

Proper 11 B
July 22nd, 2018
St. Mark 6:30-34; 53-56
St. George's Episcopal Church
Fr. Chris

No Rest for the Weary...

“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. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves.”

There is no question that the work they were doing was important. Healing people who are sick and who have been suffering a long time is important. But was that the focus and purpose of God's visit to earth, do you think? Healing and showing God's compassion was a big part of it, but not the main event.

Human beings haven't changed. The other week when the “Build a Bear” stores in Malls across the country offered a special sale, “pay your age,” tens of thousands of customers across the country could not miss the event, and stores were mobbed with customers seeking the sale bears. The crowds pressing on the stores were so big, that the Malls were stuffed with people waiting in line—so much so—they could not operate their own business and blocked off other neighboring businesses. The crowds even spilled out into the parking lots and streets in some cases, blocking the entrance to the Malls where “Build A Bear” stores were located. This is the unintended consequence of a well-intended idea. Needless to say, the company had to put an end to the sale to save not only the Malls, but their own employees who were overrun with pushing and shoving customers, some of whom were ill tempered after waiting for several hours to get into the store.

The same is true of the so-called “Black Friday” which occurs the day after we are supposed to offer our thanks for the many blessings we enjoy. Greed is now pushing that black idea into Thanksgiving Day itself, turning it into a dark Thursday. Hurry on down after you gobble up that last turkey and stuffing so you can get a chance to buy off-brand electronics for off-prices which are still higher than the junk is worth, all in an effort to show your generosity for the coming birth of Jesus Christ! Right. Human nature hasn't changed. In fact, judging from the behavior of some folks on Black Friday, where people have been trampled at the

entrance to several Wal-Mart stores and still others get into push and shove arguments over who will get the last discontinued 'Mister Coffee maker' left on the shelf! Human nature can get pretty ugly and averse to the meaning and purpose of the season. Greed. Entitlement. Me First. All driving a buyer's frenzy.

But we're not here to look down on Black Friday, as easy as that might be. However, remembering our own weaknesses, we ought not to look down on the hundreds and perhaps thousands who brought their sick and suffering to be healed by Jesus and the disciples. They were just trying to think of others, like the Christmas shoppers on Black Friday. They were showing compassion on friends and family they cared about, and if the rumors were true, and of course, they were true, then it was worth it to find this traveling preacher and prophet, the likes of whom humanity had never seen before.

Healing soon took over as the main event, we may assume from the text of the Gospel today. Crowds rushed to receive healing because of the hope extended by the stories which preceded the travels of Jesus and His disciples. However, was this the main reason that God came into the world, do you think? Yes God wanted to show mercy and compassion, but God's central focus was on something else. The healing and compassion of Jesus revealed much about God's nature and person, but it was only a sidebar to the main event, which was about the love God has for each one of us. This could easily get lost in a crush of crowds pressing Him to have their loved one's healed.

Trying to deal with too many items on the to do list. It is all about pleasing others and giving them what they want. And that's where we get into trouble. We are not God. We do not have the unlimited time and energy resources to do what others want us to do or what we want to do in our own minds. We are finite creatures with limited time. So how do we cope with the press of "To do's" which crowd us each day?

Just as Jesus tried to do in today's Gospel, we need some "down time" to recharge our batteries and rest our weary selves.

To have "down time" from your pressing "To Do's," I suggest we look to Jesus Himself for some clues as to what to do:

- Get Away! Leave work behind. If your home is not a sanctuary and place of respite from the "To Do's," make your home over into such a place. In the mean time, go to a quiet and deserted place, and be quiet and rest from your labors and worries. Sufficient unto the day are the problems and troubles thereof.

- Set boundaries and say no. Saying yes to everyone who asks something from you will not make people like you. In fact, if you disappoint them and do not fulfill what you have promised, they will like you even less than if you said an honest, ‘no, I don’t have the time to do that.’
- Count your days and hours carefully and keep a time budget. Know how much time you have to spend. Time is a very precious resource and you only have a very limited amount to spend. Do not approach time as though it were a credit card with a high limit on it. Using it that way will only build up time indebtedness. You can only afford to spend what you have.
- Set priorities for how you will use your time. What does God want me to do? What should be my priorities for how I use my time? What do you think? What moves you? What makes you happy? What fulfills you when you spend your time?
- Set your focus on those priorities. You can’t do everything. It is best to do that which is vital and important, therefore, prioritize what you want to do with your time. Decide priorities.
- Acknowledge your limitations and your humanity. You can’t do everything you want or everything others want you to do. What God wants of you is most important as you ponder how you spend your time. Spend time and focus on what God wants. Go to a quiet and deserted place and figure that out.
- Know your limits. Be mindful of them. Know how much you can do and be aware of when you are reaching your limit.

The people chasing Jesus, their need was urgent and He and His disciples showed compassion upon them, which was a part of God’s mission. But their need for rest was also urgent. They just couldn’t find a place to do it. But there is hope for us: we can!

Even God rested after working six days to create the world and universe, so Genesis records in the first chapter of sacred scripture. And God commanded we do the same. Rest. Refresh. Recreate. Recharge your batteries... AMEN