

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Title: "Jesus Remains Active, Even When We Rest"

Sermon Text: Mark 6:30-34

Sermon Hymn: "God Loves Me Dearly" LSB 392

Prayer: May we continue to find true rest in our Lord's message of hope and comfort.

Sermon Outline:

- I. Jesus steps up His activity.
  - a. The crowds are coming together.
  - b. The apostles are sent with excitement deliver the message.
- II. Jesus provides rest.
  - a. The apostles return with much excitement to report.
  - b. The apostles are grieving the execution of John the Baptist.
- III. Jesus provides the sheep a Shepherd.
  - a. The crowds need hope and comfort.
  - b. The crowds want hope and comfort.
- IV. Jesus continues to provide His message of rest, hope, and comfort.
  - a. Rest and Recuperation for those carrying His exciting message.
  - b. A miraculous message through ordinary means.
  - c. An amazing future rest where we will work without tiring.

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and from Jesus Christ, our Lord, our Savior. Amen.

Last Sunday we had the Gospel account from Mark of Jesus sending out His apostles to proclaim that the people should repent. He gave them clear instruction of what to take, how to go out, etc. We also heard the account of how John the Baptist's execution occurred.

In our Gospel for this Sunday we hear of the apostles returning, Jesus encouraging them to go to a desolate place to rest, and the feeding of the five-thousand. The reason for the Lord becoming flesh is coming clear at this point in Jesus' life- His message, His purpose, and the gift of Himself as the sacrifice for everyone's sins. And, the crowds are coming together. What people are hearing and witnessing of Jesus and His followers is hopeful and comforting, something anyone living in this sinful world needs. Jesus is becoming a real attraction throughout the land. Just imagine if He were here today. What kind of distance would you go to hear Him or witness one of His miracles? This stuff had to have been exciting, even if you didn't believe in Him and just wanted to check out.

And, not only was what Jesus doing attracting attention, but what He had sent the apostles out to do and proclaim was drawing attention. And we read in this Sunday's Gospel reading that they returned to Jesus to report "all they had done and taught." Surely, these men were excited about their experience. Likely, that journey had its joys and its disappointments as they and the message they were carrying was both received joyfully by some and rejected fiercely by others. And, upon their return there was the news of John the Baptist's execution. Consider how these apostles felt about all this. They probably considered John a close friend. They probably saw this as a threat to their own lives since John was beheaded for doing what the apostles were now doing themselves.

There was joy and excitement, grief and disappointment, all happening at the same time. Without a doubt these apostles needed rest from it all. Hence, what Jesus said to them- "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest awhile."

This need for them to rest awhile, does this need sound familiar? At the end of the day, we need to rest. At the end of the work week we like to say "thank goodness it's Friday." We take vacations. We spend time home alone or with those we love. We need our breaks, short and long. Even those fifteen minute breaks at work do a lot for us.

Rest is certainly not a bad thing, friends. It is a gift from God and our Creator set the example of taking time to rest- Genesis 2:2- "And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done."

A period of rest is intended for us. Some things to consider about periods of rest, and about the time we spend not resting. Since the fall into sin, work is hard, and it tires us out. If we continue to work without rest, terrible things happen. Yet, as well, since the fall into sin, we like to spend too much time resting, and we tend to rest for the wrong reason.

When these apostles returned Jesus recognized their need to rest. A lot had happened during their journey. And, these were the Lord's apostles, men who were excited to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Then to experience all that joy, and even disappointment over rejection, these men were likely very tired. And, the world's

rejection of who they were and the message they carried was made very clear and realistic in John's execution.

Jesus knew their need for rest and He provided it. "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest awhile." Set they set out in a boat to go to this desolate place to be by themselves and rest. But, when they got in the boat and went away many saw them and ran on foot and got ahead of them. Talk about popularity and being needed. Word was getting out, this Jesus and His band of followers had some amazing things to give and share!

When they arrived at their desolate place, Jesus saw that great crowd of people. Now, when Jesus said, "come away by yourselves to a desolate place," do you think these apostles had in mind this great crowd of people being there? Yet, Jesus saw this great crowd and He had compassion on them. He did not send them away, or chastise them for following them there. He knew they raced ahead and gathered there, because they were without a shepherd. The need for a shepherd is a real need everyone has.

These people of this crowd are no different than anyone of us. They lived in the same world we live in now. They experienced the many hardships of life we do now. They had their ups and downs of joy and disappointment. They worked, they rested out of necessity. They were real people just like all of us. Thing of it is, they were sinners just like any of us, and they lived in a sin filled world. Their consciences bothered them, they faced the consequences of their sins, and they needed hope and relief, just as any of us do.

And, isn't that what Jesus came to provide, hope and relief? The Gospel account of Mark says Jesus "had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd." So, what did Jesus do? He did just exactly as He became flesh to do, He gave them a shepherd. He gave them Himself. And, so, "He began teaching them many things." And, we can count on it, the many things He taught them was designed to deliver Himself as their Savior and winner of their salvation.

I read to you II Corinthians 5:17- "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." That is what these apostles were, a new creation. Friends, all that Jesus fulfilled, including His horrific suffering and death, happened so we would be redeemed and justified. All that we have

done wrong against our Lord, and against our neighbor, the punishment we deserve was laid upon Jesus' shoulders and His blood was shed. In our baptisms we received the gift. The gift He won. That gift is a new life in Him. The lives we live are not our own, but a new life purchased with His blood. This is who we are now. That is who those apostles were. This new life entails so much. We are humble. We are truly joyful and filled with hope. We are truly and fully comforted even while we live in this world full of sin. We are at peace even though we daily and hourly struggle with our own sin. And, we love to tell and share with others what our Lord has done for us.

This is who are and what we are all about. We are all about Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. When we go about our daily lives, no matter what it is, we do so as a new creation in the blood of Jesus Christ. This is something difficult for others around us to not notice. We are full of hope, yet, we also experience disappointment as those around us in the world reject us because of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our lives are a great big maelstrom of joy and grief, excitement and disappointment. We need regular rest. How do we get that rest? Our Lord gives it to us the same way He gave those apostles and that great crowd of people rest.

Throughout our earthly lives Jesus continues to come to us and give us His message of hope, comfort, and relief. This is the rest He gives us. Time out for Jesus, is one way to think of it. He gives us Himself and then we go out into the world. He gives us Himself and then we go out into the world.

The gift of Himself is the rest He gives us. When we go out in this world in joyful living of who He has made us to be, we still wear out because we are still as sinful as we have ever been. And, He comes to us to renew our joy in Him that we are forgiven. When we go out into this world and we are rejected because of our Lord, He comes to us to give us Himself, and He is the strength to go out again to carry His exciting message to others. By continually and routinely giving Himself He is continually and routinely giving us rest. Jesus Christ is our rest.

And, we never have to seek Him out. We never have to look to extravagant ways to receive Him, but He comes to us in the most ordinary means- His Word (in a language we can understand), in water (which we are all familiar with), and with the bread and wine (easily made available). He makes it that easy to receive Him and receive rest.

You would almost think such a miraculous gift as Jesus Christ would have to come in extraordinary ways, but it does not, our Lord gives us Himself in the simplest of ways.

The hope we live in friends, is the hope of what He has won for us, eternal life in the paradise of Heaven. There, in that great place, that we cannot begin to comprehend what it's going to be like, there we never tire out. We will work, we will serve our Lord and everyone around us, but we will never become weary or disappointed. The weary and disappointment we experience so often now is a consequence of our sin, the same sin Jesus took with Him to His death. No matter what happens we are always looking forward to that day. Sounds fantastic to me! How about you? We'll be there, that's His promise.

Friends, the rest our Lord intends us to have and wants us to have is not void and empty. It is a rest filled with hope and comfort. It is rest filled with Himself. Our Lord is active beyond our comprehension during the moments of rest He gives us. Weekly worship, daily devotions, quiet moments of study and hearing of His Word- these are the most valuable moments of rest we have in life. Even in those moments our Lord is active and freely giving us Himself.

Those apostles were tired out, we're sure. Those making up that great crowd need rest also. So, what did our Lord do? He graciously gave them time out to hear Him, to receive Him.

When it came to that great crowd of people, Jesus "commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass." Time out for Jesus.

We rest, Jesus acts. We act and we tire out. And, Jesus comes again to act while we rest. It is His promise, He will continue to do this until the day comes when we will never be weary or disappointed again.

His Words, "your sins are forgiven,"- what comfort, what relief. His Words, "I remember your sins no more," what rest, what joy. Let us go friends, out into this world, be ourselves, and live out the lives He has given us, and may we share it with others, all that the Lord has done and continues to do. Amen.