

## “It’s Time for...?” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Pentecost 9 – July 21, 2024

- I. **Mark 6:30-44** previously read
- II. **Have you ever made big plans that didn’t work out at all?**
  - a. How disappointing is it when everything you plan gets messed up or changed, and your expectations are crushed?
  - b. Throughout the years, I can’t count the times that our plans and designs were changed at the last minute.
    - i. I remember when Michele was going to visit our kids... and a snow and ice storm kept her from going for several days.
    - ii. A couple of months ago, I officiated the marriage of Jim and Barb Conway, and the plan was an outdoor wedding... but it rained so hard we had to move it inside and set up tents for the meal.
    - iii. A few weeks ago, I was visiting with a member who needed a heart procedure, and she got to the hospital on the morning of the surgery, got in the gown and was ready... when the staff came in and said the procedure was canceled and she could go home.
    - iv. No matter what our plans are, they might be changed with little or no notice...
- III. **Today in our Gospel lesson**, Jesus tells His disciples it’s a time for... rest.
  - a. John the Baptist had just been killed by Herod, and Jesus’ followers had returned from a very eventful time of spreading the Good News and healing people.
  - b. Jesus was ready to get away for a little while, recharge and spend time with His disciples alone.
  - c. It’s difficult to understand how much strain that Jesus experienced – but everywhere He went He was needed...or the target of the religious leaders.
  - d. So, the group gets into a boat to find a “desolate” place somewhere near the Sea of Galilee... except people noticed the direction Jesus went, and the word got out to all the towns and villages – so a huge crowd was there to greet Him when He got to the place He planned to rest.
    - i. Can you imagine being run ragged, grieving the loss of your relative, and being so busy you can’t even eat?
      1. I would say that Jesus and everyone with Him were ready for a little rest and relaxation... and their plans were bouncing around in their heads – maybe sitting in a hammock between two palm trees sipping out of a coconut?
      2. None of those plans really mattered in the end, because as they approached the shore, a massive crowd was gathered.
        - a. It says 5000 men... but with women and children, it could have been 15,000 people!
        - b. How’s that for a little rest and relaxation?

- e. The beauty of this passage comes when Jesus looks out on the crowd and knows that they are desperately in need of guidance and leadership in God's word and will for them – so Jesus felt deeply moved... He had compassion on them... (vs 34)
    - i. It's not like Jesus couldn't have kept going to another desolate place – but He knew that the people who were supposed to be shepherding these folks were not... and they were wandering like sheep without a shepherd.
  - f. For Jesus and His disciples, a time for rest became a time for... teaching and serving.
  - g. The only trouble was that everyone had hiked so far out of the way, that there was no time to get back to town and eat food – let alone the fact that no town could support that kind of crowd!
    - i. Can you imagine 15,000 people descending upon a little town?
    - ii. Unfortunately, no one had created a protein bar for everyone to put in their coolers so they could make it to the next meal.
  - h. So, the disciples have an idea... tell them to get out of here and try to make it home before they have a huge, hangry crowd on their hands.
    - i. But Jesus replies, "You all give them something to eat." (vs 37)
    - ii. Now, for the disciples, it's a time for... trust.
    - iii. The loaves and fishes were multiplied to feed thousands of people – something in today's money that might cost about \$25,000.
      - 1. Then, after all had eaten and were satisfied, they had a bunch of leftovers... 12 basketfuls to be exact.
  - i. Jesus began with the Word of God to fill the people and give them comfort that their Good Shepherd was speaking to them... and then He miraculously fed them with food for their bodily needs.
    - i. Jesus is the Good Shepherd of mind, body, and spirit.
- IV. **If Jesus sticks to His plan of rest**, what kind of opportunity is missed?
- a. A sudden change of plans is never our favorite thing to deal with, and sometimes this includes loss, heartache, suffering, and struggles.
    - i. Not everything is as simple as a rainy day or a canceled flight... sometimes we have to deal with major issues that throw our lives into turmoil – and we might say to ourselves... "this is not how I planned to live... this is not at all what I expected."
    - ii. Yet, at some point later, we look back on what took place – that difficult change of plans – and we see how God had a part in bringing us along through it all.
      - 1. Sometimes we even see the ways that God intervened with a miracle or some type of intervention that brings us to a new level of trust and love for Him.
  - b. You see, the Lord looks out upon you with compassion, knowing you need His support and help... and so He not only gives of Himself in the Word

and Lord's Supper, but He provides you with an interim shepherd... your pastor.

- i. In the midst of life's disappointments and unexpected changes, you have a person in your life who is there to support you, teach you the Word, give you the Lord's Supper and Baptism, and share the ups and downs that always come.
  - ii. I'm not a shepherd because I think it's a good job, or a good career choice... but I'm a shepherd because God called me through you, as Ascension extended me a call many years ago by the direction of the Holy Spirit.
  - iii. My call is to be faithful to the Lord in caring for you with His good gifts, even in the struggles.
- c. Jesus left this gift for all of us to have a shepherd when He ascended into heaven because He is loving and compassionate.

V. **Jesus never wants us to feel lost or wandering.**

- a. There are so many references to sheep wandering, or predators seeking to destroy them, or hired hands who don't care about what happens to them.
- b. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus is the only one who can guide us through the valley of the shadow of death without fear of evil. (Psalm 23:4)
- c. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus laid down His life so that all may have forgiveness and salvation.
  - i. Nothing could stand in the way of Jesus going all the way to Calvary and shedding His blood on the cross meant for us.
  - ii. As our Good Shepherd, Jesus took the evil and the sin that causes so much chaos and trouble in our lives and crushed them.
    1. Jesus won the battle over sin – because it cannot separate us from God anymore...
      - a. He won the battle over death – because it cannot truly end our lives as we have an eternal life in heaven...
      - b. And He won the battle over satan – because nothing satan does can cause you real harm... we have a Good Shepherd that keeps Him from taking us away forever.
- d. The Good News is that we have a Good Shepherd who wants to love and guide us through all of life's ups and downs.
- e. The challenge for us is to remain faithful in the trials, remembering that God is good... all the time.
  - i. Plans may change, and when we think it's a time for... you fill in the blank... it may be a time for something else... and God is right there by your side to walk you through it.
- f. So, go from here confident... that even when life is not what you expected, the Good Shepherd will never leave you or forsake you... no matter what it's time for. Amen.