



**Introduction**

*Mark's gospel makes clear how great is the press of the crowd, with its countless needs to be met, on Jesus and his disciples. Yet in today's gospel Jesus advises his disciples to get away and rest, to take care of themselves. Sometimes we think that when others are in great need we shouldn't think of ourselves at all; but Jesus also honors the caregivers' need. We are sent from Christ's table to care for others and for ourselves.*

**Confession and Forgiveness**

In the name of the Father, and of the ✙ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone.

Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and one another.

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.**

**We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

**We have not loved you with our whole heart;**

**we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**

**For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.**

**Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,**

**so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved.

In the name of ✙ Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.

Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen**

**Opening Hymn ELW # 883 / LBW # 245** *All People That on Earth Do Dwell*

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

## Prayer of the Day

O God, powerful and compassionate, you shepherd your people, faithfully feeding and protecting us. Heal each of us, and make us a whole people, that we may embody the justice and peace of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## First Reading: Jeremiah 23:1-6

*Jeremiah prophesied before the exile in 587 BCE. In this passage, he uses the metaphor of a shepherd to describe the bad kings who have scattered the “flock” of Israel. God promises to gather the flock and to raise up a new king from David’s line to save Israel and Judah.*

*Read the complete text [here](#).*

## Psalm: Psalm 23

<sup>1</sup>The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

<sup>2</sup>**The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures  
and leads me beside still waters.**

<sup>3</sup>You restore my soul, O LORD,  
and guide me along right pathways for your name’s sake.

<sup>4</sup>**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I shall fear no evil; for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

<sup>6</sup>**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

## Second Reading: Ephesians 2:11-22

*The author of this letter reminds his audience that originally they were not part of God’s chosen people. Through Jesus’ death, however, they are included in God’s household of faith, whose cornerstone is Jesus Christ.*

*Read the complete text [here](#).*

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

*When Jesus sends his disciples out to teach and heal, they minister among large numbers of people. Their work is motivated by Christ’s desire to be among those in need.*

*Read the complete text [here](#).*

## Reflection on the Text

There is a glaring problem with today's gospel text. Like a huge donut, it has an enormous hole in the middle. There are nearly twenty verses of scripture missing. And that missing portion contains two of the most important, most familiar, miracle stories: the stories of Jesus feeding the 5,000 AND the calming of the storm!

But fear not – we will circle back and read the accounts of those miracles next week – in the first of several texts from John's gospel that we will read in the next several weeks. If you want to read ahead, simply open up your bible and read John, chapter 6 this week!

If we read the text we have been given carefully, we notice some of the challenges that Jesus and his disciples faced:

While the apostles were excited about telling Jesus what they had experienced when he sent them out a short time before, two by two, to preach repentance and to cast out demons and heal the sick, they were tired and surrounded by so many people that they could not even find time to eat!

Jesus wanted them to come to a quiet place with him and rest. But they could not even escape by boat to find a quiet place to rest, because the crowd followed them along the shore. Whether the disciples noticed it or not, Jesus also had compassion for the crowds that followed them, so he took time to teach them.

After we skip past the hole in the text that I mentioned, Mark's account picks back up with Jesus and the disciples coming back to shore, in a different place, quickly being surrounded by yet another crowd of people. These are bringing people to him to be healed.

Our need for rest is real; and so is our need to simply slow down and talk with God about the things we have seen and done for the sake of others in Jesus' name. Perhaps another time soon I will spend more time preaching on our need for prayer and for Sabbath rest, but for now I want to focus on Jesus' response to the needs of those in the crowd that surrounded him.

The Greek word used here is translated mildly as compassion. Mark describes Jesus' response to the needs that he saw as "gut-wrenching compassion."

First, Jesus realized that they were like "sheep without a shepherd" which is a common Old Testament description of God's people when their leaders – prophets, priests, or kings – had completely abandoned the people.

We read in today's first lesson the prophet Jeremiah's harsh words for the harm done to the people by evil kings, which led to their exile from the Promised Land. At the same time, Jeremiah declared the Lord's promise of the Messiah who would save all the people.

And in the familiar words of the 23rd Psalm we read a description of life under the care of the Lord, the true shepherd. That stands in sharp contrast to the life the people of Jesus' time were experiencing under Herod, who had just beheaded God's most recent prophet, John the Baptist, for calling the people to repentance.

Jesus steps into the crowds with all of this on his mind. The history; the promise; and the recent death of his cousin John. He is wrenched by compassion for the people who had been misled and abandoned by Herod, who needed the care that only God could provide.

And so, in spite of the very real, very human need for rest, he led his disciples into the crowds, first to teach, and then to heal those who were brought to him. We often lift our friends and loved ones before God in prayer during difficult times.

Imagine the desperation and faith it takes to physically carry a sick loved one on a mat to lay them where Jesus might pass by, hoping that they could be healed – like that woman with a hemorrhage we read about a few weeks ago – by simply touching the fringe on his cloak.

Wherever Jesus went, Mark tells us, people who simply touched his cloak were healed. Imagine how their lives were changed when that happened! They had encountered the Messiah with faith and their prayers were answered.

The text, of course, stops there. We can be left wondering what those miracles mean for us. After all, who among us has not prayed for healing for ourselves or a loved one, only to have the illness progress or to lose that loved one to death?

We know that life can be prolonged by medical care – and by God's miraculous intervention – but that death still comes for all of us eventually. The good news is not that our life is made easy or even extended by God's miracles of healing, but that God has promised to be with us every day, every hour, every step of our journey through this world.

In the final words of the 23rd psalm, goodness and mercy – the loving presence of God – will follow us all the days of our lives and we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Those are the words of promise that we can cling to; the Good News that we recall whenever we gather.

The beloved Son of God, Jesus Christ, has lived among us to show of the love of the Father; and has promised that he goes ahead of us to prepare a place for us with him in eternity. Whatever we struggle with now, from lack of rest, pain and suffering, grief, or even our own inevitable death; in faith and hope, we trust in the promise that those will all be placed behind us and that we will live in the presence of the Living God forever.  
Amen

**Hymn of the Day ELW # 611 / LBW # 497      *I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say***

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

## Apostles' Creed

*We profess our faith with the whole church in all times and places:*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## Prayers of Intercession

Rooted in Christ and sustained by the Spirit, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

*A brief silence.*

Tend your church, O God. Encourage bishops, pastors, deacons, and vicars in their proclamation of the gospel. Raise up new leaders and encourage those pursuing a call to ministry. Embolden all the baptized to embody your love and justice.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Restore your creation, O God. Sustain croplands and pastures and safeguard all farm animals and livestock. Preserve lakes, rivers, and streams that offer refreshment. Revive lands recovering from natural disasters and protect coastlands threatened by rising oceans. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Reconcile the nations, O God. Break down the dividing walls that make us strangers to one another and unite us as one human family. Equip leaders to deal wisely with conflict and guide diplomats who seek peaceful solutions. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Heal your people, O God. Look with compassion on immigrants, exiles, and all who are afraid or feel lost. Give rest to those who are weary, comfort to those who are grieving, and recovery to those who are ill especially those we name now.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Nourish this congregation, O God. Prepare a table where we receive food for our hungry spirits. Renew our commitment to provide for one another and revitalize our ministries of feeding and nurturing hungry neighbors.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

You lead us home, O God. We give thanks for all who have died, now citizens with the saints. As you have received them into your heavenly home, so welcome all of us to dwell in your house forever. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We lift these and all our prayers to you, O God, confident in the promise of your saving love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

**Closing Hymn ELW # 624 / LBW # 341**

*Jesus, Still Lead On*

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

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Today's reflection was written by Pastor Ruth Ann Sipe.