



Greetings!

Please Read [Psalm 121](#)

Recently, I retired my 15-year-old boots and replaced them with a new model. The old boots and I have been many places together.

- Israel/Palestine - 5 times
- Colombia - 3 times
- Nicaragua - 2 times
- Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, The Philippines, Turkey and the Democratic Republic of the Congo each once.

Overseas I transited airports in England, Japan, Germany, Ireland and Ethiopia. I traveled through to my destination in domestic airports: Miami, Atlanta, Newark, Kennedy, and Houston while on my way – all gateways to adventure and spiritual experience.

The Holy Lands of Israel and Palestine are amazing places to visit. Sites of Hebrew and Christian tradition scriptures come alive. I never tire of visiting these places and the people who live there, nor do I tire of experiencing the presence of the Lord. Over the years I have developed many relationships with the people who live there.

My favorite region is the Galilee. Mt. of the Beatitudes at the northernmost portion of the region is an amazing place. Sitting there looking down the length of the Sea of Galilee is one of the most inspiring places for me. You can look around the basin of the sea and take in the different areas where the story of the Gospels came alive. The boots carried me there and to each of these holy sites. To the northwest of the Galilee there is a wonderful place to hike and take in Biblical and Roman history – the fortress city of Caesarea Philippi. The boots carried me to many more places, but too many for this short devotion. Israel/Palestine is not an easy place politically or culturally, but each visit makes me want to go again.

Besides spiritual travel many of my journeys are mission related. I have been a big fan of Volunteers in Mission (VIM) for a long time. VIM gives us the opportunity to visit

other cultures and develop relationships with indigenous persons, centered around a project of mutuality. VIM is not about going to improve someone's life in the third world. It is not about assuaging any perceived inequities. VIM holds clear values of community - in particular, Christ-centered community. Completion of any project is secondary to relationships, receiving hospitality as a precious gift, and knowing that even on the day when we part each other's company we are the Body of Christ. We all may have different gifts but are bound together with the love of Jesus. Each time on a VIM experience my boots carried me to new relationships and new experiences.

In these boots I joined others hiking all over multiple states and even in a few countries. The Judean wilderness in Israel is an awesome place to hike as long as you have a guide with you. Likewise, I enjoy hiking in Ohio at our great metro-parks, state parks and other private lands. The Selva Negra in Nicaragua is an amazing place to hike and enjoy wild coffee plants growing in the shade of deciduous trees. From the Appalachian Trail in New Hampshire to the Green Mountains in Vermont, there is great beauty to see, incredible quiet and at a vista – an overview of God's creation. In those places one not only rests from the climb, but one rests in the Lord.

In Israel Jesus spoke out against the tyranny of Rome. I enjoy wearing the boots where, figuratively Jesus walked, and connect his mission with the call I have to walk with and on the behalf of others. Many of these persons have for too long been marginalized by the color of skin, the spelling of a last name, a nationality, a socio-economic status or who they love. So I wore those boots joining others and calling for change last year when I participated in multiple peaceful witnesses for justice.

The Psalmist is talking about God's protection in the midst of life, whether it is an uphill climb for increasing ones spiritual depth, seeking justice and resisting evil, or being present to a new relationship with someone in another culture. I love difference, because it is the creative nature of God woven together into a tapestry of human community. The Psalmist gave us that gift - keeping our eye on God as the source of our being and safety.

I've been fortunate to walk to many places and in the company of so many different people. There has been one companion with me all the way - the Lord Jesus.

Conversation-

- Where have you been walking?
- Who are new companions you met along the way?
- What injustice are you seeking to change?
- Who is someone you need to ask to join you?

Peace,



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