

*See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. 3And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.*

*4Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. 5You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. 6No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. 7Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.*

I have been thinking about confirmation this week, and what it is that your parents and mentors and Marla and Mr. Lee and Joe and Mrs. Polacok and I have been hoping to accomplish. I have decided that preparing you for a trip is a good way to think of what we have been doing. It is as if you are embarking on a very long trip. We want to send you with everything you will need. You need a map; you will need the skills to operate the vehicle that will be transporting you. You will need to know what to do if there is a breakdown. You will need to know your destination. You will need a companion, food for the journey, a guidebook to help you to know what you are seeing – what to expect.

When I think of the journey that is your life I think of Jesus. At the beginning of a journey you set your heart on a destination. What will it be for you? Riches and wealth? Popularity? A family of your own someday? A good job? Success in sports? A career in music? Fun? Happiness? A long life?

God wants you to have some of these but not as the destination – the goal for your life. They may be blessings God gives along the way but the goal God wants for you is to be with your Father in heaven. You will know that you have arrived at the place that you were born for when you are with the Father. Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except by me.”

Jesus is the way. He is the map for your journey, the road for your journey, the guidebook for your journey. He is the transportation – through his death on the cross and his resurrection he carries you to the Father. The purpose and goal for your life is not something you will have to figure out for yourself. Jesus will guide you

to love as he has loved you, Jesus will direct you to be a person who shares God's peace, God's shalom in this world. Jesus will lead you in the way of giving yourself as he has given himself.

You will need light for the places of darkness along the way. Sometimes you will be tempted. You will be tempted to do things in darkness that you would never do in the light of day. Jesus is light for you, even in the middle of the night. And Jesus is companion for you even in the places where every other companion would lead you astray. "I am the light of the world," said Jesus.

When my parents sent me on journeys in my car, they were always concerned that I was ready for an emergency - a phone number to call, a spare tire, a wrench and a jack. They wanted to know that if I broke down I could soon be on my way again.

Have you noticed how many times we have talked with you about Jesus death on the cross and the forgiveness that God gives you through Jesus death? Forgiveness is the repair God gives to get you on the road again. To you young people who are being confirmed in your faith this day all the talk of forgiveness may not make much sense. It is only when I have the flat tire that I am thankful for the spare. It is only when you will fall down in sin that you will come to appreciate the forgiveness that is yours in Christ. But we want you to know what to do when you do have that flat tire. We don't want you left by the road, unable to go on – afraid in the dark, alone.

Here in the gathering of Christians forgiveness is spoken to you. Here in the gathering of Christians food for your journey is shared each week. Here in the gathering of Christians we talk about what we are encountering along the way of this journey.

And of the destination.

Our Bible is divided into what we speak of as the Old Testament and the New Testament. As I have thought about this sermon I realized that everything in the New Testament is about your journey and Jesus. Some

parts speak of Jesus as the guide, some parts of Jesus as the destination, some parts of Jesus as the repair or the companion or the food. But all of the New Testament is about the one you need for your journey, Jesus Christ.

One of my favorite stories goes like this: A preacher asked the children what is green and hops and makes a croaking sound. A little boy thought for a moment and then got of the courage to venture an answer. Well, it seems like a frog, but I know the answer must be Jesus.

Now there will be frogs on your journey, and love and laughter and mountains and valleys. I hope for you that you will have work to do some day that will require the very best of the gifts that God has given you and that you will have rewards from your efforts. But whatever else your journey brings I hope for each and every one of you that your life will be fed and led by Jesus.

St. Paul in many of his letters uses a phrase that I hope will describe the journey of your life. Paul speaks of being “in Christ” I hope that you will be in Christ in all your walking and talking and doing and living until at the end of your journey you will be in Christ forever. Amen.