

The Journey Continues
Mark 16:1-8
April 4, 2010

Willie Nelson sang about being on the road. Do you remember? “On the road again I can’t wait to get on the road again.” This past weekend a whole lot of folks loaded up their cars, trucks and minivans and got out of town. Some traveled to be with family. Our own Ken and Corinne Dowell drove to Mississippi to be with their daughter Amy. Others use the Easter break to have a little vacation. Dan and Ann Deboer are relaxing in Myrtle Beach South Carolina.

I have known families that traveled to Florida every Easter Vacation. It is always interesting to hear the stories about these trips. The adventures they had before I-75 was a straight shot from Michigan to Florida, before portable DVD players and hand held electronic games.

Connie, our 13 year old daughter couldn’t imagine the agony of taking a long trip without all those electronic devices. What did we do in those olden days? You could read, but since that has always made me car sick it was not an option for me. You could sleep. But you can only sleep so much. There are observation games but they are only fun for awhile. Finally there is just looking out the window.

As a child I would notice these posts along the interstates. On the top of the post was a sign with a number on it. For years I had no clue what they were. I could tell the numbers would go up or down but did not know what purpose they served. What a revelation it was to learn they were mile markers.

Once I knew about the mile markers I could figure out how far we had traveled and how far we had to go. Sometimes they would bring frustration, like when you dozed off and work up only to find you were at mile marker 300 and you were counting down to zero.

Six weeks ago I suggested we consider life to be like a journey. That metaphor has been around forever. The question is whether we take the time to be intentional about the journey. All through Lent, the 40 days before

Easter, we looked at different aspects of this Journey. Depending on how we think feel and act, our journey can lead us to hope or to despair.

Lent is over and Easter is here. Our journey through one church season, one sermon series is over. We now enter a new liturgical season and as you heard in a couple weeks a new sermon series. The journey continues. I would like to suggest that Easter can be viewed like a mile marker in our journey through life.

As we celebrate Easter we can recognize where we have been. Our journeys have taken us many different places, we have traveled many miles. As we reflect on what we have done we might be proud and content, or we might be ashamed and miserable.

The resurrection speaks of the newness of life. That is why chicks and butterflies are symbols for Easter. Christ gives us a 2nd chance. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus our sins are forgiven. As we worship today we can recognize where we have messed up and the ask God to forgive us.

Speaking of messing up, there have been times when I have been driving and I have gotten totally disoriented. I thought I knew where I was going, made a few turns, and suddenly I had no clue where I was. In those cases you can turn around and retrace your steps or keep driving and hope by luck or feeling you will make your way back to the road you want, or ask for help. If you're a male, you will probably choose option 2. If there is someone in the car with you, you will tell him or her you just wanted to take the scenic route.

In those time when I have gotten lost, how relieved I was when I made it back to the road I needed to be on and began seeing familiar signs. Easter is a reminder we are on the right road. When we hear the story and sing the hymns, we are reminded of God's love for us and God's desire for us to love God.

One of the places I love is Key West. If you have ever been there, you know about the 0 mile marker. This is where A1A begins. Easter is the beginning of the Christian faith. Without the resurrection there is no Christianity. Another major mile marker for the Christian Church can be considered mile marker 50. 50 days after Easter is Pentecost, the day the church came to be.

Here we are more than 2000 years after that first Easter. The Christian faith is still going. Though the number of active Christians has steadily declined in this country, the church is still making a difference. Easter allows those within the church to affirm who they are and whose they are.

The last way I see Easter to be like a mile marker on our journey through life is through its call to action. Mile markers tell us how much further we have to go. Our celebration of Easter 2010 is not the end of our journey.

In our scripture lesson it says the women said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid. We can understand that initial response. Resurrection was not a part of their understanding. In their grief they see an empty tomb and an angel. This was unbelievable. If they could hardly believe it, who would possibly believe them?

In Matthew's gospel, several days after the resurrection Jesus commissions the Disciples to go out and make more disciples. That is our commission as well. Easter is a reminder to us that our work is not finished. There are many around us that do not have a relationship with Christ.

Eventually every journey we take comes to an end. Those that went away for Easter/Spring vacation will be back to work and back to school next week. For our life journey, that too will come to an end. Unlike a road trip, we can not know how long we have left on our life journey.

The good news of Easter is that when this journey comes to an end here on earth, we will begin another journey. That is a journey that will never end. I mentioned the 0 Mile Marker. In that instance I used it as the starting point. It can also be used as the destination. We are here, April 4, 2010. Our final destination will be with the one who began it all when he rose from the dead. The journey continues. Thanks be to God for being with us yesterday, today and tomorrow.