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-- The movie *Wild* tells the story of Cheryl Strayed, a young woman who decided to walk the remote Pacific Crest trail through California and Oregon. She had read a lot about the trail and made careful plans for the trip.

-- As she prepares to begin the hike, one scene shows her trying to get her pack on her back. It's a real challenge, since it's heavy and full of stuff. She walks a week or more with it, heavily burdened.

-- When she reaches her first camp where she can meet other people and purchase things she needs, one man comes over to her and asks her to go through her things to see what she really needs and what she can discard.

-- In other words, he's trying to get her to "travel light," or at least lighter. She has been burdened with much unnecessary stuff, just as she had been burdened in her short life by past hurts and her own behavior.

-- When Jesus sends out these disciples in the gospel, he asks them to "travel light," doing without even some things they would take for granted. He challenges them to trust that he will take care of them.

-- Jesus gives us the same message as his disciples in the 21st century. Instead of telling us to forsake a money bag, a sack and extra sandals he might tell us to forget our iPads and smartphones and the like.

-- Too many things can burden us in life and detract from our central goal of bringing ourselves and others into the happiness only God can bring. But so can "other baggage" which is not physical.

-- I mentioned that Cheryl Strayed carried spiritual and psychological baggage herself: coming from a broken home, her beloved mother dying when she was 20, a failed marriage, forays into drugs and impersonal sexual encounters.

-- She needed to be unburdened of those during her journey as surely as she needed to lighten her backpack. We may not have the same spiritual

and psychological baggage as she did, but all of us probably need to have burdens taken off our soul and spirit.

-- Today Jesus tells us that there is no substitute for God's love. Apart from that, all other things we have or desire in life are simply dead weight.

-- We should concentrate on what is essential in our call to discipleship. And we can take comfort in the fact that, just as he sent out his first disciples in pairs, so he does not leave us alone.

-- We have the support of the Church, of others who have accepted that call to follow Jesus. We come together to worship God and to support one another in our journey of faith.

-- Yes, to seek God's kingdom means we may have to do without a lot of things that the world tells us we need. But these things are not essentials. What is essential is God's love and the mercy he shows us as his people.

-- If we keep our focus on these essentials, we will be able to distinguish God's kingdom from our own worldly kingdom. And only God's kingdom will bring us to true and lasting happiness.