

Dear friends

Well holiday time is here at last – as I scan the long range weather forecast it seems that the warm sunny weather is set to continue so, whether you are going somewhere exotic or simply enjoying a “staycation” I hope that you will all have the opportunity to enjoy some sort of break.

I was talking to someone the other day about Jesus and whether he ever went on holiday, and if so, what he would have packed in his suitcase. It was a silly question really, as although I believe that Jesus and his disciples would have taken the odd break from the almost constant round of preaching, teaching and healing etc, he wouldn't have had a suitcase – indeed he had very few belongings at all – so he certainly wouldn't have had the plethora of things that we seem to think are essential in order to enjoy our time away.

However, as we were talking we began thinking about the things that we pack in our suitcases and if they can tell us anything about Christ and our relationship with him. First there is the change of clothes that we need – the beachwear for the daytime and the smarter clothes for the evening in order to ensure that we have the appropriate clothing for each situation. Surely, we thought, it doesn't matter what we are wearing when we come into Christ's presence – the important thing is what is going on inside us, our state of heart and mind – these are the things we really need to get right.

Once we reach our destination and start our holidays we usually get out the sun tan lotion to protect us from its harmful rays – obviously that reminded us that if we trust him and follow his direction, Christ will ultimately give us all the protection that we need. Many people take a radio or other music playing device with them on holiday to help them to really relax and switch off – surely, we thought, this reminds us that Christ promises perfect peace to all who truly come to him. Then there is the bucket and spade that many of us take down to the beach – obviously this should remind us of the amazing creative power of God. And finally, of course, there is the good book that we get out as we laze around the pool – I don't think I need to tell you what that should remind us of.

All these very different items which we carefully pack in our bags before we set out - and I'm sure you can think of many others – plus, hopefully the hidden theological message behind them. However, please don't forget that no matter where you travel or how you enjoy this holiday season, Christ would like you to invite him to be part of it is well – after all he really does promise all those things I have already mentioned – plus much more.

Hoping that you all have a very good and Blessed August.



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