

PROPERthoughts

Series B, Proper11

Lessons for The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

July 21, 2024

Psalm 23 ~ *This confident expression of trust in God, rejoices in the care God provides like a shepherd.*

Jeremiah 23:1–6 ~ *God promised to raise up a righteous Son of David to be a good shepherd for His people.*

Ephesians 2:11–22 ~ *Jesus has made both Jew and Gentile citizens of heaven through His blood.*

Mark 6:30–44 ~ *Even while taking time alone with His disciples, Jesus responded to the needs of the crowd.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Alone -- With God

Sometimes we feel so all alone, boxed in by busy-ness and frustrated by feelings we cannot share with friends or family. Sometimes the people who should be guiding us destroy our trust and shatter our faith. But God has raised up a righteous King, Jesus, our Good Shepherd, who by his death has broken down the wall of sin that separated us from God. By his resurrection we are confident of our place in God's family. Even when we are alone God is with us.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord Jesus, you invited your disciples to come along with you to a quiet place to rest for a time. In the middle of my busy world and hectic schedule, be with me so that I may know the hand of my gentle Shepherd leading me each moment of every day. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: When Jesus saw the crowd far from their homes, He told the disciples, "Give them something to eat." Although they had limited resources, Jesus blessed their stewardship so there was plenty to spare. God has blessed us with resources and willing hearts so that we are able to meet the needs of today's crowd with food for body and soul.

OFFERING PRAYER: Lord, we had wandered far away, like sheep without a shepherd;
But You have called us back to stay, and feed us well with Your Word.
May all these gifts we bring today find willing use to prosper
Your holy flock in every way, in spirit and in number. Amen.

CONVICTION AND CONSOLATION: At times, betrayed by leaders and intimidated by friends, we busy ourselves with tasks and hide behind our feelings, closing ourselves away from others. We deny the family God has brought us into by Holy Baptism. We refuse to reach out to share the love God has showered upon us. In Christ Jesus God has sought us out as a good shepherd rescues his sheep. By Jesus' blood he has broken down the walls of sin that separated us from himself, and those we have set up between ourselves and our neighbors. By his spirit he gives us blessing upon blessing to share with family, friends, and foreigners.

Questions to Consider: What would you do for a little peace and quiet?

- What did God promise when the rulers of Judah were scattering rather than leading?
- What is the wall that separates us from God and divides us from one another?
- Why did Jesus lead the apostles to the other side of the lake? What did they get instead?
- What does Jesus offer you when you are boxed in by your sins and frustrations?

Bonus: Page 2 - Christmas in July (God's gift to mend hearts)

Mended Hearts for Christmas

The Gift, the Giver, and Recipient,
all wrapped in swaddling with a bow of hay,
was present to a broken world that went
along its proud and stubborn, deadly way.
The Gift, the Giver, and Recipient,
with loving care, selected carefully,
handcrafted it Himself and had it sent,
wrapped just in loincloth, hanging on a tree.
The Gift, the Giver, and Recipient,
waits patiently for burdens from your heart,
unwraps the aches and pains, the sins that bent
your love with pride and broke two friends apart.
Now use the gift the Christ Child bought for you;
with healing words mend broken hearts anew.

*– Gilbert A. Franke
November 26, 2001*