

Rev. Timothy M. Crummitt

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost - Year B

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Jeremiah 23:1-6

Psalm 23

Ephesians 2:11-22

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

07/22/2018

Gospel

The Holy Gospel According to St. Mark:

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

Prayer

Let us pray,

Amen

Rest

Good morning! Today's text is a strange one. The assigned readings from the lectionary are two sets of transitional stories. They're basically setting up two other, more known stories. If you look in your bulletin, you'll notice that the first half of the gospel lesson is verses 30-34 of chapter six. We pick up the story exactly where we ended last week; we've just heard about the death of John the Baptist and now the disciples have returned from having been sent out by Jesus. So they get in a boat, cross the water, heal some who are sick, and then the story ends for us. It goes on to tell of the feeding of the five thousand, but that's a story for another day. So the lectionary skips a few verses and we pick up our story with verse 53, which is basically a summary of the events that happened in chapter six of the Gospel of Mark: the disciples have just witnessed Jesus walk on water and assumed that he's a ghost, but that's another part of the text we have left out...

So we have before us a collection of stories that are focused on movement, both on the parts of the Jesus and the disciples, and in the nature and function of the stories within the narrative. Moving around is something I'm used to lately, I feel like all I've done since synod assembly is run around. So when I looked over the gospel lesson today one part of the story

stuck out for me. Take a look at verse 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.”* Jesus recognizes the need for rest, the need to recuperate. Oddly enough, it reminded me of something that happened in high school.

Our high school got out at 2:30 in the afternoon, and after school was out I had a very short window of time to relax alone at my house. My brother had football practice or lifting after school and so he wouldn't be home for awhile, my mom was a middle school teacher and wouldn't be home till sometime after 3:30, and Dad finished work at 4... now all of this was very important because I wanted to take a nap. We had dinner at my grandma's house at 5pm and so I wanted to get some sleep before everyone got home.

Now, sleeping for me could be tough. Because of my Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, I had trouble with distracting noises that others would find easy to dismiss. I would literally obsess over them, making it impossible to fall asleep. But as I lay down that afternoon on the couch in our living room I felt that I would be able to sleep... and then the phone rang. This wasn't a cellphone, but a dedicated land line that had three different handsets and a main machine and so when it rang it was LOUD! I grabbed the phone, saw that it was a telemarketer and hung it up. A few minutes later the phone rang again, and then again. After that my neighbor fired up his diesel truck with its 6inch exhaust, which he had to let run for a minute or two before leaving! It was like the world was out to make sure I didn't sleep! With my window of opportunity shrinking I tried once again to fall asleep only to be woken up by the phone once again, but this time it was my grandmother. We had dinner at her house, you remember, so I begrudgingly answered the phone. “YES?!” I may have yelled when I answered. “What do you want?” I asked. “Tim, I ran

out of milk, can you please run some milk down to my house? I need it for dinner.” Well, something snapped and the request proved to be the straw that broke the camel’s back. “CAN’T YOU GET YOUR OWN MILK! I’M TRYING TO SLEEP!” I yelled at my poor innocent grandmother. It was not my best moment, and I forget the rest of the conversation but I did end up helping her get milk. I just wanted some rest!

The disciples were in the same place, they needed a break too. We’ve all been there, and while a summer’s traveling is nothing compared to the work that the disciples have done in the name of Jesus we often end up exhausting ourselves so much that work and ministry for the church can suffer because of the stress we add to our lives from other places. We live in a culture that seems to reward those who work themselves to exhaustion; the amount of work we do has become a badge of honor, the mark of a martyr... and yet in today’s text we see Jesus trying to call out the disciples to a private place, a place of rest. Even God rested. After creating the entire universe God rested on the seventh day, and I doubt any of us are going to call God lazy. So take a break, not just to relax but to find peace with God, to rest in the comfort of the Lord who calls us to holy work and to holy rest.

You might have noticed that we haven’t had the readings from the Psalms for the summer. I intentionally took them out, but I leave you today with the assigned Psalm, may it bring us some calm and peace:

1The Lord | is my shepherd;

I shall not | be in want.

2The Lord makes me lie down | in green pastures

and leads me be- | side still waters.

3You restore my | soul, O Lord,

and guide me along right pathways | for your name's sake.

4Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall | fear no evil;

for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they | comfort me.

5You prepare a table before me in the presence | of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is | running over.

6Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days | of my life,

and I will dwell in the house of the | Lord forever.

Amen.