

July 19, 2015  
Mark 6:30-44

Proper 11b  
Compassionate Jesus

*Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Our text begins with the apostles returning to Jesus after they have been out casting out demons and preaching repentance for the forgiveness of diseases. They are telling Jesus everything that they have done and taught. They are in need of rest and Jesus recognizes that in them. He says, *“Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest awhile.”* There were many people coming and going and these disciples didn't even have time to eat. Upon returning they are continually doing ministry and Jesus knows they need rest. So they get into a boat...which is a relaxing place to be, and went off to a desolate place.

This past week I was with two youth from here at a Servant Event at Lutheran Island Camp along with another church group. We spent time working on the Island and at Christ Serve Ranch getting the place ready for the dedication at the end of the summer. As Servants we were working and I can tell you we were working hard. Our days began at 7:45 AM with flag raising and ended after devotions at about 9:30 AM. There was time to rest as well. Even with the long days on the Island, I got home on Friday seeking rest, but the work continued at home.

Or have you ever been on vacation and wanting to rest, but it seems that when you are gone, you are constantly doing things and not just sitting and resting or even reading a book in the confines of a beach chair with lemonade in your hand. It's about getting away to rest, but there actually is no rest.

You see as the Apostles and Jesus were going off to rest, the people are running after Jesus and the apostles. They were running around the lake. I am sure they could see the boat and see where it was headed to, so many of them got to the other side before they did. The disciples needed a break, they needed rest. There was no rest for them, not now, at least.

The people know Jesus, they knew His teachings, and they know His miracles. They've probably have even seen Him heal diseases or cast out demons. They probably have even heard Him teach. They've probably have also seen the Apostles teaching and doing miracles in the name of Jesus.

As Jesus and the apostles hit shore, Jesus sees this great crowd and has compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus even sees this. What happens to sheep without a shepherd? What do sheep do without their leader? They aren't protected and are attacked and killed by wolves. They wonder off seeking greener pastures but all they find is a cliff. Many times when sheep are without a shepherd it ends in their demise.

These people following after Jesus were seeking a shepherd. They were seeking someone to lead them. Jesus sees that and has compassion on them. I'm sure they were struggling in their sin, because we all do. I'm sure the devil was attacking them, he does it to all of us.

You see, we are sometimes like sheep without a shepherd. We too wonder off on our own doing our own thing. We want to make out own plans and do it our way. We wonder off the straight and narrow path into scandalous and wild living. This can be any sin. Without our shepherd we can run right off the cliff of life and end up losing the life that is promised for us. We are like sheep, we go off the path and the devil attacks us. He even attacks us on the path with the good things God has given to us.

Just go to the Ten Commandments, God gives us these commandments as a way to protect us against our own sinful nature. They are also there to protect the very gifts that God has given to us, our relationships to God and one another. We all know the first three commandments affect our relationship to God, and the final seven is based on our relationships with others. Whether that be respecting those in authority over us. When was the last time you've shown disrespect to your parents, your governmental fathers, or your spiritual fathers? The fifth commandment has been in the news this past week. Of course lives were taken in Chattanooga, TN, by who some are perceiving a terrorist attack. The other big news of the week is the Planned Parenthood video of selling fetal body parts. How devastating and yet they don't even view this children as children. Here they are breaking the fifth commandment. Yet, we break it too. When have you hated someone or wished something bad for someone or hurt them in their body. Obviously when we think of sexuality, we know we aren't supposed to have sex before we are married or have sex with someone other than our spouse. This too has been in the news quite frequently. Then there's the seventh commandment of protecting our neighbor's property.

The eight commandment, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor," is an easy commandment to break and we do it so often, whether we are talking about someone behind their back. Speaking ill of someone or even spreading gossip, whether it's true or not, or perhaps you don't even know. Gossip hurts, words hurt. Sometimes they hurt deeper than a physical pain. Words can do great damage. Yes, I'm guilty of it too. We all are prone to this one. When was the last time you spread a rumor that you didn't know was true? Each of us also secretly wishes to have things that aren't ours and might even scheme to get them.

You see without our shepherd we can run straight off the cliff of life into the valley of destructive sin.

Yet in our Gospel lesson, it tells us that Jesus has compassion. Jesus' first response to this is that He begins to teach them many things. What things? It doesn't tell us, but I'm sure they were important things. Perhaps it was preaching repentance for the forgiveness of sins. He's teaching them spiritual things. As Jesus is taking care of their

spiritual needs, the disciples want Jesus to send them away so that the people can get something to eat.

That's not what Jesus has in mind though. He wants the disciples to give them something to eat. After searching the crowds, they found five loaves and two fish, and they knew this wasn't enough to feed 5000 men plus the women and children who were there. So what does Jesus do? He continues to have compassion on the crowds and Jesus takes the bread and the fish as the crowds are sitting in groups of fifties and hundreds and He looks up to heaven says a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people.

Imagine with me for just a moment, there are 5000 people that come here to this place to hear a famous preacher, one that has authority amongst the people. Perhaps it's President Harrison or some other well-known church leader. Would we send them all to the One-n-Only or to the Cenex Store to buy food? They would run out wouldn't it! Just think, Jesus feeds 5000 men plus women and children with five loaves and two fish, and get this, there were 12 basketfuls leftover. These weren't your offering basket size either. These were baskets of size, although unknown to how big.

Jesus has compassion on the great crowds, takes care of their spiritual needs by teaching them and then takes care of their physical needs by feeding them with bread and fish.

As you can see up above without a shepherd, sheep are lost. Without Jesus these 5000 men plus women and children are lost, and so are we. Thanks be to God that Jesus has compassion on us. Jesus has compassion on you by teaching you and providing you with your physical needs.

He uses many things to teach you. He uses His very own Word as written in the Holy Scriptures. He has even provided teachers down through the ages that have written many things to aid in teaching, such as Martin Luther's Small and Large Catechisms. We even learn from Christ through Bible Study, Sunday School, Catechesis, in the Divine Service, our own devotional and prayer life. He uses other people to teach us...and not just necessarily pastors and teachers. He can even use the random stranger on the street or in the mall or at Menards to teach us something valuable about who He is as our Shepherd.

Jesus doesn't just teach you, He also feeds you. He gives you great physical blessings. If we go to the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer, we learn that daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like. This is what God gives to you. He also provides medical care through doctors and nurses and medicines. He gives you so many physical blessings, even your very bodily life.

He doesn't just feed you physically, like He didn't just feed the crowds just physically. For you, He provides you with another meal, another meal of bread, this time it's not bread and fish, but bread and wine, body and blood. On that Thursday night so many years ago, Jesus broke bread again, gave thanks, said a blessing, and gave it to the disciples saying, This is my body given for you. Take Drink, this is my blood shed on the cross for you for the forgiveness of your sins. Jesus gives to you his body and blood for you to eat and drink. What an amazing meal it is to partake in. What an amazing gift it is for us. It's a gift that keeps on giving. It's a gift that gives to you life and salvation.

Jesus Christ has great compassion for you. He feeds you physically and most importantly spiritually. He takes care of your spiritual needs. He takes your sin to the cross, dies for you and pours out a cleansing blood to wash you clean and make you as white as snow.

As there were 12 basketfuls left over of bread and fish. As the blessings for the 5000 men plus women and children did not run out, the blessings for you and me never run dry either. Christ is the giver of every good and perfect gift. He will continue to provide you with physical blessings, but more importantly, He will continue to provide you with great spiritual blessings. Spiritual blessings of continued forgiveness and the promise of life and salvation, a promise that you live in now, but will fully experience when Christ returns to live amongst us again in the new creation.

This morning we recognize that Jesus is indeed our Good Shepherd who leads us, guides us and protects us. He is also the one that will give to us rest when we desperately need it. He is the one that feeds you. He is the one that forgives your sin and teaches you many wonderful things through the Words of Holy Scripture and the wise words of faithful leaders in the church and the whole host of things listed earlier.

We continue to give God thanks for the blessings given to us, both physical and spiritual blessings. We continue to give God thanks for giving us the biggest blessing in Christ and for calling us His own in Baptism and for continuing to feed us through His Body and Blood.

IN Jesus Name. Amen.

*Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.*