

## Hayward United Methodist Church

Pastor Samuel's Message for Eighth Sunday After Pentecost, July 18, 2021

*"The Presence of God's Kingdom"*

Text: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

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

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. 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. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. 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.

When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. 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.

Prayer for Illumination (UMH 6)

Lord, open our hearts and minds by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that, as the Scriptures are read and your word proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

What are you expecting from Jesus? The people who followed Jesus wanted to be healed. Jesus had the power to heal people. People even touched the fringe of his cloak and they got healed. The same healing power is made available to us through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Jesus continues to work miracles in our midst. What all we need is faith. Faith in the power of Jesus makes us healed of all kinds of sickness.

Jesus's ministry is marked by teaching, preaching, and healing. He came to proclaim the Kingdom of God and set people free from all kinds of bondage. The very first message of Jesus according to Mark's Gospel is: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:15).

John the Baptist also preached the same message earlier. But he didn't do anything to demonstrate what he preached. Right after Jesus preached that message, he went to the Synagogue and healed a man who was possessed of a spirit. Jesus commanded the spirit to come out of this man and he was healed. People were surprised to see that even the spirits obeyed the command of Jesus. Jesus's fame spread throughout the region of Galilee. Since then a great crowd started following Jesus.

First, Jesus showed compassion. The disciples came and reported to Jesus about their mission. They preached the gospel and they healed people. They were exhausted. They needed some rest. Jesus also knew that he too needed rest as he was working overtime. So he said to the disciples, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while" (Mark 6:31). The disciples and Jesus got into a boat to a deserted place. But their rest was short lived. In fact they had some rest in the middle of the Sea of Galilee.

The crowd was already looking for Jesus. They knew that Jesus would come to the shore. They were running along the shore of the Sea of Galilee to see where the boat would land. Have you ever had a situation like that? You planned your vacation. And you were vacationing, hoping for good rest. But suddenly you got a phone call from your relatives or friends to attend to an emergency situation. It happens most of the time. It happened to Jesus and the disciples. They couldn't go to the deserted place. The crowd was already there waiting for Jesus. Jesus didn't run away from the crowd. He faced the crowd. He knew what the crowd was looking for.

When Jesus saw the crowd, he had compassion for them. He could feel their pain. He could feel their need. He could feel their suffering. He saw them as sheep without a shepherd. How will the sheep survive with a shepherd? Who will feed the sheep? Who will protect the sheep? Without a shepherd, the sheep will be scattered. Without a shepherd, the sheep will be lost or vulnerable to wild

animals. Without a shepherd, the sheep may not survive in the wilderness. The crowd needed a shepherd. The crowd needed a shepherd to survive.

Jesus could have left them alone. Jesus could have ignored the crowd. But Jesus determined to help the crowd. He wanted to be a shepherd to them. He wanted to lead them to green pasture. He wanted to protect them from danger. He wanted to satisfy their hunger. Do you feel like a sheep without a shepherd? Do you feel that no one is there to help you? Jesus cares for you. He has compassion for you. He comes to help you. He comes to give you eternal life.

Jesus knows what you are going through. He will provide all the means to sustain your life. Did not Jesus say, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). Psalm 23 speaks about God as the shepherd leading us to green pasture. The good shepherd goes before us to prepare the way. The good shepherd knows our names and calls us by name. The good shepherd will fulfill all our needs.

Second, Jesus heals many who were sick. The crowd already knew the healing power of Jesus. Jesus performed many miracles earlier. Many people testified that they received healing at the touch of Jesus. The crowd was bringing the sick to Jesus in the marketplaces. They were bringing the sick to the places where Jesus was preaching and teaching. Wherever Jesus was, the people brought the sick to be healed. They even begged him to touch the fringe of his cloak. Those who touched the fringe of his cloak were healed. They had faith in Jesus. Their faith in Jesus brought healing.

Two things were going on here. Jesus had the power to heal the sick. And people had faith in Jesus. Without faith it is impossible to receive healing. Many times Jesus refused to heal people because of their lack of faith. Everyone who had faith and had come to Jesus was healed. Later in Mark's Gospel Jesus would perform more miracles. Because people believed in the healing power of Jesus. Apart from the teaching of Jesus, the healing stories dominate the Gospels. Jesus healed people because he had compassion for them.

Faith in Jesus leads us to experience the healing we need. Do you want to be healed? Jesus has all the power to heal you of any sickness. The healing stories recorded in the Gospels gives us more hope to trust in Jesus. Healing does happen

today as it took place back then. When we come to Jesus in prayer, Jesus does answer our prayer. He does heal us. Because Jesus comes to us as a good shepherd. He wants to bless us. He wants to bless us.

Jesus gave his life for us on the cross so that we might be healed. The prophet Isaiah spoke about the suffering servant who took on himself our infirmities. The suffering servant alluded to the suffering of Christ. The prophet says, "Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed." (Isaiah 53:4-5). Christ suffered for us so that we might receive healing.

What are you looking for in Jesus Christ? Are you exhausted? Jesus invites you to come and rest. He is there to lead you as a shepherd. Are you looking for healing? Jesus has the power to heal. What all you need is faith in Jesus. You will experience the healing power of Jesus.

God Bless.

Pastor Samuel

Let's say the Benediction together:  
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all. Amen.