

## Sermon for July 21, 2024

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on this 9th Sunday after Pentecost. Amen.

Last month, I shared a McDonald's slogan from the early '70s in my sermon: *"You deserve a break today. So get up and get away to McDonald's!"*

After reading today's gospel, I believe that slogan – or at least the first part of it – might be very appropriate. *"You deserve a break today."*

We all deserve a break. Our bodies and our minds weren't meant to function 24/7/365 without, first of all, facing burnout, and secondly, probably facing death from overworking our hearts.

Two weeks ago, our gospel was from the beginning of the 6th chapter of Mark. Jesus was rejected in His hometown of Nazareth. He then instructed His disciples to go out into the mission field, giving them authority over the unclean spirits.

*"Jesus ordered (His disciples) to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics." (Mark 6:8-9)*

*"(The disciples) cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them." (Mark 6:13)*

Last week, our gospel was a flashback of the beheading of John the Baptist.

King Herod, a married man, fell in love with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. According to Jewish law, the two had committed an unpardonable sin according to their holy Scriptures which said: *"If a man takes his brother's wife, it is impurity. He has uncovered his brother's nakedness." Leviticus 20:21a*

John was very vocal pointing out the corrupt and immoral position the king put himself in. Herodias was livid that John was so vocal against her and her husband. Using her daughter's favor, she had John beheaded. Jesus loved John, and John's death greatly grieved Jesus.

**In today's gospel, we hear that the disciples gathered around Jesus, excited to tell Him all that they had done since being granted the authority to heal people and cast out demons. They were filled with stories of healing and miracles. They wanted to share these with their Master.**

**But Jesus needed a break. Rejected by his hometown, learning of John's death, exhausted from healing and preaching, He just wanted to get away.**

**As we've heard several times throughout scripture, Jesus finds solace in a boat. Out in the lake, fewer people were likely to have immediate access to Him. This was a chance for Him to get away; to get rest, except, of course, the time that the disciples woke Him because of the violent storm! Still, even then, Jesus was asleep in the boat.**

**Going out in the boat worked. For a bit, anyway. The disciples and Jesus were able to get some rest. Scripture doesn't tell us if it was an hour, two hours, or six hours, but I'm guessing it wasn't very long. It wasn't long enough for Jesus.**

**Why? Because He saw people on the shoreline, looking at Him, calling for Him, waiting for Him to come ashore. There were more healings to do. There was more preaching to do. More socializing to do.**

**Jesus couldn't stay away. The scripture says, "*He had compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and He began to teach them many things.*" (Mark 6:34b)**

**The gospel for today omitted verses 35-52. I'm not sure if the theologians who put together the Revised Common Lectionary thought it would be too long or what. But they skipped over Jesus feeding the Five Thousand. They also skipped over the part where Jesus, again in a boat, walked on water, and calmed the sea.**

**Even in a place where Jesus hoped to find rest, He didn't. He couldn't.**

**I get it. Most of us who have been in the workaday world get it. Just when you think your work is all caught up and you can get some rest, you find just one more thing to do.**

**I am, in no way, comparing myself to Jesus! But my husband has mentioned numerous times that when we lived in town here, I would say on a Saturday or**

even on a day off, "I'm going over to the office for just a minute. I have one more thing I want to do." Well, oftentimes, that minute would turn into an hour or longer.

Living in Curtis, I don't say, "I'm going to run into Newberry and stop into the office for a minute!" I think I'm a bit more intentional of having some rest time. Rest time - as in away from the office - though there are always things to do at home!

Our gospel for today concludes with Jesus doing more ministry. He and the disciples landed their boat at Gennesaret and immediately were surrounded by folks who recognized Jesus. The crowd brought their sick and dying. And Jesus cured them.

Jesus wasn't one to say no. While He knew the importance of having some downtime and some rest, He also knew doing God's work was so important. If not Him, then who?

Jesus wants us to have rest, too. He wants to be sure we are taking care of ourselves by having some downtime which is so critical to the work we do. Yes, whether that is in our workaday world or in our church. Yes, we may get distracted by other's needs, especially if we have small children or elders we care for.

You may not be able to go away in a boat. You may not even be able to go away from your home. But find a place where you can rest. The back porch. The front porch. An area in your home. Or take a drive somewhere.

**Find rest.**

Let us remember the words of Matthew when Jesus said, <sup>28</sup> *"Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."* (Matt. 11:28-30)

**Let us find rest. Amen.**

**Sources:**

<sup>1</sup>www.sundaysandseasons.com

<sup>2</sup>Study Bible. The New Student Bible. New Revised Standard Version. Augsburg