**7/21/24**

**Holy Rest & Renewal, Yet So Much More**

**Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 (NRSV)**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSV) (2) **Amen.**

Good morning! Thank you for joining us whether you are out there in our pews, wandering the halls, or on our conference call. I am glad that we have joined together again in community this Sunday so that we can dive into the Word, support one another, and be able to recharge. We have to do this in order to be able to go back out there and be able to serve by showing a little bit of Christ to others. The presence of each and every one of you does not go unnoticed. We really do miss you when you are not here. Now, we might not have a demand that you be here each and every week, but we actually do come to expect and appreciate it in so many ways. If you really think about it, we actually grow on one another and love one another just as Jesus has taught us. Together we are also stronger for sure! So, again, thank you for being here and being part of the continued mission and ministry to yourself and this very community.

Now, I am not too sure that all of you knew that I used to work in the Social Services field for AtlantiCare Behavioral Health. If you did know this, then I am not sure if you knew that in March a very hard decision occurred in which I left a job I had been at and loved for over 12 years. I of course prayed about it, and had several discussions with my wife, family, and friends. I came to the very realization that I was stretching myself way too thin with all the hours I was working, let alone all the places I was driving, and all the time that I was sitting behind a computer. I was also here working and serving at church, I was in Seminary with intensive classes, and I also had a home life and family to be committed to as well. I just could not continue to keep serving and running at the capacity I was any longer. It actually was not healthy for me, nor was it even helpful for others. I enjoyed serving at the job that I was at, but in my head and in my heart, I knew that my life and my priorities had just simply changed.

To put things into perspective a little bit more for you all, at my former job I had the distinct privilege and honor to serve and work with individuals diagnosed with various mental health disorders. Several folks managed to do well and needed little to no support at times. However, several other folks struggled to make it independently in the community without being frequently hospitalized or even being incarcerated. As you can imagine I loved to be there for all my folks when they needed it, and especially when they needed it the most. Through doing that I never shut my work phone off, and would often take calls and texts after hours, or even answer emails. Through my job and serving I would visit folks at their apartments or homes, find them in the community or shelters, go to the hospitals or jails, link folks to various levels of support, advocate for them when needed, get them to health appointments or job interviews, accompany them to the store, assist folks with paperwork, make sure they made it to court, buy them a coffee or a meal, or quite frankly just simply be present. Unfortunately, all too often I had to come to the very realization and awareness that I was pouring into my folks so much, let alone trying to create balance with school, church, and home life that I was not actually caring for myself. I was trying to listen and be there, to provide support to everyone anywhere that I could that I actually forgot the cardinal rule. If you think about it, we actually heard it loudly in our Introduction to our Worship Service and in our Gospel Reading when Jesus advised the apostles “to get away and rest, to take care of themselves.” (1) I mean none of us can pour from an empty pitcher or jug, and mine was oh so dangerously close to empty way too often! When you allow that to happen, that not taking care of oneself over the course of time, then you can imagine that got to the point that I could not and was not able to take care of anyone else. I am quite sure that you have all been there at a time or two in your lives and professional careers. Through all of this busyness in life we are all reminded that care is definitely two-pronged, and as care for others is of course important, your care for self is ever more so vital.

So, let’s picture things in the context of what we have heard over and over again in a lot of our texts. Jesus went away to pray to be able to bring things to his Father, but more importantly he withdrew or went away at times to recharge. Jesus wanted to be able to help and support the crowds like we heard about in our Gospel Reading with his full heart and his full self. He also wanted to ensure his apostles knew the vital nature of recharging when he was with them, and he also wanted to ensure that they would carry on this self-care when he departed from them as well. That is precisely why he provided several examples for them. The last line in our Introduction to our Worship Service sums things up so wonderfully in saying that, “We are sent from Christ’s table to care for others and for ourselves.” (1) So, let us leave Christ’s table here again on a Sunday morning to be able to go out and share a little bit of Christ with others. However, let us make sure that we heed and follow the advice and the very example set by our Triune God, for it is not simply a suggestion to rest and recharge.

Alright, now that I have laid a little groundwork, we can really attack things further from a holy rest perspective. However, this is where my proverbial curveball comes in as well. This is when I transition back to my outline and hit a few key points as we rally through the next few parts of this sermon together.

So, in today’s Gospel Reading when the apostles return from the mission Jesus sent them on, he of course wants them to get rest. Jesus is thankful for their work and for their following of his command. So, he pulls them into a boat and says let me show you how you can keep on helping and healing. Unfortunately, as we continue to read on we hear the very realization that there is never an escape from the troubles and issues of the world for the apostles or Jesus. Their ministry and their recognition were growing so much that people were even racing ahead of them! Back then the shepherd and his flock of apostles were making themselves known so much to others that there were more sheep who were coming into the fold and realizing they were there for them. I mean faith may actually not be said or addressed directly in our Gospel Reading in words, but these people’s very actions and expectations from their encounters with Jesus and the apostles speaks volumes. It is very unfortunate that so many people needed help or healing. Thank goodness they exhibited a sense of trust and belief, and even an acceptance of it. So much so that they even told others about the apostles and Jesus so that they could also experience the very help, restoration, and healing they needed.

That brings us to you and I in the right here and the right now. This world seems like it is crumbling in so many places around us for sure. I know that I could provide an endless list of things and places, and I am sure I would strike a chord or two with all of you. Unfortunately, throughout life we hear, learn, and come to know that there is never an escape from the troubles and issues of the world for us or our neighbors. There are constant battles in and of this world that we get invested in or even pulled into at times, and that is whether we want to or not sometimes. This world and the very things going on in it can be so overwhelming, defeating, and frustrating at times. You and I and our neighbors experience so many of the same and even so many different troubles and issues that this world has to give day in and day out. (Hold up book) Just like Doc in this very book, Wine to Water, that Kathy loaned me to read a few short weeks ago. That is why we need to find another approach, just like our apostles in our Gospel Reading as well.

This is where we heard that the apostles taught and completed what Jesus had asked of them and this pleased and motivated him. This is where we learn that giving and serving has its limits, and pouring back into self is vital. Jesus took the proverbial reigns back when the apostles returned to him. When they went on to rest and eat, he handled the heavy lifting. He may have been tired too, but he was motivated that they went out and completed their ministry journey. He was further motivated by their excitement and their stories and experiences that they had brought back and shared with him. This motivation further led Jesus out into the crowds that were arriving everywhere before they even got there. We hear in verse 34, Jesus “showed his compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.” Jesus was not just providing some sort of temporary healing or support. Jesus was providing ministry, trust, faith, love, and showing care for one another that would last a lifetime. Just as he was showing his apostles, he was showing others how to be apostles too. Jesus was calling each person he encountered to care for and love one another. He was exhibiting this, and making sure that no one was lost any longer. The shepherd was indeed tending to his sheep, and bringing them all into the fold.

This is exactly what happens when we leave these church doors and the conference call each Sunday and go back out into the world. We have the calling to be the apostles now. We have the opportunity and blessing to go out there and teach and complete what Jesus asks of us and as we do this it pleases and motivates him. Our works will never be measured, but they are vital to our neighbor. Coming back here each Sunday is of course a check in and recharge with one another, but it is a check in and recharge in and through our Triune God. We get the opportunity to recommit our time to the study of the Word and to prayer with one another, and we get to let go and let God through our very trust and faith in him. We are indeed called to be the very hands and feet of ministry in the world today. We can support and encourage one another, and we can provide help and healing to folks through Our Lord and Savior. We can build each other up, and pull each other out of the daily struggles with the help of our Lord. We are blessed to be sheep that our Shepherd has a firm grasp on. We are sheep that are blessed to have experienced love and leadership from our Shepherd that we can share and show to others as well.

Our rest and recharge has occurred here and now in this very place. Let us go back out there and share and care, and allow others to come to understand the very love and faith we get to experience. Everyone is hurting in one way or another and seeks help and healing. Let’s remind them that their shepherd is constantly pursuing them and wants them to come into the fold for holy rest and renewal. Let us also be reminded that seeking help and healing for ourselves is required in order to be able to provide help and healing for others too. Let us continually have a hunger to come back here each and every week because we need it, others need our presence, and we need to show others how to do it as well. This is precisely where we build relationships and where Jesus says good job apostles, but let me show you how we keep on helping and healing.

Amen and Amen.

**References & Study Points**

(1) Sundays and Seasons

Preaching

Year B 2024

July 21st, 2024

9th Sunday After Pentecost

(2) Bible.com

(3) The Four Pages of The Sermon

Revised and Updated

A Guide to Biblical Preaching

Paul Scott Wilson

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Abingdon Press

(4) WorkingPreacher.org

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

His acts are not symbolic of the salvation he provides—they are a piece of that

salvation

July 21, 2024

Commentary on Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

Matt Skinner

(5) WorkingPreacher.org

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

This Gospel reading begins with an account of the disciples’ return after they had

been previously sent out by Jesus in Mark 6:6-13, and follows the unpleasantness of

John’s beheading described in Mark 6:14-29.

July 19, 2009

Commentary on Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

Mark G. Vitalis Hoffman

(6) WorkingPreacher.org

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Many Christians don’t have a sense of what a spiritual life is. Is it prayer? Is it

reading the Bible? Is it being guided spiritually by someone?

July 22, 2018

Commentary on Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

Cláudio Carvalhaes

(7) SermonCentral.com

Jesus Teaches And Heals

Contributed by Rick Bezanson on Jul 12, 2008

Scripture: Mark 6:30-56

Denomination: Lutheran

(8) Wine to Water

A Bartender's Quest to Bring Clean Water to the World

Doc Hendley

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Penguin Publishing Group

**Introduction**

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.

**Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 (NRSV)**

When Jesus sends his disciples out to teach and heal, they minister among large

numbers of people. Their work is motivated by Christ’s desire to be among those

in need.

30 The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and

taught. 31 He 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. 32 And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by

themselves. 33 Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they

hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. 34 As 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.

53 When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored

the boat. 54 When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him,

55 and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to

wherever they heard he was. 56 And 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.

**Theme Statement: What is God doing in or behind this text?**

**(Active verb, saving or empowering action, complete thought, and a simple short sentence)**

Jesus says good job apostles, but let me show you how we keep on helping and healing.

**Four Page Method**

**Page One (Trouble in the Text) (Characters Only)**

There is never an escape from the troubles and issues of the world for the apostles or Jesus.

**Page Two (Trouble in the World) (Us Only)**

There is never an escape from the troubles and issues of the world for us or our neighbors.

**Page Three (Grace in the Text) (God & Characters)**

The apostles taught and completed what Jesus had asked of them and this pleased and motivated him.

**Page Four (Grace in the World) (God & Us)**

We teach and complete what Jesus asks of us and this pleases and motivates him.

**Sermon Unity Elements: The Tiny Dog Now Is Mine**

**Text (41-42):** Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 (NRSV)

**Theme (42-48):** Jesus lets the disciples rest as he goes back to work and leads by example.

**Doctrine (48-50):** Healing

**Need (50-52):** Everyone is hurting in one way or another and seeks help and healing.

**Image (52-56):** Sheep without a Shepherd

**Mission (56-57):** Seeking help and healing for ourselves is required in order to be able to provide help and healing for others.