

What We Need – Pr Jim Sprengle – Pentecost 8 – July 18, 2021

- I. **Mark 6:30-44** – The Gospel lesson previously read
- II. **Do you know what you need?**
 - a. That's usually the first line that a salesman says... or maybe a friend who wants to explain how they have just the right thing to help you... You know what you need? As they move their eyebrows up and down.
 - b. Some people will confidently say – “yes, I know what I need... and it's not what you have to offer.”
 - c. However, curiosity usually gets the better of us and we say, “no, I don't know what I need, maybe you can enlighten me.”
 - i. Inevitably, the person tells us about something that borders on a need but is usually a want...
 - ii. A vacation... aahhhh... room service and ocean views... we all need rest and relaxation right?
 - iii. A new car... Hmmm... it's transportation and I need that right?
 - iv. A new house... well, it's a place to live and I need that.
 - v. A big TV... I need to know what's going on in the world... so...
 - d. Wants and needs are funny things, because we have a tendency to rationalize or justify our wants and move them over to the category of needs.
 - e. I've said this before (and even in our C-101 class the other night) – but I knew a man in the AA program who used to describe all these things he “needed” – a new boat, a good job, a girlfriend... and his sponsor in the program was pretty blunt and said, “Look, all you need is a pup tent and peanut butter sandwich!”
 - i. Our wants are not needs.
 - ii. What we need is usually a little ordinary and boring – like air, water, food, shelter – the things that Martin Luther writes about our daily bread in the Lord's Prayer.
 - iii. What we actually need is usually hidden under piles of wants
- III. **We have another voice in our lives**
 - a. A person who is not a salesman or a shepherd leading us astray.
 - b. We have a voice of reason... of power... of wisdom and knowledge.
 - c. It's not always easy to push away all the other voices that are vying for our attention (those bad shepherd's trying to lead us astray) and place our trust in Jesus and His Word.
 - d. Yet, the beauty of our Savior is that He knows us better than we know ourselves...
 - i. He really does know what we need, and we can trust in Him to provide what we need... and much of what we want too.
 - e. You might say that our ability to discern a need from a want got broken when sin entered the world.

- i. Did Eve look at the fruit and need it... or want it?
- ii. The idea of knowing good and evil – of wanting to know the mysteries that are only God’s to know – the idea of being like God was a “want”
- iii. From that first point of rebellion and taking what did not belong to them, humans have always struggled with desires or wants that lead us away from God rather than toward Him.
- f. When we listen to the voices around us that do not have our best interest in mind, we end up like that crowd who gathered to meet Jesus... lost without a shepherd.

IV. **Our Gospel lesson today begins with Jesus seeking rest...**

- a. John the Baptist had been executed by Herod as we read last week.
 - i. Perhaps Jesus was getting away to grieve this loss, or to pray about the fact He would also end up like John.
 - ii. It also says that Jesus and His followers were so busy they weren’t even able to eat
- b. So they head out to a quiet place to regroup, and a crowd charts their course to the shore...
 - i. People from all over the place greet them – and we are not talking about a few people – it says 5000 men plus women and children which easily doubles that number
- c. Just put yourself in the shoes of Jesus and His disciples... they are dead tired and running on empty... and they see nothing but hours and hours of ministry and pouring more energy into others.
 - i. Rather than getting angry, or maybe pretending not to see them and keep on sailing to the next empty place... Jesus had compassion on them
 - ii. They were begging to hear the Word and have a Shepherd
- d. You see, somewhere along the line, these people were drawn to Jesus... because the world and it’s leaders had failed them
 - i. Was it “wants” that got them there?
 - 1. Yes, for many of them, they heard that Jesus could perform miracles, and they were seeking to either see one or maybe even receive healing from something they had
 - a. In fact, after the miracle of the loaves and fishes, it says that many followed Jesus around seeking more of this bread He could provide supernaturally. (John 6:26)
 - ii. Others who went to that place were seeking Jesus because they had a spiritual need that only He could meet.
 - 1. This is the important point... before the miracle of the loaves and fishes, Jesus taught them many things (vs 34)
 - 2. The Word of God, Jesus, was among them, was teaching them, and even had compassion on them as sheep without a shepherd.

- e. Our deepest need is a relationship and forgiveness from God... it is spiritual in nature –
 - i. But obviously our needs for basic survival will make it much harder to connect with the spiritual side of things.
 - ii. God knows that we need our basic needs met – but the most important thing is a relationship with Him – a trust in Him to provide no matter what.

V. **Jesus calls on all people to trust in Him.**

- a. When the disciples saw it was late, they wanted to dismiss everyone – so they could get home or to a store for food... but Jesus tells them... “You give them something to eat.” (vs. 37)
 - i. No, they weren’t ready for a miracle yet, but they did go find a little food that was blessed by God and brought forth as enough for everyone, along with a bunch of leftovers!
 - ii. No doubt, the disciples were called to trust in Jesus to provide... and so was the crowd.
 - iii. The great thing about this scene is that none of them had anywhere else to turn... it was Jesus or go home hungry.
- b. Out of that care, compassion and love that Jesus showed, a spiritual connection arose as well for many of the people who were present.
- c. Do you know what you need?
 - i. What we need... what all people need is Jesus.
- d. Only Jesus can fill the shoes of the Good Shepherd who is always trustworthy and willing to provide for His sheep.
 - i. The heart He has for us is on full display when He has compassion on this crowd of people...
 - ii. Maybe even some of these very same people were lining the road and screaming at Him as He carried His cross to Calvary.
 - iii. But hatred and rejection never stopped Jesus from completing His rescue mission –
 - 1. Jesus knew that we needed more than bread and fish to live... we need the Bread of Life – the death and resurrection of Jesus to pay for our sins.
 - 2. Without Jesus giving up everything we could have nothing but separation and eternal death – but He knows what we need.
 - 3. We need Jesus and His life saving work.
- e. It’s not hard to see that our wants and desires can lead us to trust in the wrong things, but the Lord always brings us back to focus on Him.
- f. Trust Jesus... He will always meet your needs... even if it’s not how you expect.
- g. Do you know what you need?
 - i. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, Amen.