

July 18, 2021

Texts: Psalm 63: 1-8; Mark 6: 30-34, 53-56

Title: “Hungering for Some Time Off?”

Do any of you ever have a hard time taking a vacation? Most of us want one now and then, but, are you able to enjoy it? I would guess that some of you have trouble letting go of work and other cares when you go on vacation.

It can be a challenge to take full advantage of time off for rest and relaxation, especially when there are demands and needs before you such as when Jesus and his disciples wanted to get away. They’d just returned from their first solo mission, which was successful, and they had much to share about their experiences. Jesus could tell that they were worn out and that they needed some time away so he said, *“Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest for a while”* (v31). So they headed off for this time away from the crowds.

But this was one vacation that just wasn’t going to happen. The word spread so quickly that Jesus and his disciples were coming on the boat that by the time they got off there was already a crowd waiting.

Now Jesus and his disciples weren’t seeking the limelight at this time, but Jesus was attracting a lot of attention anyway. So they just weren’t able to get away as they had planned. But Jesus wasn’t upset about it. He stayed there with the crowd and taught them and healed them. Let’s look at a few important aspects of this story.

First, **look at the crowd’s “hunger.”** There was something about Jesus that made people want to come to him. I would call it a “spiritual hunger” What is a

“spiritual hunger?” Perhaps it comes to those who feel that they’re stumbling through life, obviously looking for a road to wholeness and happiness— but going down the wrong road, a road without God. Jesus meets those needs. He still meets them today.

Most of you know of QB Tom Brady, who now has seven Super Bowl championships. Back in 2005, after the third one, he sat down for an interview with *60 Minutes*. In the course of the interview, Brady said, “There’s times where I’m not the person that I want to be. Why do I have three Super Bowl rings, and still think there’s something greater out there for me? I mean this can’t be what it’s all cracked up to be. I mean I’ve done it. I’m 27. And what else is there for me?” The interviewer asked, “What’s the answer?” Brady responded, “I wish I knew. I wish I knew.”

Ever have the feeling that there’s more to life than what you’ve experienced so far? That maybe, God is calling to something of a deeper meaning and purpose? My message today is that Jesus Christ, the living Christ, will fill this need just as he did for the crowds in Mark’s gospel chapter six.

It’s also important to note that **Jesus responded to the crowd with compassion**. When he looked at the people crowding around him, he viewed them as a “pain in the butt” but as “sheep without a shepherd.” In John’s gospel Jesus proclaimed, “I am the good shepherd.” You may remember the story he told about a shepherd who was tending a large flock of sheep. But despite that, if one sheep goes missing, the shepherd would search until it was found. Why, because

he loved each one and each one was worth saving.

And I want to leave you with this thought today: that Jesus alone has the power to satisfy our hungry hearts. We end our Bible passage the same way we began it. After a day of ministering to people, (the passage that became known as the “feeding of the five thousand”) Jesus and the disciples still hoped to get away. So that night they again got on the boat and went across the lake. But again, as soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized them and flocked to them. People came from all over to see Jesus. Sick people were set out in the streets so that Jesus would heal them. And Jesus did heal them. No matter how much he needed a vacation, if there were people who needed his healing, he was there for them, both spiritually and physically, to minister to their needs.

And this my point for the day: ***you can't wear Jesus down with your problems!*** He knows what's going on. He sees our hunger. He has compassion. Reach out to him. Do it every day. He will respond.

And if we know this and if we've experienced this truth, then we're called to join him in the ministry of caring for the needs of others. Think about the people you come in contact with regularly. What are they hungry for? How are they reaching to fill this hunger in their lives? Are you resisting perhaps how God might wish to use you to meet their needs?

Be aware! Let's be aware for what God may be saying to us, impressing upon our hearts, interrupting our vacation, so to speak...and offering **us** not only healing and hope, but through us, offering it to many who are struggling today.