

## Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Sep 25th 2013

...shake the dust from your feet...

The authority Luke speaks of is the authority of relationship. Jesus gave his apostles the authority, to “cure diseases... proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick.” Jesus offered nothing beyond themselves; who they were in relationship to him. He offered them no healing herbs, no potions, no medical skills, no additional anything. He sent them off with “... nothing for the journey, neither walking stick, nor sack, nor food, nor money,...no second tunic.” But neither did Jesus say anything about expectations or results. In fact, he says, “...as for those who don’t welcome you, shake the dust from your feet.” He does not say to stick around, try and try again, or be persistent. He says to keep going, to keep moving on, to stay faithful to the mission, the journey, stay faithful to me, to us, to what we have together. It is not about the quality of the hospitality offered, rather it is about faithfulness to Jesus himself. Staying faithful to the relationship.

This is not about the ‘what’ and the ‘where’ of the sending. It is not about success or failure. It is about relationship and the journey itself. It is about being sent – again and again within whatever my vocation is at the time. It is about living out of the relationship. It is about having the freedom to go in spite of uncertainties. It is about freedom from success or failure, people, places, and fears. It is about journey and mission, freedom, response and responsibility . Relationship. It is about inner movement, inner change, as well as physical relocation. It is about the relationship between me and Jesus, me and others. It is about trusting who I am in the heart of God and that what I have been given is enough for the journey. It is always about relationship.

The paramount relationship throughout all of scripture, Hebrew and Christian, is the relationship between Jesus and Abba, his father. Hebrew scripture relates Yahweh’s frustrating ongoing invitation to the Hebrew nation to be in relationship with Yahweh. In the end, Jesus, the incarnation of the intimate relationship between himself and his Father comes to show, teach, invite me – all of us – into that intimate relationship. Jesus says, implies and refers over and over again to his relationship with ‘My Father.’ From the time he is a young boy left behind and found preaching in the synagogue, to his baptism, the Transfiguration – up to and including his death, Jesus testifies to his relationship with his Father. His Father likewise reveals their intimate relationship. In his ministry, Jesus speaks with the ‘authority’ of this intimate relationship with Father. This is the authority, the intimacy, open to me, to us.

Forever and always it is about relationship. Intimate, loving relationship. Jesus’ intimacy with Abba overflows into Jesus’ invitation to me to be in intimate relationship with Jesus. From that intimacy flows human intimacy. Out of intimate love comes the freedom to live fully, stay faithful and walk the

journey. To live in the fullness of The Intimate Relationship.

The Good News: the invitation is forever and always open.

Joan Blandin Howard