

Joining in with Jesus
Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

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If you had your bibles open for the gospel reading, you will notice that we left out many verses containing some great stories like the feeding of the 5000 and Jesus walking on water. Those stories will come at other times for example next week we will hear the feeding of the five thousand from the gospel of John. Instead we have what comes before and after. Before, the disciples come and tell Jesus all they have done and taught and Jesus tries to take them away to rest since there is so much coming and going that they cannot even eat. But the crowds find them and Jesus has compassion on them and teaches them many things. After, we hear how the crowds seek Jesus out bringing the sick to him. Wherever Jesus went, they brought the sick to him – begging to let them touch even the fringe of his garment.

While our gospel lacks the vividness of the feeding of the five thousand and Jesus walking on water, we learn a lot about Jesus in these verses. We see how great his compassion is for the people who long for him. Even though he knows the disciples need to get away, when he sees the crowd and their need, he stays to teach the crowd. Later we hear about the sick that are being brought to Jesus and how that even touching the fringe of his cloak would heal them. Can you imagine the chaos this causes? Even so Jesus heals them and is there for them. This is the incredible compassion, mercy and love Jesus has for his people.

I wonder how the disciples felt about all this – about having their quiet time taken away because of the insistence of the crowds to be with Jesus. How do they feel about the sick that constantly seemed to be present? We don't hear them complaining this time, but they have surely complained on other occasions. Think about one of the stories that was left out - the feeding of the five thousand when the disciples want to send away the people when Jesus wants to feed them. And then can you imagine the irritation of those trying to do business in the marketplace when Jesus showed up. All of a sudden all these sick people showed up which I am sure was bad for all the trading that was going on.

And so I come to this gospel reading a little scared. Do I have to have that same boundless compassion for all in need? Can I have that boundless compassion? Suppose my ministry degenerates into nothing but complaining and irritation. And here is where I and many others get into trouble. We forget we are not Jesus. We forget we are not God. We do have to have compassion, but we must also remember that Jesus is still with us and is at work among us. Jesus is still doing the heavy lifting.

This is very much related to the work our Way of St. Paul team is doing which is focusing on helping our congregation grow in faith. The team has been watching and discussing some videos by Greg Finke. The main theme of these videos is that God has a mission and we are invited to join in as opposed to us having a mission that we are doing for God where we do it all. I think the latter is where many of us go when we hear about Jesus' work. We think we have to be Jesus especially since he is not here in the

flesh. We forget that Jesus is still working among us and that all we have to do is to pay attention to how he is working and see how we can join in. For me, this is a huge relief, because I don't have to be the one to work non-stop and never take a break because the people are in need. I can trust that Jesus is working and see how I can show up.

Here is a clip of one of the videos which addresses this. As you will hear in the video, **being part of Jesus' mission is about seeking, recognizing and responding** to what Jesus is already doing in the lives of people around us.

Video -

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1LB2TYBMcpGogKt1CD2E9NF_mOYaW8s12 to watch.

Jesus is still working in all of our lives. Jesus has great compassion and mercy for all of us. He did 2000 years ago as we heard in our gospel and he does now. We do not have to be Jesus. However, there is still work for us to do. We can seek and recognize what Jesus is doing with the people around us and see how we are being invited to participate. Remember Jesus is doing the heavy lifting. Jesus is among us. We just have to join in and be part of spreading that amazing compassion that Jesus is bringing to the world.