

MESSAGE - The Hope of Faith

July 25, 2021

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What did you spend your week doing? Think back on all your activities....

How much time was spent doing those things?

Do we know what motivates us to do those things?

What were we looking for?

What need did we want fulfilled?

In today's story, I'd like to take a look at the people around Jesus and what they are doing.

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

<sup>30</sup> The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup> 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 yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

<sup>32</sup> So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. <sup>33</sup> But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. <sup>34</sup> 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.

<sup>53</sup> When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. <sup>54</sup> As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. <sup>55</sup> They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. <sup>56</sup> And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were .

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We get this picture of a lot of activity surrounding Jesus as he goes about doing ministry:

*So many people coming and going*

*Many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns*

*As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. they ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was.*

The Scripture attests to many people seeking out and surrounding Jesus.

Because they were in need do you suppose?

Who are these people?

I get the feeling that there's a fair share of anxious people.

People who are hungering and thirsting for what nothing else is giving them.

People who are lost, looking for direction, sick, disenfranchised,

Yet, people who are motivated by hope.

Mark reports: Jesus had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

"Sheep without a shepherd"

Long-time metaphor of people without a leader/protector/

*Ezekiel 34:8 As I live, says the Lord God, because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild animals, since there was no shepherd; and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep;*

People left vulnerable. Without a safety net in life.

People uncared for: un-sought out.

That is a harsh reality when there could have been any number of shepherds:

There was a king – Herod

There was a government – Roman empire

There was a ruler – Caesar

Are we anything like them? I think we are:

Searching for meaning in life....is this all there is:

*Daily routine.....*

Looking for help to ease our burdens and our problems.

*The people in our community are suffering from a lot of hidden situations: mental health issues, addictions, and the reality of shame keeps it all hidden and therefore without help*

Nothing that seems to unite us

*Not just the ideological divisions, but a disconnect. People are lonely. Not just forgetting how to talk with each other, but forgetting to talk with each other. I see community events, but I wonder how much it provides us with a sense of connection. How much do people talk with each other?*

Conditional care.

*There are some people who are deserving and some who aren't*

Looking for something that made a difference in their lives

Actively looking for a shepherd....and so they went out searching for Jesus when they heard he was in town.

Which is an important ingredient when it comes to hope.

I know I've said this before, but I know I always need a reminder:

Biblical hope is not merely wishful thinking....when we are looking for an outcome that we don't have the ability to help make happen.

*I hope it rains.*

*I hope it doesn't rain.*

*I hope the Cubs win.*

Biblical hope is an active participation in the bringing about the outcome.

I have a colleague coming for dinner and I am going to make a pie – and I hope it's good.

But I can't just wish for the pie to be good....I actively participate in making it good.

It won't be good if I over work the dough.

It won't be good if I use poor ingredients

It won't be good if I don't bake it enough so the bottom crust isn't soggy.

As much as I want it to be good, there's a lot I need to do to make it so.

Same when it comes to our faith in Jesus.

We can't just wish for Jesus to change our hard circumstances....

We can't just wish for Jesus to bring peace... we need to bring the good ingredients of our hearts to Jesus.

We can't just wish for hungry people to receive food...we need to help make food available to them.

We can't just wish for Jesus to grow our church....we need to be ambassadors and invitational people and offer ministries that touch people's lives.

We can't just wish for Jesus to make our lives meaningful.....we need to be actively seeking out and living in the principles of God's kingdom right where we are.

That's why the people of so long ago actively sought out Jesus...

Their participation in what they hoped for met Jesus and something happened:

A blind man gained his sight

The woman with a long-standing illness was healed

A young girl was raised to life

Lepers were restored

People were fed

How do you spend your days?

How much of those activities are born of hope?