

Mark 6:30-34 The Good Shepherd Feeds His Sheep! Pentecost 9 July 22, 23 2018

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Grace and peace are yours from God our Father and from our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Amen
God's Word is from Mark 6:30-34

This is Your Word heavenly Father. Help us to trust in Your Son as He feeds us! Your Word is truth! Amen.

Dear Friends, in Christ, our Good Shepherd,

Summer is in full swing with the warmer weather and thunder storms, but also with members traveling. Perhaps some of you have been traveling this summer or will be in the near future! I pray your travels are restful and help you to recharge before going back to work or school. Whether summer or any other time, God wants us to be refreshed as we take time in His Word. There He offers us just what we need, balancing the demands of His law with the forgiveness of sins in the Gospel. The Bible, like in Psalm 23, pictures such God's refreshing like when a shepherd takes his sheep to feed in a new pasture in the hills. So we see Jesus,

The Good Shepherd Feeds His Sheep!

First, we see Jesus' compassion! Jesus was concerned for His own disciples. They had returned from the mission trip to the villages of Galilee that we heard about last week. Their work must have a great effect because more people than ever came seeking Jesus. But, Jesus had compassion for his disciples who were tired and hardly had a chance to eat. So, he had them get into a boat and travel across the lake to a "*quiet*" and "*solitary place.*" (v. 31-32). Many people were so desperate to see Jesus, and, seeing which way his boat was heading, they traveled by foot in the same direction.

Our verse states, *When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them*" (v.34). The word for compassion in the original language means feeling sorry for someone deep inside. Your whole inside is moved at the sight of people in need. The Matthew, Mark, and Luke use this word about Jesus several times. It is often tied to physical and spiritual problems. Sometimes it was people ill or demon possessed. Two times it was people who were hungry and he proceeded to feed 5,000 and at a later time another 4,000. What made Jesus so deeply concerned was that the people were "*like sheep without a shepherd.*" (v.34). Sheep without a shepherd can eat the wrong food. They can get lost. They can be easily harmed by predators. Without someone to guard them, the sheep would die.

Because so many of these people had not been taught the truth about the coming Savior, they were not ready to accept Jesus by faith. Many in the large crowd for whom He had compassion only wanted His physical gifts without the greater spiritual gifts. But, Jesus met the people where they were at, even at a time when he and his disciples needed rest.

How far does our compassion extend to people? We hear about tornado or hurricane victims. Last year there was a great outpouring of gifts to help people of our fellow Lutherans in some island countries and in our states of Texas and Florida. But, do we have as great a concern for people who don't know the truth? These people are burdened by their sins or are guilt-ridden without the news of Christ's forgiveness. How often are we praying and how much are we supporting work like the disciples did so that more people can receive physical nourishment and spiritual nourishment from God's Word?

Jesus had compassion for us when He gave His life, how are we extending his compassion to other people, even our fellow believers? During the time of the kings in Israel, Elisha was the prophet. An enemy sent an army to kill him since he predicted where the enemy soldiers were going to attack. God blinded the enemy army and Elisha led them right into the strong-hold of Israel. Their army could have been destroyed. But Elisha had compassion on them, had them fed and set free. They never fought against Israel again. They had learned about the true God and had a respect for Him and for prophets of His Word. Only God knows what kind of difference He can make through us as we show compassion to people. It could change their lives forever!

The Bible pictures people without Christ like the 1 lost sheep in 100. Jesus described how a good shepherd will go out to find that one lost sheep. Each of us was that sheep. Jesus searched for us and found us when we were spiritually lost. Jesus doesn't want any to be lost or to be condemned on Judgment Day.

Second, the Good Shepherd has the solution. In our verses it states that Jesus *"began to teach them many things."* (v.34). The Bible also states that He healed many who were sick (Matthew 9:14) and that He taught them about the Kingdom of God. (Luke 9:11). Jesus often spoke from the Old Testament. He could have quoted Micah, which states, *"I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel. I will bring them together like sheep in a pen, like a flock in its pasture; the place will throng with people."* (Micah 2:12) Jesus work as a prophet was to gather people together around his Word. Through His teaching they would learn that they couldn't earn eternal life with money or good works. They needed God's solution. Jesus calling Himself the Good Shepherd in John 15 describing how he would lay down His life to save His friends. With Jesus as Good Shepherd we can put ourselves into Psalm 23: *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters."* (v.1-2). When Jesus feeds us with His Word we can be refreshed and find contentment now, but later it will be forever when we are with Jesus in heaven. We will no longer need Jesus' compassion, for we will have everything we spiritually and physically need!

We know that this is true because Jesus died to conquer death and the power of sin which we couldn't stop on our own. Then He rose from death to be our eternal Good Shepherd. We are well supplied by Jesus, even if we can't always see it or feel it. Our sins are completely forgiven. We are guaranteed a home in heaven as we trust in Jesus alone to save us.

Jesus promised, *"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life..."* (John 10:27-28). We have a Good Shepherd who loved us so much He died in our place to make an eternal place for us in heaven! Jesus also said, *"Because I live, you also shall live. (John 11:21)* God is concerned about our bodies. He valued them enough to have His Son rise from death. This assures us that at God's time, the world will end but we will live forever with new resurrected bodies made new. This is the good news for hungry and lost sheep (people) who are going to die in their sins unless Jesus reaches them through His Word. All people in this world go through adversities, tragedies, and perplexities. But, as Christians we have a Good Shepherd who promised, *"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned."* (Isaiah 43:1-2)

Motivated by God's promises, we believe in Jesus! And by faith we will follow Christ's example and have compassion for all people. We want to share the news of Jesus' forgiveness and we will show God's love as He has shown it us. We want all to gladly receive God's promise, *"When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away."* (1 Peter 5:4) With Christ as our Savior, *we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever!"* (Psalm 23:6) Amen.