

8<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY after PENTECOST

July 18, 2021

**Collect:** Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, you know our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking: Have compassion on our weakness, and mercifully give us those things which for our own unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask; through the worthiness of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**The Lessons:** Old Testament: Jeremiah 23:1-6

Psalm: 23

Epistle: Ephesians 2:11-22

Gospel: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

**The Sermon:** Today's Gospel begins with the disciples returning to Jesus to report to him on the work they had done in the surrounding area of Nazareth. Jesus had come home to Nazareth, but found people there were not acceptable of him. They looked on him as someone whose family they had known and were just ordinary people like themselves. They knew him as he grew up and now, they are finding it hard to accept him as this rabbi who is teaching new things, healing the sick and driving out demons.

They knew he was the carpenter's son. They knew and watched him grow up.

There wasn't anything extraordinary about him. He appeared to be one of them. He went away and now he is back. But he is different!

The people of Nazareth wanted to know what made him different from them. Where did he get this wisdom, he showed when teaching in the synagogue? Who gave him authority and who gave him the power to cast out demons and heal?

There was no crowd or large following of Jesus in this, his home town, Nazareth. He was able to cure only a few people.

Jesus stayed in Nazareth for a while, but he sent his disciples out to the villages and town around Nazareth. They were sent out in pairs, so they could be mutual support for each other. They were to drive out demons and heal people, just as Jesus did. They were instructed to take only a staff, for safety and protection, and just the sandals on their feet. They weren't to take any food, money or additional clothing. The thought was that God would provide their needs.

Jesus knew that in some places they would be accepted and in some they would be rejected. If rejected, they were to shake the dust of that town off their feet, to forget about it and not return to it.

The disciples were able to cast out demons and heal the sick just as Jesus did. In fact, they were able to do the work that Jesus did. Let's remember they had received the Holy Spirit, which gave them Jesus like powers directly from Jesus when they were hiding in the upper room in Jerusalem. This Holy Spirit allowed them to continue the work of Jesus in the local areas. On Pentecost, they received the Holy Spirit that allowed them to speak in different languages. This allowed them to make the work of Jesus universal, they could take it to all the areas of the known world.

So now, after having completed their mission, the disciples come back to Jesus to report. Jesus wanted to go to a quiet place where they could rest, eat, and not be disturbed. It was impossible, even when they had gotten into a boat and crossed to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, people recognized them and brought the sick to them.

The people would search throughout the region and find those who were sick and bring them to wherever they heard Jesus would be. They even believed that if they could only touch the hem of his garment, they would be healed.

The people may not have understood his teachings, so he used parables to explain and teach. They did though accept his power. They believed he was a holy man of God. And through his driving out demons and healing the sick he was able to be the shepherd that Jeremiah had talked about in today's Old Testament lesson.

Jesus was able to gather and bring people back into righteous fellowship with God. He was able to forgive them of their sins, their evil doings and give them the joy of God's love. He was able to be a shepherd to them, he was able to teach and show them, that God didn't wish to destroy mankind but instead to love them. He wanted them to know that God offered them his protection and that he wanted them to be fruitful and multiply. He wanted them to be joyous and obey God's commandments. As a shepherd, he got people to return to God, he got them to believe that one day God would separate the righteous from the unrighteous and there would be justice for all of God's people. Amen.

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