

July 18, 2021

St. Mark 6:30-34

“This I Know”

- I. Invites Us to Be With Him.
- II. Full of Compassion.
- III. Teaches Us Many Things.

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St. Mark 6:30-34

Dear Friends in Christ,

While our text is found in the sixth chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, if we back up to closing of the fourth chapter we're given the account of Jesus calming the raging storm. Immediately following that the fifth chapter begins with, 'And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit (a demon possessed man).' (v.2) After that, we're told, "And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him..." (Mk. 5:21) There He healed an ailing woman and a little girl. All this was followed by rejection of Jesus at Nazareth, His sending out the Twelve Apostles, the death of John the Baptist and then The Feeding Of The Five Thousand.

The point of all this? Its intensity! That's the way it was for Jesus. God in the flesh entered the world to reveal His love. He didn't have to, but did. He was uninvited. He was and is mostly rejected. And we know why. It's simple. He said, "... (the world) hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil." (Jn.7:7) They're evil because the goal of this world's works is to glorify all things human over the things of God. The world doesn't want to hear it yet grinds on in its absurdities and wickedness, its dying and death. I want to examine with you . . .

THIS I KNOW

I. Invites Us to Be With Him.

The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, "come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest awhile." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. (vv.30-31)

"...come away by yourselves...rest awhile...no leisure even to eat." Life gets that way at times, doesn't it? Running, gathering, doing, wondering, driven by wants and fears, appointments and deadlines. Our post sermon hymn is "Jesus Loves Me." And the opening words of the first stanza are the ever familiar, "Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so." We know His love as revealed in the Word - the Bible. His love invites us: "Come away by yourselves." Or, "Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible..." invites us to meet with Him.

And there it stands, the call of Jesus: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me..." (Matt. 11:28-29a) Rest - not from being physically tired and hungry, but the reason for being physically tired and hungry, mentally and emotionally weary: **sin**. Weary from the sin that slapped us around last year, last month, last week, yesterday, this morning, and will slap us around tomorrow...and so on. But Jesus says, "...for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:29b-30)

The sermon hymn was "Upon the Cross Extended." I want you to listen to stanza 4 once again because it's about you - about me: "I caused Your grief and sighing By evils multiplying As countless as the sands. I caused the woes unnumbered With which your soul is cumbered, Your sorrows raised by wicked hands." Only the self-righteous and arrogant person would resent that confession.

Next, stanza 5, the Jesus loves me and invites me to be His and with Him forever part: "Your soul in griefs unbounded, Your head with thorns surrounded, You died to ransom me. The Cross for me enduring, The crown for me securing, You healed my wounds and set me free." And that's it: set us free from condemnation because of our sin. He locked the door to death and hell, and opened the door to everlasting life. He ransomed us, paid the price for our forgiveness and for our place in eternal life. He made us His, and with that, Jesus promised:

“And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” (Jn. 6:39-40)

We can say it: “This I know!”

II. Full of Compassion.

And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. (vv.32-34a)

Recall that incident where some Sadducees questioned Jesus about who belongs to whom in the resurrection. The question was asked in the context of a woman who had been married seven times. The Sadducees asked, “In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be?” (Mk. 12:23) What’s fascinating about their question is the fact that Sadducees - a sect that held a position of influence - did not believe in the resurrection.

Jesus’ answer to their devious question was this: “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.” (Matt. 22:29) And that is the ultimate point for all who reject or find something wrong with Jesus, the Word made flesh! They wallow in ignorance and death. Jesus said of such spiritual leadership: “they tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.” (Matt. 23:4) They offer neither comfort nor hope!

What we want to note and take with us is this Word from our text: “He (Jesus) had compassion on them...” This is how God serves us through Word and Sacrament. He comes to us and announces, “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.” (Jn. 3:17)

Christ doesn’t lay new burdens on us. He lifts the old ones away. He doesn’t teach - as many teach - “If you do this and that, then God will do something for you.” On the contrary, He teaches that God does everything for us, in spite of ourselves. Specifically this: “Whoever believes in him is not condemned...” (Jn. 3:18a) We can say it: “This I know. Jesus is compassion.” Again, “When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them...”

III. Teaches Us Many Things.

Everybody is looking for something to give them answers and guidance for life in this world. The hope that somewhere there is someone who can make sense out of the gross and demonic senselessness which smothers this world.

Everybody has their thoughts about what’s going to happen after they die - speculates, wonders. Many live in fear. And many laugh in rejection and denial, or, as I like to say - and please forgive my overuse of this - they laugh and reject until right after they’ve sucked in their last breath of earthly atmosphere.

Well, I’m guessing we know the first stanza of the post sermon hymn:

Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to Him belong; They are weak, but He is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

With that in front of us, our text closes with, "And he began to teach them many things." (v. 34b) - because He loved them. And so, He left this with the Apostles and, consequently, the church - left this which is largely ignored by most of the church, or viewed as something to be taken in tiny doses when convenient - this: "...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:20) And He left this, which few take seriously: "Your word (that which gives guidance and hope) is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." (Ps. 119:105) What Jesus said to the Sadducees He says to most of the church of this day: "you know neither the Scripture nor the power of God."

Our Lutheran Confessions state:

...the apostle (Paul) testifies that "Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and encouragement of Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4) But it is certain that any interpretation of the Scriptures which weakens or even removes this comfort and hope is contrary to the Holy Spirit's will and intent. (Tappert, The Book of Concord, p. 632.92)

Again, our text says, "And he began to teach them many things." Indeed, He will teach us "many things" about life and death; God's love, forgiveness and eternity; why this world is moving the way it is and who is really moving it. And it's all in the context of "Jesus loves me!...the Bible tells me so."

This I Know!

Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott