

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
August 2, 2009 Pentecost 9 Mark 6:30-34



The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourself to a quiet place and get some rest.” So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Mandy was a pretty good size dog – 45 pounds of naturally curly hair – with big sad eyes and a tail that could knock stuff off the coffee table when she was excited. The other day Mandy was playing down by the pond in her back yard – when a seven foot two inch crocodile came racing out of the water on its squatty legs and grabbed Mandy right around the middle! Mr. Grounds – the man who gave Mandy to his son as a gift 7 years ago – saw what happened and without hesitation – ran over and grabbed the alligator – trying to pull the jaws apart. He couldn’t. The jaw muscles were so strong – they didn’t budge. That’s when Mr. Grounds remembered he had heard somewhere – if you poke an alligator in the eye – they will let go. So that’s what he did. He poked that alligator in the eye as hard as he could – and the puppy popped out! Good! *Now run for your life!* But before he could – the alligator bit Mr. Ground’s hand. He caught his ring finger and his index finger – bit down and did that death roll thing – spinning his whole alligator body around – and the fingers were gone! Mr. Grounds grabbed Mandy and ran toward the house. They were safe! All the news people had to ask – if he had it to do over – would Mr. Grounds do it again? Would he sacrifice his fingers to save his puppy? Without a doubt – Mr. Grounds said – it wasn’t a bad trade at all! Sure he won’t be able to type the way he used to – but what does that matter? Love gives! Love sacrifices without thought of what’s in it for me? Love gives. We are here in God’s House to thank and praise our Redeemer for all he sacrificed to rescue us from the deadly grip of sin and death. Today God’s Word reminds us:

Sheep Need A Shepherd!

- 1. Jesus blesses work**
- 2. Jesus gives us rest**
- 3. Jesus blesses more work**

Our Gospel reading today – follows on the Gospel reading from last week. Remember? Jesus sent out his disciples in groups of two. **And gave them authority over evil spirits.** Jesus’ instructions were simple and to the point! **“Take nothing for the journey except a staff – no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra tunic. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave as a testimony against them.”** Mark 6:7b-11. How did it go? God’s Word says, **They went out and preached that the people should**

repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them. Mk. 6:12

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. They went out and preached that people should repent. Repentance has two parts. The first part is sadness and sorrow over our sins. Do you have that? We watched a very interesting TV show the other day. One of the patients had something wrong with the very front part of their brain – the part that exercises self-control over what you say. This part didn't work. The patient said whatever thoughts came into his mind. Needless to say – sometimes – without that filter – he said things that were very inappropriate! And I wondered out loud – how would that be? How would that work? Are we so quick to think things that are so painful and hurtful and gross and wrong? Do terrible thoughts come into our head again and again – to the point that even people who love us would be driven away – if we said them all out loud? Could we not control what we say? Think about it! I'm afraid that again and again – even without damage to the front part of our brain – we say things that are painful and hurtful and gross and wrong! Repentance means I'm sorry for all the bad things I have thought and sad. And repentance means I have a child like confidence that Jesus has washed away all my sins. He was washed them away with the blood he shed when he died on the cross. I know my sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake!

Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourself to a quiet place and get some rest." So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. Rest is a good thing – a gift from God. It is tempting to work all the time. If you work lots of hours – then you will earn lots of money! And if you earn lots of money – then you can buy nice things. And everybody likes nice things. You can buy a nice car – that starts in the winter – and gets good mileage – and is safe if *heaven forbid* – you should be in an accident. It's nice to earn good money. Then you can go out to eat on Friday – have refreshments and fish and that little thing that spins around with potato salad and slaw and baked beans. That's nice. And it's nice to have nice clothes to wear – nice outfits – and nice jewelry. And Jesus has blessed us with many nice things. The danger is – the more we have – the more we want. Before you know it – we have a ring on every finger – and a jewelry box full of jewelry. And we eat out so often – pretty soon little children will say – I'm sick of this restaurant. We always go to that place. Why can't we go some place different? Why can't we have a Red Lobster and an Outback Steak House – *I love that bloomin' onion* and a Texas Road House and a Panera Bread in Watertown? And one of the devil's really sneaky tricks is – for people to hide from marriage and family troubles – by working all the time! If we don't want to deal with our children growing up – don't want to teach them and discipline them – then just work lots and lots of hours – and buy them lots of expensive things. If we don't want to deal with our spouse and our family concerns – then never be home – and you won't have to deal with them. But just like lumps where they shouldn't be – or blood where it shouldn't be – things don't get better if you try to ignore them – then only get worse! The fact is – children can get by without a shelf full of video games – and they don't have to have the most expensive sneakers. What they need are parents who love them and teach them – before they are all grown up and it's too late! What wives need is their husband to listen to them and talk to them – and tell them the truth in love!

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. We took Uncle Terry to the Mall the other day. I got a book and a cup of Caramel Macchiato (*grande* – not medium) and sat down in the food court to watch the people. I wasn't sitting there for 5 minutes – when three teenage girls went past me and one of them said, "Jesus Christ!" The name of the Savior – uttered out loud – not to pray,

praise or give thanks – but just to express some kind of what – surprise? There are people everywhere who are *un-shepherded*. You can see it in their eyes. As I watched people walking through the mall you could see sadness in their eyes – a sadness that was etched on their face – the corners of their mouth bent downward – their gaze downward – their forehead wrinkled with worry. Every once in a while you would see someone with a twinkle in their eye – laugh wrinkles beside their mouth – a smile that was very quick – if they would catch your eye – and see you smile. Every once in a while – you would see someone – and they would wink at you. I love that – when people wink. It happens so fast – sometimes you’re not sure it even happened at all. But then you know it did. I know some people who are winkers – and it’s a wonderful opportunity to tell people my joy deep inside comes from the ultimate confidence that Heaven is my home! Sheep need a shepherd – to bring us to the means of grace – the Gospel in Scripture and Communion. We need a shepherd to keep us safe from the wolves and bears and lions from Hell who want to devour our soul! We need to be close to Jesus – the Good Shepherd – who gave up his life for sheep who love to wander!

So he began teaching them many things. There are so many things to learn. Read the Old Testament. On Tuesday night – at Good Shepherd Bible Class we read about 2 Chronicles. About King Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah and Jerusalem. There was danger all around. A vast army was approaching – Moabites and Ammonites – and Meunites – people from by Mount Seir – Edomites? These three armies were coming nearer and nearer. They were already pretty close! Do you appreciate the danger? These were people that would shoot you in the heart with their arrows. They would stab you with their spears. They would hack you with their swords. They would shoot flaming arrows on your roof and set your house on fire. They would do unspeakable things to your wife and sister and daughter. They would sell your children literally into slavery. And they were coming for you! That would be pretty scary – unless you knew in your heart of hearts – by the power of the means of grace – by the power of the Gospel that you didn’t have anything – anything to be afraid of. God’s people knew they would be ok. And so – even before the LORD – the Great I AM – the Holy One of Israel delivered them – *before he delivered him – they thanked him* – using one of the very first prayers you ever learned. The people of Judah and Jerusalem sang at the head of their army, **“Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever!”** **As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir to destroy and annihilate them. After they finished slaughtering the men from Seir, they helped to destroy one another. When the men of Judah came to the place that overlooks the desert and looked toward the vast army, they saw only dead bodies lying on the ground; no one had escaped. 2 Chronicles 20:21b-24** There was so much equipment and clothing and other articles of value from the enemy – it was more than they could take away. It took them three days – just to gather together all the weapons and clothes and tents and valuables. The fourth day – they spent praising God. They went back to Jerusalem – and you know what they did? They went to the Temple and sacrificed and praised the LORD. And the LORD wasn’t through being good to his people. **The kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side! *Rest on every side!*** How precious is that?

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. God’s Word teaches us many things. Perhaps none more precious than this – you can always come home! There are lots of homeless people – street people – bag ladies in New York City. Everyone knows that. But did you know – they have had for the past three years a program where they will give you a one-way ticket home. I thought to myself – “Wow!” That’s really something – to

give people a ticket home – out of the homeless shelter – off the street – back home – to family! A one way ticket back to your mom and dad – your wife – your brother – your family. Wow! *Some relative* has to take you in – when you arrive. And they do make sure you arrive safely and are ok. Jesus did much *much* more than that! Jesus was born into this sin spoiled world. Jesus lived the life we couldn't live and died the death we couldn't to save us from all our sins. He did that so we could come home to Heaven forever. No one ever loved us that much. No one ever gave us better rest than that. Jesus takes very good care of his sheep. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony E. Schantz