



Grain

“The best medicine for each of us is each of us.” Dan Spoone, Immediate Past President and Past Interim Executive Director, American Council of the Blind

Field

⁵³When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. ⁵⁴When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, ⁵⁵and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed. Mark 6: 53-56

Thoughts by Reverend Peter Heide, Baraboo, WI

Have you ever had one of those days when you know exactly what you are going to do and you know how and when you are going to get it done, and then life intervenes? Mark 6 is one of those intervention times.

After sending the disciples out on their internship, a pastoral formation journey, Jesus hears of the death of John. We hear the story of his beheading, and then the disciples return from their first experiences in ministry. The disciples are pumped, but Jesus is grieving. “Let us go to a quiet place where we can debrief,” Jesus says (my paraphrase). It seemed like such a good idea, and then five thousand people show up for supper. Jesus sends the crowd and his disciples away and goes up on the mountain to be alone and pray. Afterwards, he catches up with the disciples who are in their boat going to the other side—Jesus walks on the water and gets into the boat with them. Finally, they come to the shore, only it’s not where they had intended to go at all. Instead of Bethsaida, they find themselves in Gennesaret which means garden of plenty.

But, when Jesus enters into this garden of plenty, the plenty he encounters is disability, abandonment, and need. The sick and dying have been left in the market to fend for themselves where they are begging to be touched and to even just touch the fringe of Jesus’ prayer shawl. And now something extraordinary happens. All who touched or were touched are saved. I know that our text says healed, but the word in Greek can also be translated as saved. Saved offers an opportunity to see the ministry of Jesus as being something other than magic. Saved offers us the opportunity to see Jesus’ work as bringing new relationship. No longer just abandoned in the marketplace, Jesus offers them now a new understanding of living.

Instead of being relegated to the margins, Jesus’ presence brings a new world of inclusion to them. Instead of being seen as the untouchables of the world, Jesus makes himself available to them to touch and be touched. Instead of being considered the detritus or refuse of the world, Jesus raises them, the disabled of his time, into a community of value. The one whom we will see resurrected is the source of resurrection for those the world considers to be socially dead.

Jesus is not in a relationship of rescue with these people because Jesus establishes a relationship of equity. It is a relationship of interdependence. It is a relationship of value and wholeness that we have come to know as the body of Christ, alive and active in the world. This is a saving that we can participate in whenever we see people abandoned in the marketplace. When we encounter the marginalized of our world, we, the Church, the body of Christ, can, in the ministry and work of Jesus, make ourselves available to touch and be touched—to change and be changed. Doing this, we recognize and value those whom the world would abandon. Doing this, we recognize their value for the world. It is a ministry that changed the world of Jesus’ time, and it can change the world we live in today. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,
Pastor Peter