

22 Reasons Why Jesus Walked Everywhere



Why did Jesus choose to walk everywhere? Jesus briefly rode a borrowed donkey (Mark 11:1-7) and went on a few journeys in small fishing boats (Matthew 8:23, 9:1, 14:13 etc.). Other than that, Jesus walked everywhere. He even chose to walk on water (Matthew 14:22-23). This article will explore “walking” as a very powerful metaphor that we can adopt to challenge ourselves about our form of ministry and our Christian lifestyle.

So why walk? Jesus was the Son of God, yet He never rode a horse or camel or rode in a chariot. He was never carried in a litter or in a sedan chair. He never rode in a Roman wagon or in a carriage. He did not levitate from Capernaum to Jerusalem. In fact, we never see Jesus using a form of transport that was not readily available to the common people.

Surely, this was inefficient? Surely, Jesus could have got to a lot more villages, in a less tiring way, if the disciples had a few chariots to take them around?

I think we can all agree on a few things:

- a) Jesus did not lack faith for God’s provision
- b) He didn’t have a transportation phobia or think that chariots were inventions of the Devil
- c) There is no indication that Jesus thought it was a sin to own a horse or a chariot.

Therefore, in my opinion, Jesus walked simply because He thought it was a great strategy for missions and evangelism:

1. Jesus had time to mentor the disciples and to have significant spiritual conversations while walking. (It is rather hard to converse at length whilst galloping around on a horse.)
2. Walking enabled numerous accidental divine encounters with people.
3. Walking demonstrated the humility of Christ as a spiritual principle for the ages.
4. Walking demonstrated God's commitment to full radical incarnation. He went "all the way".
5. Walking demonstrated God's bias toward the poor.
6. Walking helped prevent the disciples from becoming self-important, which was clearly a weakness of theirs (Mark 10:35-45). If there had, for instance, been a gold chariot, one can only imagine the disputes that would have arisen over who got to ride beside Jesus as they zoomed all over Israel. Walking helped crucify the flesh.
7. Walking kept the disciples away from the psychological influence of the arrogant rich and holier-than-thou folk who could have ruined their faith. These toxic people would naturally self-select themselves out of the group by refusing to walk alongside of the disciples and the poor among the multitudes. Thus walking helped place the disciples among the humble, among those of faith, among the receptive, and away from evil influences.
8. Walking allowed large bands of people to travel alongside Jesus and the disciples. Anyone who came to faith could simply follow Jesus walking along the road. This, in turn, must have allowed significant peer-to-peer ministry.
9. Walking prevented alienation from the poor. I live in Los Angeles and when someone zooms by in his or her stretch limousine it is an act of alienating the average person. Our advanced technology can create feelings of alienation, inferiority, resentment and rejection. Jesus honored the poor by having no significant status barriers between Himself and the average person.
10. Walking says, "come beside me, let's chat", it facilitates Adult-to-Adult conversation rather than Parent to Child lectures or even worse an objectifying of people as mere customers or products of the system.
11. Walking demonstrated total dependence on God for the achievement of ministry results, "for it is not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord" (Zechariah 4:6,7). The power of the ministry was clearly not in the magnificence of the logistics but in the anointing on Jesus and the apostles.

12. Walking kept the anointing intact. Pride kills the anointing (1 Peter 5:5). By staying humble the anointing was always upon the apostles (and was, of course, on Jesus permanently).
13. Walking limited the ministry agenda to just the essential things. There is a temptation to distraction when you have the means to be distracted. It is easy to have an “international ministry” if you can just jump on a plane and go. However, God may have just called you to know your neighborhood. Sometimes when God limits our funds, it is to keep us focused, so that the main thing stays the main thing. Walking kept them focused on the next village rather than on the far horizons.
14. Walking stops us fretting about results, we get there when we get there and getting wet along the way is just part of the fun. It forces us to patiently trust God with the outcome.
15. Walking stops people from hurrying. Martin Luther once said: “Hurry is not “of the Devil” it IS the Devil”. When we hurry, we end up discarding all the fruit of the Spirit. First, as we hurry along we lose patience, then joy, then peace, goodness, kindness, faith and love and then finally we lose long-suffering and self-control. Teaching the disciples not to hurry in ministry must have been a huge part of Jesus’ agenda and part of the reason for walking along.
16. Walking inculcated simplicity. It told them that simplicity was survivable. It also taught the disciples that they could still get from point A to point B without requiring any money, which would be important when things got tough later on in their apostolic calling.
17. Walking required hospitality at the end of the day. This in turn meant the disciples had a vested interest in locating the “man of peace” in each village, which in turn could lead to disciple-making movements after Pentecost.
18. Jesus walked as a prophetic act against the powers and principalities of the time, and against the demonic temptation to attain the world and all the glory thereof. Walking was an act of renunciation of the unholy trinity of the world, the flesh and the Devil.
19. Walking gets rid of the idolatry of image. Walking is dusty and tiring and not at all exclusive. The expected Messianic glory just doesn’t happen. Superstars don’t walk, superstars don’t let people touch them. Walking says loud and clear “I am not a superstar”.
20. Walking is free, just like the rest of the gospel. Walking says that the Kingdom and Kingdom ministry are free, peaceful, accessible, humble and real.
21. Walking is reproducible by the next generation of disciples at no cost. It does not require a complicated infrastructure that could be a barrier to the spread of the gospel.

22. Walking is a metaphor that helps shatter our addiction to “effectiveness” and points out that God’s purposes proceed at God’s pace. It brings us out of fight-or-flight panic mode and into the righteous rhythms of grace.

So how does this metaphor apply to us who are in ministry? How do we walk rather than run? How do we remain humble? How do we come alongside the poor in non-alienating ways? Does the form of our ministry matter?

And how do we address those Christian workers who have all Apple devices, business class airfares, and huge numbers of air miles? Firstly, such lifestyle choices are not “morally wrong” they are just spiritually ineffective.

I am certainly not advocating literally walking everywhere at all times. We are not back of the times of the apostles. However, I am saying that Christian workers should travel as the normal people in your culture travel: by motorbike, public transport, jeepney, bicycle, tricycle, tuk-tuk, or camel. In some jungle cultures that will still be by walking.

I am saying that the technology, transport and techniques that you use in ministry should draw people to you, rather than alienating them from you. Your technology should not create a large gap in social status. Your national partners should not feel jealous or be put down by the glamour of your gadgets.

Whenever possible travel in a group, hire a bus full of young people, travel on a train, get amongst the crowd. Learn to slow down, saunter, stroll, and potter about, exploring the nooks and crannies and by-ways in your community. Stop in on a small shop or the local library. Be open and look for conversations. Walk about.

Do not equate logistics with ministry success or spiritual power. When the disciples forgot to bring the bread along in the boat Jesus did not rebuke their disorganization, but rather He rebuked their lack of faith (Mark 8:11-21).

Your real ministry might grow more through deeply discipling a few, rather than flying from nation to nation doing pastor’s conferences with the exact same people that every other preacher does pastor’s conferences with.

People notice what you own and it can cause division. At one leadership conference all the national pastors had average status Windows computers, and nearly all the Western missionaries had high-status Apple computers and this was noticed by the national pastors.

On another occasion, a ministry gave expensive tablets to youth pastors while their senior pastors had no such devices. This shamed the senior pastors and many of them took the devices away from the youth pastors. Technology always has a social context.

Another time I was among a group of missionaries and one pridefully said that he had 3 million frequent flyer points. This was not helpful.

Are you and I (metaphorically) walking the dusty road with Jesus? Or, are we riding in a worldly chariot of ego? Christian faith should result in a Christian lifestyle and a Christian lifestyle should be careful of the feelings of our national partners, our congregations, and those with whom we interact.

There is a spirituality beyond legality. It is not a sin to have luxury items however is it helpful? Is it edifying? Or, is it alienating? Have you broken fellowship, shattered brotherhood, or exalted yourself?

Simplicity is good missiology. It was part of the missiology of Jesus, the apostles, St. Francis of Assisi, the Puritans, the Moravians, and of many of the greatest early missionaries. Is it absolutely compulsory? No, not at all. However, it sure helps and is spiritually convincing. It demonstrates a marked difference between the missionary and the world.

More importantly, simplicity leads to accessibility and to the spiritual conversations out of which spring in-depth discipleship. You can make converts in a stadium but you make disciples by walking alongside them.

Finally, walking is a rebuke of the powers and principalities that want to corrupt us, to fill us with greed and envy, and make us self-important. Walking is a form of spiritual resistance to everything that opposes the gospel. Which is why Jesus walked everywhere.

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