

Sunday, July 18, 2021 – Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Ephesians 2:11-22 - Reconciled to God through Christ

1-2 - You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who were disobedient.

3 – All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else.

4-5 - But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

Cf. Romans 5: 6 – While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Verse 8 – While we still were sinners, Christ died for us.

Verse 10 – While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son.

6 – And raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

7 – So that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

8-9 – For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God – not the result of works, so that no one may boast.

10 – For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

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11-12 – At one time you Gentiles were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

13-14 - But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. He is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.

15-16 - He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.

17-18 - He came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father.

19-20 - So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.

21-22 - In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 - Christ heals the multitudes

As we said last week, these verses occur right after the death of John the Baptist. When Jesus hears about the death of His cousin – when the burden of sorrow becomes too heavy for Him to endure – He tries to get away with His primary human support group – the twelve disciples.

*Who is your primary human support group?
If you do not have one, ask God for one.*

*How have you responded – what have you wanted and needed to do – when sorrow became too much for you?
When you need to get away, where do you go?*

30-32 - The apostles gathered around Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves.

Jesus is not able to get away. The crowds follow Him and get to where He was going before He got there.

How have you responded when you were not able to get away – even when you most needed to get away?

33-34 - Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

After teaching the crowds all day and feeding the crowds at the end of the day (here we have Mark's account of the feeding of the five thousand), Jesus makes the disciples get into a boat and cross over to the other side while He Himself goes up on the mountain to pray. Finally He is able to get away and spend time with the Father to find healing and comfort in His time of great grief over the death of His cousin.

The following verses come right after His disciples' got caught in a terrible storm and He came to them, walking on the water, on top of and victorious over what scared them the most.

Certainly the time He spent alone with the Father was part of what gave Him the strength to constantly and totally be there for others.

*Where do you find the strength to deal with all the challenges that you face?
Or, if you are lacking in that strength, where could you find that strength?*

53-56 - When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And 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.