

No Time!

King of Glory Lutheran
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Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 The 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.

There was no time to eat. The crowds were always there. So many people to be healed. The need to rest was great. Yet Jesus healed all who came seeking Him. He had compassion.

God’s unending compassion and healing power be with you all this day. Amen.

Think of a time when you were in a crowd. Maybe you were shopping right before Christmas and the store is wall to wall people. Perhaps you were walking into a stadium or arena before a ball game or concert? You are just one person in the midst of a crowd. There is a blob of moving people all headed in the same direction. People’s elbows touch you, not intentionally, but only because there isn’t enough space to spread out. It is a sea of bodies and legs and if you tried to turn around to go the other way, it just wouldn’t work!

Perhaps this is how Jesus and the disciples felt. Lately the crowds are always around. There is no time! The disciples have returned from their first successful mission of healing. Jesus knew they all needed to stop and rest. They had to eat, renew and pray. The burden of restoring people to health was exhausting. Truly, it was hard to find a quiet place to eat because people always found them.

The mission – Jesus’ mission - was gaining momentum. After John’s beheading, it had become vitally clear...go against the political powers and there will be consequences. Jesus’ mission wasn’t over, but it had taken a blow.

Herod was supposed to be the people’s king. But he was off having parties; wining and dining the upper class. The locals knew of Jesus’ healing powers, His teaching, His love for ordinary citizens. No wonder they sought him out.

Therefore, there is no time to eat. People recognize Jesus, like the paparazzi recognize Hollywood stars, under dark sunglasses and low brimmed hats. Jesus and the disciples want to rest, but there is always a crowd. They only rest was a few brief moments in the boat, because folks could run faster on foot than the boat could travel. There they were, at the dock waiting. There is no time!

During the pandemic, we all became familiar with the term “essential workers.” These are the folks whose job it is to be on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They are the firemen and police women, the ambulance workers, the nurses, doctors and funeral directors. Many worked not only 12 hour shifts, but 36 hour shifts. Nothing seemed to stop the flow of sick people filling up every possible bed. There was no time to rest.

But notice what the text says. “Jesus had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things...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.

If it was hard to find the Good News in last week’s lesson, it is more than obvious this week! Jesus had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Sheep without a shepherd is a common phrase in the Bible. God is the good shepherd for all God’s children, we sheep! But when that phrase turns up, it indicates God is typically standing over and against abusive shepherds (the Herods of the world) who no longer even care for their subjects.

Jesus had compassion on all the people. First he began to teach. Teach? Of course, because to be whole, one’s mind has to be just as healthy as the body. Jesus says, “The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light.” (Matthew 6:22) The way we see and understand the world impacts our whole outlook, our overall health. So Jesus taught them...taught them of God’s love and forgiveness.

You and I understand this. Without teaching a child to read, they are lost for much of their lives. Without teaching them to take turns and be patient, they will be become bullies and angry. Teaching comes first so the mind knows what the body needs.

Then Jesus healed them. The parents who were overwhelmed. The grandfather who was sick. A mother with one blind eye and a child with an extended belly. Every single body in that crowd who touched the fringe of His cloak was healed.

No wonder they came running! Who wouldn’t? There is no time like now to run to Jesus for healing of body, mind and spirit!

What one of us doesn’t need healing in some capacity? We long for Jesus to listen to our unanswered questions. We desire for Him to touch us or take an old memory and ease its pain. Compassion is a valuable commodity right now. We too, long for His time and touch.

The Good News for today is Jesus – God – has more capacity to teach, love, heal and comfort than we would ever need! Although there were hundreds perhaps, Jesus touched and allowed each one to touch Him. This Shepherd, knew His sheep needed tending. They were not a crowd to Jesus, they were individuals, each one, God’s unique child.

Here’s the catch. Jesus does have time. He made time for all the people in the story and He makes time for us. There is no time like right now to run to Jesus for healing. Whatever care or worry, whatever illness come to Him. Jesus has compassion.

Please say that phrase after each category, “Jesus has compassion.”

For all the weary: “Jesus has compassion.”

For all the hungry: “Jesus has compassion.”

For all the sick: “Jesus has compassion.”

For all who grow old: “Jesus has compassion.”

For all the famous: “Jesus has compassion.”

For all the nameless: “Jesus has compassion.”

For all the politicians in our country: “Jesus has compassion.”

For all the refugees in Afghanistan: “Jesus has compassion.”

For all the immigrants from Syria: “Jesus has compassion.”

For all fleeing floods in Europe: “Jesus has compassion.”

For all fleeing war in Sudan and Ethiopia: “Jesus has compassion.”

For all the Rohingya genocide in Myanmar: “Jesus has compassion.”

For all sisters and brothers of color in Loveland and everywhere: “Jesus has compassion.”

For all we despise: “Jesus has compassion.”

For all we love: “Jesus has compassion.”

For all of them, every single one.....Jesus has compassion. Amen.