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## Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

May 15, 2016

Our Sacred Work

*“Learn from Me.”*

Portion of Matthew 11:29 (Common English Bible)

I never imagined that I would have the opportunity to travel to the Holy Land. Colleagues in ministry have spoken of how this holy pilgrimage changed their life in deeply profound ways. I accepted their words as sincere. Yet, I had no capacity to understand. Such a trip seemed out of reach for me. Now, through the gracious and generous gift of one family in this congregation, my wife, Grace and I have returned from Israel. In the span of eight days we followed the way of our Lord along the shore of Galilee, the Mount of Beatitudes, entered the gates of Old Jerusalem and walked the Via Dolorosa – the path taken by Jesus with a cross on His back. The impact of that experience is still emerging. I anticipate it will continue to present surprises – in thought and emotion – for some time.

There are two impressions, in particular that have pressed against my heart from this sacred pilgrimage: the sense of memory that remains in locations known to our Lord, and the recognition that the Lord has moved on. Both bear the capacity to impress a deeper reflection upon personal discipleship; the personal quest to acquire the Lord’s thought, to carry on the Lord’s spirit, to participate in the Lord’s vision of a new world and to embody that vision in our own lives. The abundant wealth of such a robust discipleship requires attention to three words of our Lord, *“Learn from Me.”*

Today people of many different nations make the journey to Israel for just this purpose, to learn more of Jesus. Though motives for the journey may be expressed differently, all come because of a basic curiosity. And curiosity is always the pursuit of information, of deeper understanding. They have come to learn of Jesus, to learn from Him. Someone once remarked that the secret of learning is to ask much, to remember much and to teach much. This provides a helpful pathway for our own discipleship. It is a fruitful approach to successful learning in the school of Jesus.

Each disciple of Jesus must devise their own curriculum to learn from Jesus. But let no one assume that they are alone in the labor of learning. Standing in a footprint of Jesus along the shore of Galilee or walking along the way of the cross may stir remembrances of our Lord and inspire the heart to know more of Him but none of us are alone in this labor to be students of Jesus. The absence of Jesus embodied in flesh at each sacred location reminds us that He has now come in spirit as a great helper in the sacred work of discipleship. That, perhaps, is one of the glories of the ministry of Jesus Christ. While we seek to learn of Jesus, He is at work within us in such a manner that the beauty of the Lord grows upon our vision.

Doug Hood

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