

8TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY PROPER 11

07/22/18

Mount Calvary, West View

JEREMIAH 23: 1-6, EPHESIANS 2: 11-22, MARK 6: 30-44

HYMNS: LORD JESUS CHRIST, BE PRESENT NOW LSB #902,

THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION LSB #644,

MY HOPE IS BUILT ON NOTHING LESS LSB #575,

I'M BUT A STRANGER HERE, HEAVEN IS MY HOME LSB #748

Theme: The Vision of this World

+ Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN +

Our Text is a continuation of St. Mark's Gospel, the 6th Chapter:

When He went ashore He saw a great crowd, and He had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a Shepherd. And He began to teach them many things

How do you see this world? Is this question simple, and the answer complex? Is the question complex, and the answer simple? Is the question as complex as the answer, or is it as simple as the answer? Indeed, this question can be all of these depending upon how one poses the question and phrases the answer. At first, I was going to tackle every angle of nuance this question and answer could possibly provide, and then I found the sermon was becoming quite lengthy. So instead, I will tell you what I find the question and answer to be in Jesus terms ó Simple and simple.

You see, when Jesus first got the response from the twelve disciples, who had two weeks previously been sent out two by two to preach the good news, cast out demons, and anointed the sick with oil and heal them, He had them come away to a quiet spot, so that they could reflect on the ministry they were doing. They had a real joy in preaching and teaching, what we would term today as "Being on fire for the Lord!" Even the very demons, the most powerful of the powerful, were submitting to their ministry! And well they should, for the Word of the Lord is sharper than any double-edged sword, and even the prince of demons must submit to the Word preached, as Martin Luther once penned, "One Little Word can fell him."

I think perhaps this is the problem today: may perceive that there is no joy or very little in the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. Not me. I love every opportunity to tell someone about Jesus; about the theology of the cross; about the wonderful comfort to know that Jesus has guided my life and will guide it further because He has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in this one true faith. Not me only, but the entire Christian Church on earth does He keep in the One True Faith. When you see how God has guided your life, and more importantly your faith, there is great joy, and there is a desire to share that faith with others.

This is the problem in the Old Testament reading. The "shepherds" that were supposed to be watching over the sheep of God's pasture were not doing their job. What was their job? God Himself declares, "*You have scattered My flock and have driven*

*them away, and you have not attended to them.*ö Their job was to attend to the needs of the sheep, to gather them together to be under the protected wing of the Church. To preach the Word with power and lead by example in taking care of the needs of others, especially when offering the forgiveness of sins. When the contrite come confessing their sins, it is not the purpose of the church to impose still more burden upon the downtrodden. Instead we are to lift up, forgive, and rejoice in the forgiveness that Almighty God offers freely and without cost. Instead they had scattered rather than gathered; they have ignored them rather than attend to them. Because of this, God has a statement to them, *öBehold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD.*ö That does not sound like a happy God.

However, He is happy to take care of His sheep. As He so declared, *öI will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the LORD. Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and He shall reign as King and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely.*ö When will God raise up this righteous branch? Easy. When the One Who comes with the Great Name, *öThe LORD is our righteousness.*ö

This is the one we see before us in the meditation today. Jesus, our Righteousness, looks upon His sheep and sees that very little has changed since Jeremiah, for the people are still scattered by the inattentiveness of the religious leaders, and helpless to save themselves. They truly are like sheep without a Shepherd. So, the time has come for the disciples to take what they have learned in their ministry and make it more personal. Before they went out two by two, the twelve of them had gone town to town witnessing about the kingdom which has come to them. They let the people know that there is a prophet among them, Jesus of Nazareth, who has come to earth born of a virgin, living the sinless life for the salvation of His people. To those that heard them they were happy to give them the ministry; to those that did not listen, they were happy to shake the dust off their feet. After all, why waste time with the sinners that refuse to repent? There is a ministry that needs to be done, and the people that believe should be rewarded.

But what of the unbelievers, and the people that treat you with disdain? How is one to deal with them? Jesus shows us. We are to treat them as God has treated us: as harassed and helpless. Like sheep without a shepherd. Here the people were gathered because they heard of this great rabbi. There were over 5 thousand people gathered. Did they all believe and trust in what Jesus was saying? Most likely not, and yet, Jesus told the disciples, "You give them something to eat." The disciples complained, "***This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.***" We should not have to deal with this

rabble, especially if they are not believing in our message! But Jesus instructed them, ***“You give them something to eat.”*** They complained all the more, ***“Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?”*** And Jesus directed them to go to the Government storehouses and get their food stampsí . No, wait. Jesus asked them, ***“How many loaves do you have? Go and see.”*** What? What does Jesus mean go and see? We have nothing to give them! But in looking about them, says John, \ they found a boy. ***And when they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.”*** Fish! Even more than they thought! ***Then He commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. So, they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. And taking the five loaves and the two fish He looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And He divided the two fish among them all. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men,*** not including women or children. All were satisfied, because God leaves no one wanting. He promises as much in Psalm 23.

The message here is that you and I have the means to take care of the harassed and helpless, we do not need to look elsewhere. We have the Word of God, we have His blessings, and we have the faith. Jesus has taken care of every sin upon the cross of Calvary and with His death, destroyed sin and its guilt. With His resurrection, He has proven the Sacrifice is acceptable to the Father, and we have His body and blood to keep

us in this one true faith until He comes again. No one needs to be harassed and helpless, for Jesus has gone to the cross and saved all men, women, and children from ourselves. As I opened this sermon asking for the view of this world, I said it was simple. The world is separated from Christ, not unlike you and I were before our reception into the kingdom through our Baptism. ***Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world*** because sin made us harassed and helpless; sheep without a shepherd. And the answer to the Question is simple as well for ***in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.*** God is no longer our enemy, but our very Life. ***And He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the Chief cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together,***

grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. This means there is not one single person you can meet that does not deserve your comfort, peace, help and forgiveness, for Jesus saves all.

It is a simple vision that this world is in need of a Shepherd, and it is a simple answer that the world needs Jesus, and it is also simply put that the world needs you to tell it about the salvation and forgiveness found at the cross for their sins. I pray that all our doings and life do show Christ and His love that indeed some may be saved. In our Triune God's Name we pray. **AMEN.**

+ AND NOW MAY THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASSES ALL
UNDERSTANDING KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN UNION WITH
CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD. AMEN+

**There are only two days on my calendar...today and the day of
judgment**