

It is fairly obvious in the context Gospel Jesus is trying to teach his disciples how to trust in God. It is also obvious that for most of us, we will never be asked immolate these rather arduous acts of faith. Yes, we are all called to trust God, but what else might he be trying to tell us today? What might we glean from this in our day to day living?

+A man in an airport was quite worried about missing his plane. He didn't have a wristwatch and he could not locate a clock, so he hurried up to a total stranger and said, "*Excuse me. Could you give me the time, please?*" The man smiled and said, "*Sure.*" He set down two **large, heavy suitcases** he was carrying and looked at his wristwatch.

He said, "*It's exactly 5:09, the temperature outside is seventy-three degrees, and it's supposed to rain tonight. In London, the sky is clear, and the temperature is thirty-eight degrees celsius. The barometer reading there is twenty-nine and fourteen tenths and falling. And, let's see, in Singapore, the sun is shining brightly and, by the way, the moon should be full tonight here in Los Angeles, and...*" The man interrupted him and said, "*Your watch tells you all that?*" "*Oh, yes,*" said the man, "*and much more. You see, I invented this watch and I can assure you there is no other timepiece like it in the entire world.*"

The man exclaimed, "*I want to buy that watch! I'll pay you one thousand dollars for it right now.*" The man said, "*No, it's not for sale,*" and he reached down to pick up his suitcases. "*Now, wait,*" said the other man; "*I'll pay you two thousand dollars.*" He reached for his wallet.

The man said, "*No, I can't sell you this. You see, I planned to give it to my son for his twenty-first birthday. I invented it for him to enjoy.*" "*Well, okay,*" the man said. "*Listen, I'll give you three thousand dollars. I've got the money right here.*" "*Ummmm,*" the stranger paused. "*Three thousand bucks? Okay, it's a deal. It's yours for three thousand dollars even.*"

The man was absolutely elated. He paid the stranger, took the watch, snapped it on his wrist with glee, and said "thanks" as he turned to leave. "*Wait a minute,*" the stranger said, as **he handed the two heavy suitcases to the man.** "*Don't forget the batteries!*"

**Aside from learning to trust, it could also be that Jesus is trying to teach us how to become free from all that weighs us down.** Obviously material things that pass quickly away and never leave us free might be one Jesus would mention. When we fall into this mode, we tire quickly with what we have and look for something even better (all the while we grow heavier with what looked like freedom, but becomes an addiction). I met one such individual, as he constantly bought things that they piled up all over the house. It was obvious that each addition never made him happy, but imprisoned him.

Jesus could be speaking to us in other ways, as well. Jesus might instruct us in what we really should never take with us as we leave our home...

*"Remove those painful memories of your past that weigh you down in anger and keep you from loving."*

*“Unpack that low esteem that you carry too often. (I met a man who said he could never forget his father calling him “My doofus son.”) Carry instead the love of God the Father for you.”*

*“Take off the inability to accept that you are forgiven that you may take true joy instead of guilt.”*

Or maybe he might ask us to leave behind those bad moods we sometimes carry. We can wake up two ways, *“Good God it is morning or Good morning God!”*

**It is interesting that the very things Jesus told his Apostles to leave would also be the very things one would be told to take off prior to entering the Temple.** Perhaps he is also telling them to enter the world as a holy place – treat every person and place you come across as sacred. And he says when you find one, stay there until you leave. There are many sacred places, temples, aside from the church that I have visited:

- \*The loving families with children and the sacred hands of the parents who hold them.
- \*Those of you who have had to overcome great adversity in life and yet you are here worshipping.
- \*Sharing in the celebration of a couple married for fifty years.
- \*A cookout among friends – friendship is a sacred place.

Yes, there are many sacred places in this parish. I suspect many of you have been to them, as well. And yet we know we cannot stay there, as we still have to go out to a people and places that may not be too accommodating and Jesus gives us instructions for this as well.

Perhaps you crossed one on the way here – cutting you off in traffic or even taking your parking place at the Cathedral! It might be someone at work who drives you insane week after week. Then there are those arrogant and angry people we have to contend with that makes our blood boil. With others, it is not what they say but what they do not say as they ignore you and make you feel insignificant. Have you encountered any such people this past week?

Jesus not only addresses what you should do before you leave for your journey into the world (each day) but also be mindful in what you **pick up along the way** in the present that you feel weighing you down into anger or what have you. He tells us, shake it from our feet and move on. (This is what Jew would do after crossing through a pagan territory.) Across the hall from me, I often here a member of my staff speak out loud: *“I’m letting it go! I am done with this!”* That pretty much sums up what Jesus is getting at.

We pick things up along the way in life that can collect like mud on our feet that weighs us down and then we track it into our homes or even churches. I will give you one concrete example that I once came across. A priest became angry with a group of parishioners and then he carried this into the church and threw this anger against the entire congregation. He wrote up the prayers of the faithful and in one of them he said, *“We prayer for dysfunctional families, particularly those in this parish.”* He just could not shake the dust or mud from his feet and ended up imprisoned in his anger.

+A farmer hired a carpenter to help him restore his old farmhouse. The carpenter's first day on the job was a rough one. He arrived late to work because he had a flat tire, halfway through the work his electric saw broke, and at the end of the workday his old pickup truck refused to start. The farmer had to drive him home. Arriving home, the carpenter invited the farmer in to meet his family. As they walked toward the front door, the carpenter paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands. He then opened the door and was beaming with smiles as he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss. Afterward he walked the farmer to the car. As they passed the tree the farmer's curiosity got the better of him. So he decided to ask the carpenter about what he had seen him do earlier. "*Oh, that's my trouble tree,*" he replied. "*I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing for sure, troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and the children. So I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home. Then in the morning I pick them up again. Funny thing is when I come out in the morning to pick them up, there aren't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before.*"

This is what Jesus is trying to tell all of us. Sometimes we allow the problems and pressures of the workplace to ruin the peace of our family life. We need, at the end of the day to be able to shake off the dust of worry and failure from our feet knowing that tomorrow will bring with it a brand new day with brand new opportunities.

God in his mercy has provided us with a trouble tree, the cross of Christ. St. Peter put it best: "*He himself carried up our sins in his body to the tree of the cross* (1 Peter 2:24)...*Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.*" (1 Peter 5:7).