

**WEEK #5 – THE JOURNEY OF DISCIPLESHIP REQUIRES A SERVANT’S HEART**  
**February 2-8, 2009**

**SATURDAY – February 7<sup>th</sup>**

**CENTERING BREATH PRAYER: May I continue to travel...as your faithful servant.**

*Precious Lord, as we meet once again to continue to build a more loving and constant relationship, I beg your presence today. As the road of new discoveries beckons me to move along, help me to travel as your faithful servant. Lead me as your disciple into a more serving relationship. Let me continue to move forward as you did in your own ministry. In your serving name, I pray. Amen.*

**SCRIPTURE: Mark 1:35-39**

**KEY VERSES: Mark 1:38-39:**

**(38) “But he replied, ‘We must go on to other towns as well, and I will preach to them, too, because that is why I came.’ (39) So he traveled throughout the region of Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and expelling demons from many people” (NLT).**

Christ’s ministry took him to many towns and villages in Galilee and later into Judea as well. It was important for him to keep moving, reaching out to many, many people. Sometimes our ministry will involve travel as well. Though there are times when people will come to us for the good news, it is more often the case that we must go to them. That’s what Jesus did and he has also sent us. “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20 NIV). How often have we looked at what has been called the Great Commission and been fearful that it might mean leaving our home and going to a far place? Most of us don’t feel called to be foreign missionaries. But, that doesn’t mean that this scripture passage does not apply to us.

In my college days, I attended a university which had its roots as a Southern Baptist school. Though it was no longer controlled by that church there were a few holdovers from that time. Chapel was still mandatory in my freshman year and though it became a choice later, it was still the only thing happening during that time and day each week. The other holdover was a requirement to take two semesters of Christianity and Western Thought as a part of the curriculum for all students no matter what their major or degree program. I felt very blessed to have the professor I did, for most of them hated teaching this course and mine gave life to it and made it interesting and a joy. This professor taught me one thing about the Great Commission I shall never forget. He told us that the translation, “Go into the world...” really says, “As you are going into the world...” That made a profound impression on me. What he was saying is that we place emphasis on the idea of going when the real emphasis is on making disciples. I do not know if his translation idea holds any water since I do not know the original Greek, but I do know that it was taken as a given that the disciples, including us, would be going to all the nations of the earth. What we are to be doing along the way is to make disciples. It also tells us to teach all that Jesus taught them. We are called to serve in many capacities, but all of them are focused on making disciples.

Most of us today travel around our cities and states or countries. While we are going we can serve out Lord by making disciples. We can share the good news we have received. We can help teach what we have learned to others. We can share our personal experiences

with the Lord. We can invite others to share with us their experiences and knowledge. We can reach out and touch those who are wounded and hurting in whatever way we are capable. It does not matter if our journey takes us across the world or across the street. We can be faithful servants of the Lord along the way.

**ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES: Matthew 28:16-20**

**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND/OR JOURNALING:**

1. Where am I willing to go to share the good news?
2. How can I work to make disciples in the places where I am led?
3. How can I be a faithful servant today?

**SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION:**

1. As you go to the various places your schedule takes you today, look for some way to serve the Lord in word or deed.
2. Keep a list of both the places you go and how you served the Lord today.

*Lord Jesus Christ, as I go along my way today show me how I can serve you. Bring my attention to those who are in need and direct me in how you would have me serve. Keep me focused on the task of making disciples as I continue my faith journey today. In your wondrous name, I pray. Amen.*

## 5<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN EPIPHANY – February 8<sup>th</sup>

### CENTERING BREATH PRAYER: Teach me how to wait...and find new strength.

*Precious Lord, being a servant is very draining. I need your strength to continue to serve as you have taught me to do. As we commune together once more, let me find strength as I learn how to wait for you and your direction. In your strengthening name, I pray. Amen.*

### SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 40:27-31

### KEY VERSE: Isaiah 40:29-31:

**(29) “He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; he offers strength to the weak. (30) Even youths will become exhausted, and young men will give up. (31) But those who wait on the Lord will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint” (NLT).**

After a week of traveling with the idea of being a servant, perhaps we are all a little tired. There are so many ways we might be called to serve that sometimes we become overwhelmed with the decisions or the actual work itself and we seem to shut down. This happened to me this week as I tried to finish these devotionals for week #5. As the week went by I continued to work but got further and further behind. I was tired of writing and nothing seemed to flow. When I got to this final one for the week my mind seemed to just shut down. It seems really strange that I get to this subject about waiting on the Lord and the strength it can bring to empower and instead of writing, I’m waiting. I’m waiting for strength, I’m waiting for the spark, I’m waiting for the right words and I’m waiting for God’s inspiration. For two days I wait while getting further behind for the writing of week #6 (which should already be in progress). Finally, after impatiently waiting, showing my own weakness, the Lord prompts me to write about how this felt and the strength of purpose and renewal that now flows because I didn’t give up, but waited until God led me through this impasse.

When we seek to serve the Lord, there are many times when we want to strike out on our own. We don’t wait for the Lord to lead us, we just start moving. If what we are doing is the Lord’s desire, things will go along very well. But, if we aren’t waiting for the Lord’s leadership, we will come to a time when our own weaknesses will creep into our service and instead of doing God’s will, we wind up doing our own thing or burning out because we don’t spend enough time allowing God to be in the serving. We often find ourselves questioning our commitment or even the choice of service because we don’t wait on the Lord for the strength to follow through. It is one of the reasons Sabbath rest is so important for us. Without looking for a legalistic reason to take one day in seven for rest and to spend time in worship of the Lord, our spirits and our souls need this rest just as our physical bodies need times of rest in order to function well. We know that we can push our bodies to do incredible things and we can keep them going without resting 6-8 hours a night for a while. But, eventually we will crash and that can take many forms, some simple to correct, such as sleeping around the clock after the job is done, and some will take months to recover because the body or mind just says enough and we become ill because of the abuse we put the body through. Waiting upon the Lord has many forms, but giving our souls, spirits, minds and bodies simple Sabbath rest can be one of the most beneficial things we do for ourselves. And it gives us time to wait in the presence of the Lord for the strength to serve. Isaiah reminds us that even the young get tired and need rest. Even those of us who have a strong sense of purpose for the service we are giving (like me and my devotional writing) still need to wait for the Lord’s guidance and provision. Sometimes, my writing flows so smoothly that I can write several devotionals in one

day. Sometimes, like I found this week, I need to stop and wait on the Lord, even if it doesn't fit my schedule. When I wait on the Lord I don't always have to be in constant prayer, I just need to let God be in charge of my time and the process. Somehow, I know when the words are finally there and I can continue. I know I am spending a lot of time talking about me in this devotional. But this devotional is not about me, it's about waiting on the Lord for strength and guidance. I'm only using this experience with the writing to illustrate how this can happen. It won't happen in quite the same way for each one, not even each writer. When things are flowing smoothly and easily it is easy to see God's hand in things, but it is also easy to think we are doing the work on our own. When things get bogged down or we lose our focus or just plain get tired of serving we need to stop and look to the Lord for renewal and to see if we have gone off without the Lord in our own direction. Waiting in prayer, in relaxation, in laughter with friends or just doing something else for a while can bring often clarity and purpose back into our tired selves. Whenever Jesus needed this, he went off by himself to pray. Too often we don't allow ourselves to take time off for prayer or anything else. Perhaps that is why writing these devotionals is important for me. They give us a way to stop and pray and wait on the Lord.

**ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES: Exodus 20:8-11; Mark 1:29-38**

**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND/OR JOURNALING:**

1. When have I become tired of serving the Lord and needed to stop and wait for the Lord to renew my spirit and clarify my direction?
2. Do I need strength from the Lord now? Have I stopped to wait for direction and rest from the Lord?
3. Do I take Sabbath rest in some form each week? If not, why not?

**SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION:**

Take a few minutes today and look at your schedule. Does it include some time to wait on the Lord? Look for ways to spend some special time with the Lord waiting for direction and strength from the Lord's Spirit. Schedule some Sabbath rest time (if you don't already have it).

*Dearest Lord, I don't take enough time to wait on you. Help me to see the need for the time we spend together and expand on it. Renew my strength so that my Spirit may soar with the eagles. Teach me, Lord, teach me, Lord, to wait. In your patient name, I pray. Amen.*