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“Healing Hands: Draw Crowds”

Mark 6:30-34; 53-56

Series: HEALING HANDS

Theme: We all need time apart/away from others for rest and renewal. Yet, Jesus also acknowledges and meets the needs of others who are drawn to him for healing and life.

Mark 6:30-34; 53-56

³⁰ *The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.* ³¹ *Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”*

³² *So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.* ³³ *But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them.* ³⁴ *When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.*

⁵³ *When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there.* ⁵⁴ *As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus.* ⁵⁵ *They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was.* ⁵⁶ *And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.*

† **Jesus knows our circumstances and need for rest and renewal.**

As we continue our gospel journey with Jesus and his disciples in Mark’s account, we pick up with return of the disciples whom he had previously sent out to proclaim the gospel, casting out demons and performing healings.

As word continued to spread about the healing Jesus and his disciples were doing, large crowds began to seek Jesus out and follow them. Mark tells us that so many people were coming and going that the disciples did not even get a chance to eat.

Did you ever have a time like that? I’m pretty sure you have. And, as happy as you may be about all the excitement, we all need time for nourishment and, not just of the body, but also for the spirit and soul. Yes, even Jesus knew this about himself and his disciples. Jesus knows our circumstances and need for rest and renewal, as well. Sometimes, he says to us, “*Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.*”

We may do that through a personal or group retreat at a place like Camp Pecometh. Or, we may have another place we may like to go just to get away for solitude: in the woods, by a lake or shore, up in the mountains, or somewhere else. Even if it’s just for a day, it’s a good practice for

spiritual, mental and physical renewal. I'm glad to hear that some of you are finding or making the time to do that this summer.

† **Jesus also acknowledges and meets the needs of others who are drawn to him for healing and life.**

Our reading from the gospel also shows that Jesus has compassion for the needs of others. And, when the need arises, he meets that need, often in marvelous ways we never have expected! As Mark tells us . . . *So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.* (vs. 32-34)

Notice that Jesus first feeds their soul with the word of God, teaching them many things, as that was their primary need at the time.

But he doesn't stop there. Mark goes on to tell . . . it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. *"This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."* (vs. 35-36)

And, rather than send them away, Jesus teaches something most wonderful . . . how God can multiply and provide more than is needed, from what little we have to offer. He tells his disciples to feed the crowds. After taking five loaves of bread and two fish and giving thanks to God in heaven, they feed over five thousand people.

And, after meeting the people's needs, Jesus again sent the disciples into the boat to go away from the crowds. This time he sent them on without him, so that he could dismiss the crowds and go up to the mountainside to pray by himself. He, too, acknowledged his own human need to pray and stay connected to the Father in and by the Spirit.

Then, something else amazing happened the disciples didn't expect.

Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. The Sea of Galilee, or Lake of Gennesaret as it was also called, is only about eight miles wide. And, as they were traveling from the western shore to another town on that side, they would not have been too far off shore. Perhaps, there was a full moon, as Jesus was able to see the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them.

Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, because they all saw him and were terrified. (vs. 47-50)

Immediately he spoke to them and said, *"Have courage! It's me. Don't be afraid."* Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down.

They were completely amazed, for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened, Mark tells us.

Sometimes, we, too, may not understand or believe all that God can do because of doubts, fears, or even hardened hearts. Yet, Jesus does not give up on us, even after we have seen miracles. He still seeks to teach and use us for his purpose of bringing healing and life.

† **Trusting in God to provide, we can meet the needs of others seeking Christ's love, hope and healing.**

Mark tells us . . .

When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed. (vs. 53-56)

Jesus is hope for healing! The people in the crowds who came and gathered to him were seeking wholeness, renewal and restoration. They wanted to be changed. They wanted to touch the one who gave them hope. And, although the means of communication and transportation have changed, that need still exists today.

We can offer that hope to others today! As others see and identify Jesus in us, they are drawn to him through us. We, too, can share his love, compassion, hope and healing with those in need. I feel blessed in knowing God can use me in that way. It pleases and blesses me to hear how some of you share that hope with others, and how their lives are changed. And, I'm glad for the ministries we have that bring hope and healing to our community.

When I prayed and meditated again yesterday morning on the healing needs of our community and area, once again the Spirit brought to mind those struggling with addiction, including their families. I, also, was led to a couple of further related faith resources, which I plan to read and reconnect with an area counselor or two as possible guest speakers. If this is something that is close to your heart as well, please let me know.

Trusting in God to provide, we can further meet the needs of others seeking Christ's love, hope and healing.

May God's Spirit and peace strengthen and sustain you this and every day!

Questions for Reflection:

- 1. What do you need most from Jesus now?**
- 2. How do you find time apart with God for rest and renewal?**

3. How can or do you help share the love and life of Christ with others seeking hope and healing?