

PENTECOST 9
JEREMIAH 23:1-6
EPHESIANS 2:11-22
MARK 6:30-34, 53-56
JULY 21, 22, 2018

YEAR B

When God created the heavens and the earth God saved one day God called the day of rest. It was called Sabbath. The day of rest is a day like other days in that it was 24 hours. The sun rises and sets as on other days but God regarded the day of rest to be a special day. It is a day set apart. God gave this day of rest because God knew that we would burn ourselves out unless we had a day of Sabbath and rest. God also knew that we would not be able to do our work on during the rest of the week if we did not have a day of rest and leisure. The Sabbath was meant to be a day of spiritual renewal as well as renewal for our emotions and our bodies. In many ways we have ignored God's gift. Many of us fill the day of rest with many things. God meant this day to be a day of renewal but many fill the day so that there is no rest. Monday comes and we are more tired than we were on Friday. God meant that we would use this day as a day to grow in the Lord but to also find nurturing in our families. We come to church on the Sabbath and we worship the Lord. We gather as the people of God for the purpose of praising and honoring God. We all came together as the body of Christ in order to draw closer to God and to each other. We come together so that we come to a closer relationship with God. We hear that our sins are forgiven and our lives are restored and that we are children of God. We gather for spiritual renewal and to find rest.

Mark 6:30, 31 **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.**

Earlier in chapter 6 Jesus sent the apostles on their missionary journey. They were to take nothing but the clothes on their backs and were to rely on the people they went to for their sustenance. The apostles returned from their missionary journeys where they ministered to many. They came to Jesus and

told him about the work they had been doing. Our Lord invited them to come away with him to a quiet place. They were invited to go where Jesus often went when he needed and wanted time away. Jesus often went to a quiet place away from others to spend time with the Father and to find rest. You and I might call our time away a vacation or holiday. It is also the idea behind Sabbath. This is another function of the church. The church is that place we are invited to get away from the world. We are invited to a place where we find rest. The ideal of the Sabbath is that we seek this day of rest. Many of us come from the work of a busy week and need a time to get away. It does not matter if you are retired from the workforce or not. We all have busy and sometimes frustrating weeks. God built this special day into our week where we are able to rest. We might read this as a commandment from God but it is better to see this as an invitation and a gift from God. Come away to a deserted place. Come away to the church where you will find rest before heading back out into the world.

The church is made up of all kinds of people. In Paul's time there were Jews and Greeks. Paul refers to them as the circumcised and the uncircumcised. In our time there are Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians and United Methodists. There are some that call them evangelical and others Pentecostal. There was a time when we were divided based on where our ancestors came from. We were Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, Finns and Germans. We each gathered in our own place. I thank God that we have broken those barriers down. I thank God that we can come together in one sanctuary to worship the same God and share the same space. We all come together for the common purpose coming away for a time of rest and restoration in our lives. We come together as the family of God.

Mark 6:34 As 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.

Jesus says that those running after Jesus were like sheep without a shepherd. They were searching. It could be that some had been searching for years seeking peace and truth for their lives. Some had experienced health issues and were searching for a way to be cured. They wandered like many of us wander when we are searching for answers to the difficult questions about life. Into our searching comes the Lord Jesus Christ. He teaches us and shows us the right direction. Although our Lord does not force us to listen, he guides our ways so that we might find the right way. We come to the church so that the distractions of the world are set aside, even if only for a short time. We come to a place of blessing and a place of rest. We come together and we come to know Jesus Christ who is our friend but more than a friend. He is our Savior and our Lord. Jesus is our shepherd. It is interesting that Jesus and the disciples encountered the crowds but Jesus did not require the disciples to stop resting. We look at these verses and discover that Jesus taught them. Jesus taught the crowd and he ministered to the crowd. The twelve were to rest because the time would come that they would need to work again. In the verses we did not read today from Mark 6 we have the story of the feeding of 5000. The disciples would need to return to the work of ministering to those with Jesus in that place. Jesus taught them until the hour was late and the disciples had time to rest but then the rest was ended and they returned to their tasks of ministry.

Mark 6:53 When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat.

After the 5000 were fed Jesus sent the disciples away. They were to go to Bethsaida. They were to go ahead of him while Jesus prayed with the crowd and sent them away. It is interesting that they ended up in Gennesaret instead of Bethsaida. There is a physical reason and a spiritual reason for the boat ending up in Gennesaret. The physical reason is that there was a storm. The storm moved the disciples off their course. They did everything they knew to do when fighting a storm at sea but they still ended up off up in Gennesaret. The spiritual reason is that they needed to be in Gennesaret because there was

ministry to be done there. The Lord guides our ways to where we need to be. Sometimes we fight, scream and kick trying to stay on our plan because it was a good plan but God pushes us to where God needs us to be. Many of us have had the experience of not knowing why we are doing the things we are doing or going places we going. The Lord knows where we need to be and asks us to respond in faith to go where God is leading. The Lord gives us the day of rest but then pushes us back into our lives in mission for the Lord.

Mark 6:56 And 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.

Many came together to where Jesus was. Everyone that went to Jesus had a need and our Lord ministered to them. You and I are given a time to step away for rest and renewal but we cannot stay in that rest or on the Sabbath. We are sent back to the mission of our Lord. There are many things asked of us and our Lord equips each of us for the work we are called to. We respond by hearing the Lord and then doing all he asks of us. We have come to this place of rest and restoration. Allow the Lord to minister to you when and where you have needs. Allow the Lord to feed you with this spiritual food. Be sure to hear the word of the Lord and to be cared for. AMEN