

Sermon Mark 6 30 44 8<sup>th</sup> S af Pent S B

Sermon: 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Text: Mark 6:30-44 (v. 34)

Theme; Jesus' Compassion

Goal: Jesus' compassion takes care of our spiritual and of our physical needs.

Dear Friends,

Introduction: The image of the shepherd and the flock to portray the church is a well known picture and is common both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. Psalm 23 is the climax of this image, accomplished by John 10, where Jesus presents Himself as the Good Shepherd who gives His life on behalf of His sheep.

But we have the reverse of this picture as well: The people like sheep without a shepherd, abandoned to their own lot. This is the situation described in our text. Jesus became filled with compassion towards them and took care of them, nurturing their spiritual needs and their physical needs as well.

*I – Jesus sees (notices) the scattered sheep*

You are aware of the situation of the established church at the time of Jesus: The Pharisee, the Sadducee and the Teachers of the Law, isolated in their formalism and high positions, didn't care about the people. When John the Baptist came preaching repentance and faith, and after him, when Jesus came, they didn't accept either of them. By this lack of care, and frustration, many people were "like sheep without a shepherd", looking for some help, looking for some hope.

God had warned the people and the church through the prophets of the OT about the situation of the people and the lack of

care of the bad shepherds. The reading of Jeremiah 23:1 said: “Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture, declare the Lord!” - Ezekiel 34 says: “The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? ... but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.”

This was still the situation found by Jesus in our text.

Whereas Jesus wanted to rest for a while with His disciples, who had just come back from a missionary trip around Galilee, the people didn't give Him rest. While He was crossing the lake in a boat, people ran around the lake and reached the opposite side even before the boat had reached the shore. When Jesus landed, He saw a large crowd, - more than 5000! and had compassion on them, “because they were like sheep without a shepherd”.

## *II – Jesus takes care of the spiritual needs of His sheep*

First of all, Jesus took care of the spiritual needs of the people. “He began teaching them many things”, as He was used to doing it . From other texts we know that Jesus always preached repentance, faith and the Kingdom of God. This is the core of the church's message. For the repentant and believers, there is forgiveness. The kingdom of God is not just a hope, but it is a reality for the Christians here and now. Jesus is at the same time the King and the Good Shepherd, who gave His life on the cross for His sheep. His glorious resurrection assures us life, eternal life!

This compassion of Jesus as the Good Shepherd accomplished the promise of God through the prophet Ezekiel (34:1ff): “For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered... I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel...I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, ... I will shepherd the flock with justice...I will save my flock,... I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the LORD have spoken. ‘I will make a covenant of peace with them... I will make them and the places surrounding my hill a blessing. I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing.’”

The “servant David” mentioned in this prophecy is Jesus, the Son of David.

### *III – Jesus takes care of the physical needs of His sheep*

But Jesus doesn't take care of the spiritual needs only. He looks after the physical needs as well. The miracle of the Multiplication of Bread and Fish shows Jesus' concern about our daily bread.

Jesus didn't perform the miracle at once. He first challenged His disciples: “You give them something to eat!” The disciples became nervous and upset with this challenge. “It's too expensive to feed all these people... That would take eight months of a man's wages. Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give them to eat?”

“It's too expensive” is our excuse as well when Jesus asks us to feed the needy. Is this really a good excuse for not helping the needy? We have enough for ourselves, thanks God. The disciples had only five loaves and two fish. But when they gave it to be shared with the multitude, the miracle happened. Jesus can multiply what we have when we share it with the hungry and needy. Don't forget to put aside your food and clothes donation for Luther's Loot every month. Jesus still has compassion on the needy, and He says to us as well: “You give them something to eat.”

Jesus' concern for our daily needs and His compassion are shown in the Lord's Prayer. Among several spiritual petitions, one petition focuses just on the daily bread. And Luther explains what it means: not just bread, but *“Everything that belongs to the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, field, cattle, money, goods, a pious spouse, pious children, pious servants, pious and faithful magistrates, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.”*

Conclusion: Jesus still has compassion on His flock. He nourishes us with His Gospel and the Sacrament. He gathers us in the fellowship of the church around His altar. He challenges us to share what we have with the needy on His behalf. Luther confesses at the First Article of the Creed: *“Every day God abundantly provides everything I need to nourish this body and life. God protects me against all danger, shields and defends me from all evil. God does all this because of pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, not because I've earned it or deserved it. For all of this, I must thank, praise, serve, and obey God. Yes, this is true!”* Amen.

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle

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