

July 18th, 2021 – Eighth Sunday After Pentecost

Introduction to the Day

Mark's gospel makes clear how great is the press of the crowd, with its countless needs to be met, on Jesus and his disciples. Yet in today's gospel Jesus advises his disciples to get away and rest, to take care of themselves.

Sometimes we think that when others are in great need we shouldn't think of ourselves at all; but Jesus also honors the caregivers' need. We are sent from Christ's table to care for others and for ourselves.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the God of manna,
the God of miracles,
the God of mercy.

Amen.

Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God, our provider,

help us.

It is hard to believe there is enough to share.

**We question your ways when they differ from
the ways**

of the world in which we live.

**We turn to our own understanding
rather than trusting in you.**

**We take offense at your teachings and your
ways.**

Turn us again to you.

Where else can we turn?

**Share with us the words of eternal life
and feed us for life in the world.**

Amen.

Beloved people of God:

in Jesus, the manna from heaven,
you are fed and nourished.

By Jesus, the worker of miracles,
there is always more than enough.

Through Jesus, † the bread of life,
you are shown God's mercy:

you are forgiven and loved into abundant life.

Amen.

Prayer of the Day

O God, powerful and compassionate, you shepherd your people, faithfully feeding and protecting us. Heal each of us, and make us a whole people, that we may embody the justice and peace of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen**

Jeremiah 23:1-6

¹Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD. ²Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. ³Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. ⁴I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD.

⁵The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

Children's Message

Gospel – Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³²And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ³³Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

⁵³When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. ⁵⁴When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, ⁵⁵and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

Message

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN

Are you a fixer? Or, do you know someone who is? I’m not talking about fixing a leaky faucet. When I say fixer I’m talking about when you see someone that is going through something, you take it upon yourself to make it better. Is that you? You know someone who is?

Jesus is a fixer. We see the truly compassionate side of Jesus in our Gospel story for today.

The apostles, the ones whom Jesus has sent out to do the work in the world, have returned, and they have told him all about the work that they have done and the encounters that they have had...and instead of telling them to build on that momentum and send them to the next mission field, Jesus tells them they are tired and they need rest.

“Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest awhile.”

They had worked themselves so hard, they had been coming and going, and they were so busy that they had difficulty finding leisure time even to eat.

Jesus sees this. He senses their exhaustion, and knowing the work that they’ve done, and the work that is yet to be done, he knows they need to rest.

This is all fine and dandy, except Jesus is a fixer.

The crowd that is continually mentioned throughout the Gospels sees Jesus and the weary disciples set out for their deserted place, and the crowd runs ahead and meets them there.

Jesus, the compassionate fixer, saw the crowd, and had compassion for them. They were lost. Like a sheep without a shepherd, or a herd of stray cats to a back step where food has been placed, they come rushing. He has compassion for them. Because he is a fixer.

We do this so often. We are so good at knowing that we need a break, and so bad at actually taking it.

In our house we call this, “I need some time.” We know what that means. The kids, for the most part, know what it means when mom or dad tell them that we “need some time.”

I also know that, when I take my time, I do it with an ear to the outside world with the constant thought of what am I going to have to deal with when I’m done here. And, more times than not, Kayla will come from her time, and ask, “what in the world is going on out here?”

We try to take our time. We try to refresh. But, we so often do it with an eye, or ear, towards what is coming next.

We see that with Jesus as well.

I'd imagine that the crowd that ran ahead was difficult NOT to see from the boat that Jesus and the disciples were in. Much of the journey to shore was likely spent with Jesus wondering what he was going to do with the crowd when they did come ashore.

And, what did he do?

He looked at them with compassion. Because that is what he does.

This Gospel text gives us a simplified Jesus. You'll notice that we jump from verse 34 to verse 50. In the verses that are removed we get the miraculous spectacle that is Jesus. He walks on water and feeds 5,000. But, in our text for today Jesus reminds his followers that it is important to rest, it is important to have compassion, and God's grace – even the fringes of it – is enough for us.

We forget those things. We focus on the spectacle. We focus on doing it big. After all, bigger is better. But not here. Jesus shows us that it can also be simple.

Take rest.

Have compassion.

God's grace is indeed for you.

Thanks be to God. AMEN

Apostle's Creed

Prayers

Rooted in Christ and sustained by the Spirit, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

Tend your church, O God. Encourage bishops, pastors, and deacons in their proclamation of the gospel. Raise up new leaders and encourage those pursuing a call to ministry. Embolden all the baptized to embody your love and justice. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Restore your creation, O God. Sustain croplands and pastures and safeguard all farm animals and livestock. Preserve lakes, rivers, and streams that offer refreshment. Revive lands recovering from natural disasters and protect coastlands threatened by rising oceans. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Reconcile the nations, O God. Break down the dividing walls that make us strangers to one another and unite us as one human family. Equip leaders to deal wisely with conflict and guide diplomats who seek peaceful solutions. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Heal your people, O God. Look with compassion on immigrants, exiles, and all who are afraid or feel lost. Give rest to those who are weary, comfort to those who are grieving, and recovery to those who are ill (especially *Kathy Smith, Matt Miller, Bill and Betty Davey, Bob Kries, Jim and Sandy Nelson, Joe Christensen, Marilee Julson, Bill Kuehn, Shirley Stark.*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Nourish this congregation, O God. Prepare a table where we receive food for our hungering spirits. Renew our commitment to provide for one another and revitalize our ministries of feeding and nurturing hungry neighbors. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You lead us home, O God. We give thanks for all who have died, now citizens with the saints (*especially*). As you have received them into your heavenly home, so welcome all of us to dwell in your house forever. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We lift these and all our prayers to you, O God, confident in the promise of your saving love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

Jesus, Bread of life,
you have set this table with your very self,
and called us to the feast of plenty.

Gather what has been sown among us,
and strengthen us in this meal.

Make us to be what we receive here,
your body for the life of the world.

Amen.

Words of Institution – We invite you to find bread and wine or juice and partake in this Holy Meal.

(Holding the bread) In the night in which we was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and broke it, gave thanks and gave it for all to eat saying, “This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

(Holding the cup) Again after supper he took the cup, and after giving thanks he gave it for all to drink saying, “this cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins. So often as you do this, remember me.”

Once you’ve taken the elements say, “Wellspring of joy, through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord’s Prayer

Blessing

The blessing of God,
who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us,
✠ be upon you now and forever.

Amen.

Go in peace, you are the body of Christ.