point of the entire law code that the LORD gave to Moses was so his people could live in a close relationship with him, as a community and as individuals. Then they could reflect his

character and nature to the people around them.

Please note that the law was never given to make them good, they were chosen! Sadly the Pharisees of Jesus day missed the whole point and used the law to prove themselves, and in doing so exclude others, keeping the undesirable at a distance. That strikes me as being the very opposite of what they were called to do.

So now this community is being called to move, but then the LORD says something that I would never ever want to hear. He says; "But I will not go with you..." (Exodus 33:3) God is proposing to send an angel to guide them, not himself. He's withdrawing. He's had his heart ripped out and

doesn't know if he can trust this group again.

It's like the groom saying 'I do', only to learn his bride has had it off with the best man at the reception, and now they're meant to go off and make a new life together!

Then we have Moses' wonderful words; "If you don't go with us personally, don't let us move a step from this place..." (Exodus 33:15) Moses once again reminds the LORD of his love for these people and once again we see the LORD change his mind. He always chooses to be true to himself, which is what he is saying when he says; "I will call out my name 'the LORD' to you, I will show kindness to anyone I choose, and I will show mercy to anyone I choose." (Exodus 33:19) The LORD always lives motivated by the love from within

him, staying true to who he is. Never being shaped by what others do or don't do.

So we hear these wonderful words; "And the LORD replied to Moses, 'I will indeed do what you have asked, for you have found favour with me, and you are my

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**If Jesus doesn't go, I'm staying put.**

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friend." (Exodus 33:17) The word friend reminds me of something Jesus said; "I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." (John 15:15) In Jesus God also calls us friend, and then he shows us himself in person. Moses only got a glimpse, in Jesus we see far more. We get to

know the person, person to person.

And that was Moses' prayer; "If you don't go with us personally, don't let us move a step..." (Exodus 33:15)

Unfortunately the history of the Children of Israel is a sad one. The LORD does go with them, but they continually break his heart, they again and again reject him in favour of others. They grumble and complain. They want to do things their way. The joy of reflecting the personal loving relationship they have with the LORD just isn't their motivating force. They want to be like everyone else. They want to have all the good things everyone else has got. Again and again and again they break the LORD'S heart, and all the adults who left Egypt do die in the desert as they feared.

The challenge of this passage to me was; 'Am I waiting for Jesus to lead before I take a step, or am I off doing what I feel is the best option. Have I moved off without Jesus' personal presence?'

This isn't to give anyone a guilt trip, but a reminder of what I believe we all want, to be walking in step with Jesus; person to person. I don't believe any of us would want to wander off leaving Jesus out of the picture; just someone we once knew but who isn't involved with our live today. I know none of us want to be living like that.

But I also know I'm not perfect, and I am tempted to believe what I want is what Jesus wants, so I go and take it, I go and get it. But the truth is that what I want isn't always what Jesus wants. Would you agree with that?

So today I pray; 'Jesus don't let me move one step if you don't personally go.' I don't want to walk off and get lost doing my own thing.

Jesus has told us where he is, what's on his heart so we can walk in harmony with him, enjoying life together.

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**If Jesus is moving, I'm moving.**

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A simple summary I believe of where Jesus personally invests himself is found in John 13 and Matthew 28. In John we read this well known verse; "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34,35) Did you notice the common

thread from Exodus; that people will know that we are Jesus disciples, that we as a community reflect the character of the God who has invested himself in us.

Jesus wants people to see him in the way we love each other. Is that how I'm walking, or have I wondered off down the path of being a consumer?

The Matthew passage is also a well known one; "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me (Jesus). Therefore GO and make DISCIPLES of all nation... And surely I am with you always..." (Matt. 28:18-20) Where does Jesus walk, out to those who don't know him, so that they too can join in walking with him personally though life. Am I going or staying? Am I going with Jesus, or making myself feel good? Am I making