

Two by two

Jesus put his arms around Peter and Andrew and guided them up to the road. The two brothers carried only long walking sticks as they headed out, empty-handed and full of fear.

Peter looked at Jesus with pleading in his eyes: “I’m just a fisherman, Lord...”

“And a good one, too!” Jesus reassured, “but you are also a fisher of men. You can do this as well. You have the power and authority. Believe me!”

Both of them knew they must go on this mission into the towns and villages of Galilee. Jesus was sending them with instructions to take nothing with them. They would soon discover God’s strength in their weakness.

Pausing at the road, Andrew and Peter turned to face Jesus. “Remember this,” Jesus said. “You have the authority over unclean spirits. Preach repentance.” They had heard these words of repentance which John the Baptist had preached. During the previous months they had learned from Jesus—by his preaching and by his example. Now, as the first disciples chosen by Jesus, they were the first being sent out alone.

“Jesus, we have nothing with us, no food, no coins, not even water to drink.” Peter protested in a last, desperate appeal to reason.

Jesus answered with a patient smile. His eyes told Peter and Andrew that this was a test of their faith. If they truly believed that God would provide for them, then the first demons they must expel are their own demons of fear and doubt.

Jesus hugged them strongly, clapping their backs with his hands as if to pack down the fullest measure of his confidence in them.

Once Peter and Andrew had set out, the road that stretched before them was the familiar route that led south toward Tiberias. Beyond that were the villages.

They heard the noisy morning chatter of birds perched in the trees fronting the lake. Bright sunlight was dancing in the sky. It was a glorious morning and the sweetness of



life was upon them. Peter jabbed his walking stick into the ground ahead and Andrew echoed a rhythmic double tap with his own stick. Peter got the joke and they both began to laugh



If Peter and Andrew come to our house will we welcome them in? Will we give them food and water to drink, wash their tunics and give them a bed in which to sleep? Will we allow them to stay as long as they want?

Or have we already sent them away, causing them to shake our dust from their feet? Somehow these questions challenge us to examine the depth of our faith and commitment to being a follower of Jesus Christ.