

Pentecost #8

7-18-2021

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor

Vicar Karen Pugatch

Celebrate (Introduction)

“Mark’s gospel makes clear how great is the press of a 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.”

We come together in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Opening Hymn: [“Word of God, Came Down on Earth”](#)

Psalm: Psalm 23

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;

² he makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters;³

³ he restores my soul.⁴

He leads me in paths of righteousness⁵

for his name’s sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,⁶

I fear no evil;

for thou art with me;

thy rod and thy staff,

they comfort me.

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

thou anointest my head with oil,

my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely⁷ goodness and mercy⁸ shall follow me

all the days of my life;

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord

for ever.”

Hymn of Praise: [“When Morning Gilds the Skies”](#)

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.”

1st Reading: [Jeremiah 23:1-6](#)

2nd Reading: [Ephesians 2:11-22](#)

The Gospel: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+6%3A30-34%2C+53-56&version=NRSV>

Hymn of the Day: ["O Jesus, I Have Promised"](#)

The Message: Vicar Karen Pugatch ([Video Link](#))

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.

The Gospel of our Lord

John is dead, those who have been sent out have returned full of excitement and stories about what they have accomplished. I envision an encampment somewhere in the countryside near Capernaum- with people milling about everywhere. The apostles (those who were sent) excited and energized by their success, wound up like over-tired children eager to ride their adrenalin buzz on to the next big adventure.

Some in this frenetic camp are likely saddened at the death of John-maybe even frightened that his fate might be theirs if they are not careful. There is so much going on that Jesus and his disciples have no time to sit and share a meal. We all know how important table fellowship is for Jesus and his followers. Jesus, senses that the apostles need a rest upon their return so he takes them away to a deserted place. By its nature, wilderness can also be a chaotic, not a place where one goes to share a meal-the wilderness is a place of hunger, but it is quiet.

In the gospel of Mark deserted places are important. Symbolically they are where a community goes when in flight for protection and to await deliverance. The prophetic movements of John and Jesus begin in the wilderness. The wilderness is the opposite of the Temple! Jesus goes to deserted places to pray. Interestingly enough, when it becomes too dangerous for him to be in a town because he is recognizable to the authorities, Jesus retreats to deserted places and the crowds follow to meet him there in those marginal places. We see this clearly in today's lesson-the place may be deserted, but it is not unknown to the people! Recognizing Jesus and his followers as they attempt to get away, people from "all the cities" run ahead to meet him.

These people are in need of something—Jesus characterizes them as Sheep without a shepherd—Moses said the same as he handed over leadership to Joshua. Some may be followers of John looking for a new leader, some may be citizens of Rome perhaps disillusioned by the “leadership” of Herod Antipas, certainly some are there looking for healing drawn by knowledge of the wonders Jesus and the Apostles have accomplished, and others might just be curious about this healer and his followers. Jesus looks upon this crowd and has **compassion** for them. Jesus and his followers are most certainly in need of a rest but the needs of the crowd come first. This will not be a therapeutic trip for him and his disciples—there is work to be done—ministry is constant.

Jesus has compassion—this is an emotional response to the suffering of others that stimulates a desire to help, unlike empathy in which we are aware of the emotional state of others and try to understand that emotion and “sit with it”—compassion is empathy joined with altruism. Jesus is most certainly mourning the loss of John like some in that crowd, he can empathize with their emotions around loss but he sees them as leaderless so he teaches them.

And then there is the gap in this morning’s lesson. In case you are wondering what gets skipped, it is the Markan version of the feeding of the 5000— the one where Jesus tells the disciples to feed the masses. They are skeptical but Jesus assures them they have an abundance of food—5 loaves and 2 fish and all are fed with 12 baskets left over— the deserted places, it turns out, are where God provides nourishment.

In the second part of this morning’s lesson, we hear that Jesus and his disciples arrive at Gennesaret— We have skipped another story—Jesus walking on water—they were headed for Bethsaida not Gennesaret yet again when they land, crowds recognize Jesus and bring their sick to him for healing!

Why is it that the crowds recognize Jesus and just a short while before his disciples did not? As Jesus came to them in the storm, they thought him a ghost! Yet in this place they were not planning on going, people from all walks of life bring their loved ones to the marketplace seeking only to touch the hem of Jesus’ garment to be healed. The garment is not magic, it is not the fringe that heals— it is the faith in Jesus’ authority over illness that heals.

What does this disjointed text teach us? I think it encourages us to look carefully at transition—there is a lot going on in the liminal spaces of our lives. Pay attention to the tiny details that sometimes go unnoticed.

This text recognizes the need for rest, time away in the quiet and it also acknowledges that sometimes life gets in the way. It assures us that even when rest seems unattainable, Jesus is there to feed us in our wilderness, to lead us when we are lost.

This text speaks of compassion—something we as Christians are called to exhibit for others. Compassion is deeply felt not just the window dressing of good works. When we are compassionate we deeply feel the pain of our neighbor and enter into that place. We acknowledge that suffering, dwell with them in their painful reality and then we act in love to try to alleviate their pain and address the cause. We ask—what do you need, listen carefully to their answer and act in love to respond without judgement.

Jesus does not need to ask the crowd if they desire help—he just helps because he knows what they need. He does not discern if they are worthy of his healing, he just heals—because he has compassion for them—he has compassion for us.

When we are leaderless or blown off course in our own lives there is hope because we are loved no matter what, no matter where the grace of God will find us, is for us—thanks be to God.

Anthem: [“The Lord’s My Shepherd”](#)

Offering*: ([On-Line giving Link](#))

We give thee but thine own, what e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

The Prayer

Most merciful God, we are still in the midst of a worldwide pandemic with a surge in cases and deaths in regions of our own country. Instill within all those who have chosen not to become vaccinated a change of heart and mind so that we may overcome this dreaded virus in order for life to return to normalcy without fear. We also pray for all those who are being affected by drought and devastating wildfires in our western states as well as those who are experiencing damaging floods in Europe. Our world remains in a state of turmoil. Open our hearts and lives to the realization of love and peace.

We pray for all who need your comforting and healing presence especially Bob and Pat Allen, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Cronin family, the Elshafei family, the Fultz family, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Charles Larsen, Donna Mayhew, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, David Otto, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Linda Rigby, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family,, Della , Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Linda Williamson, Wyatt Lee Wolf, Pastor Jack,
We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you;
The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters
Live on knowing God's love,
The joy of living this life of love,
And the peace which only comes through the power of His presence within you.
So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

Closing Hymn: ["Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us"](#)

Announcements

Senior Piano Recital, Monday July 19th , 7:00 PM.

Today is Vicar Karen's last Sunday with us. We are thankful for her time with us and we pray for her future Ministry with St John's Lutheran Church in Linthicum.

Night at the Ball Park in Frederick: The Frederick Keys, July 31st at 6:00 PM

Services will be outdoors unless inclement weather conditions force us indoors. Face masks and social distancing outdoors are not required. An email will be sent late Saturday afternoons stating whether indoors or outdoors.

*Offering to be sent to:

Bob Brackbill
10274 Raleigh Tavern Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church
9122 Sybert Drive
Columbia Hills
Ellicott City, MD 21043

<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org>

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online giving with the link found after the offering designation or here: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291