



Christ United Methodist Church

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Date: July 22, 2018

Sermon: Shipwrecked...with Hope

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

Speaker: Pastor Don Archer

In today's gospel reading, the disciples of Jesus have returned from their mission of teaching and healing the sick. They gather around Jesus and tell him all that they had done and taught. After hearing them, Jesus suggests that they all take some time to rest. *Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest for a while. For many were coming and going and they had no leisure even to eat.*

So Jesus and the disciples get in Simon Peter's Sun Craft Pontoon boat, with twin 120 HP Mercury Outboard Motors, and head to a deserted place, away from all the people. Or so they thought. Some people saw them and recognized them, figured out where they were going and got their ahead of them. By the time Jesus and the disciples arrive and tie up the boat, a larger crowd has assembled and is waiting on them. (I will tell you, later, who the people were in this crowd.)

At this point, it would appear that Jesus had the option of untying the boat and opting for another location. But, as he went ashore and saw the crowd; *he had*

*compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them **many things.***

Like sheep without a shepherd. Like children without parents? Like vacation travelers without GPS?

I don't know about you but there have times in my life when I felt like those people gathered on the shore. The people who saw where Jesus was going and ran to the destination. Waiting, hoping, for some word, some direction, some answer that would help get me unstuck. Some word that would show me a new way. For lack of a better word, we call that **being lost.**

We can be lost in a physical sense. Not knowing where we are geographically. We can also be lost spiritually, mentally, emotionally. (I recently traveled to Harrisonburg, Va for part of my spiritual renewal leave. Someone who has family in Harrisonburg went to the trouble of actually obtaining a WV Highway Map. A physical, foldable map like Daniel Boone used, and highlighted the route that I should take. A route that Google Maps, Mapquest, or Apple Maps would not recognize or recommend.) It was a beautiful drive and saved me a little time. What a blessing to be shown the way by someone who has been there and knows, from experience, the best route to take.)

At this point in the Gospel of Mark, many people are beginning to recognize Jesus as someone who has a unique sense of direction. Someone who knows the way. Someone who can help get us *unlost*. So they came, they followed, they pursued, the One who had the map. The sheep were looking for a Shepherd. They were looking

for the shepherd so beautifully described in the poetry of the 23rd Psalm. The shepherd that leads us to green pastures, beside still waters. The shepherd who restores our soul! (I need some soul restoration.) As a church, as individuals, we are certainly in need of being led in the paths of righteousness. We live in a time when many people are being taken down many paths but the *paths or righteousness* are practically overgrown from lack of use. The people gathered on the shore, were waiting on Jesus, waiting for the map, waiting for the shepherd who does not, will not, forsake or abandon us ... but who walks with us through every situation and circumstance ... even through the valley of the shadow of death.

The people 2000 years ago and the people today, including us, are desperate for someone who can give us the confidence to face evil without fear. There is a lot of evil in our world, our nation, in our community. There is also a lot fear because of that evil. People came to Jesus and are still coming to Jesus because his rod and his staff, his goodness and his mercy, provide comfort ... even in uncomfortable times. I still believe that. Sometimes I firmly believe it. Sometimes I believe it and sometimes I barely believe it and there have been times when I couldn't believe it. Even then, the boat came. The rescue boat with Jesus and his disciples, the church ... came.

You may have noticed in our narthex a display promoting our VBS theme; *Shipwrecked*. How appropriate. We do not have to own a ship, a boat, or a canoe, to be shipwrecked. We don't have to be a pirate

or a cast member from Gilligan's Island to be in a deserted or desolate place. We can be shipwrecked by the storms and circumstances of life. (I spoke with a man this week who asked if he could pray in our sanctuary. I gave him some time to himself and then asked if I could be of help. *I don't know where to start. I've done so many wrong things. I don't think I can be forgiven.* I assured him that we are not beyond forgiveness. He began to weep. I asked him what he needed. *I don't know. I wish I knew.* His words struck a chord. Although our lives have taken very different paths we were in the same place. This (sanctuary) place. As we talked, and as I eventually drove him to the hospital, I realized that we were, in spite of outward differences, shipwrecked. Like sheep without, or in need of, a shepherd.

I think, sometimes, we can become lost, lose our map, without realizing it at first. Time passes and one day we look around and ask ourselves: *Where am I? How did I get to this place?* I think the people waiting on that shore, for the boat to arrive, are sitting right here this morning. They are us. Each with our own reason for being here. We are the sheep needing a shepherd. We are the shipwrecked in need of a rescue.

The good news is that our ship has come in. The boat carrying Jesus has tied up. He sees us and has compassion for us. He has many things to teach us so that we can find ourselves and find our way. He is here for us. To lead us home. When Jesus leads, surely goodness and mercy will follow and we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.