

9th Sunday after Pentecost

“Jesus, the Good Shepherd, provides for all our needs!” Mark 6:34

July 21, 2024

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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost is from our Gospel reading, Mark 6:43.

“34 And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.”

So far our text.

If you listen to the main issues that concern people the most these days, what's #1 is **having** a strong economy where inflation isn't eating away at one's savings and getting a person into debt. Jesus knows all our needs and He tells us what stirred Him when He looked up at the great multitude gathering around Him.

Not having a shepherd. That little phrase moved Jesus to action. For if a person doesn't have a shepherd, the true Shepherd, Jesus Christ, a person has nothing. This is what Jesus saw when He looked up at the multitudes, aimless, spiritually destitute people. There are many things in life that people want to have...and spend their lives chasing after them. They want to be part of the “haves” and not the “have nots”.

Jesus, of course, knows all our material needs even before we know them, and He graciously provides for them.

As we heard in today's introit from Psalm 147:

“Who covers the heavens with clouds, who prepares rain for the earth, who makes grass to grow on the mountains. He gives to the beast its food, and to the young ravens that cry.”

Jesus indeed wants us to **have** our daily bread and gives us our daily bread even without our prayers, even to the ungodly. He knows our bodily needs and shows how He powerfully provides for them with the miracle of the multiplying of the bread and fish.

Jesus tested His disciples as we know from John's account:

“He said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” 6 But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.” (John 6:5-6)

But how? The disciples said that they don't have the means to feed the multitude. They were at a loss. We should send them away thought the disciples. Out of sight – out of mind!

“You give them something to eat.” But they couldn't so Jesus did. He wanted them to see how dependent we are for all that the good gifts that God gives us. As Psalm 147 continues”

“He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy.”

As important as having food on the table is, a shelter and clothes, Jesus wants us to trust and hope in Him, in His mercy for the greatest of gifts – having a True Shepherd.

That's the big need on Jesus' list. That's what stirs Him to have compassion. That's #1 need, more urgent than a strong economy or secure borders. So what did Jesus do for the 5000 plus people gathered around Him?

“So He began to teach them many things.” And from Luke's account, we hear that Jesus especially **“spoke to them about the kingdom of God,”** ...and at the same time, **“healed those who had need of healing.”** Luke 9:11

Body and soul. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, cares for our entire being.

That's why we are gathered here this morning...because we need the True Shepherd for our souls, now and eternally. We need the Good Shepherd to care for our bodies now and eternally. And thanks be to God, Jesus has compassion on us!

As we read today in Psalm 23,

“He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.”

In the green pastures of His Word and Sacraments Jesus teaches us about His Kingdom of grace and mercy. He teaches us above all that He, the Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep so that we who are born in sin, the “have nots” of righteousness, would become “haves” of all the blessings of His Kingdom – forgiveness, life, and salvation. **“He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.”**

He does it all! **“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. 11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.” (John 10:10-11)**

He gives to us the gift of baptism that washes our soul and names us as His sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. (John 10:14)

And Jesus feeds us with His very body and blood for our forgiveness. What compassion He shows us by giving us these precious gifts of His Kingdom.

Hebrews 13 tells us that the Great Shepherd who laid down His life for all people was raised again.

“20 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

The God of peace, graciously gives our souls peace through the blood of the everlasting covenant. It can’t be nullified. Jesus has paid for all our sins. And the proof is Jesus resurrection from the dead!

Listen to Colossians 1:

Colossians 1:18-20

And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

¹⁹ For it pleased *the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,* ²⁰ and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

Take and eat, take and drink the blood of Jesus, for by it you are reconciled. Indeed Jesus has provided for our biggest need by conquering death itself.

““Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”

And as the Great Shepherd of the sheep Hebrews 13 goes on to tell us that our God of peace has big plans for His sheep.

21 make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

He makes you complete in every good work to do His will! He provides you faith and the abilities to do what is pleasing in His sight. He provides for you to serve Him in every vocation for the building up of His church. The God of peace gives you His gifts of peace in Jesus so that you have peace in your home, in your family, between husband and wife, father and son, mother and daughter.

And when we need a little rest from our labors, Jesus knows and provides for us. His disciples had just come back from their mission. Jesus had given them power to drive out demons and preach repentance. They came back weary and Jesus took them on a boat ride for some rest and solitude in Bethsaida. While Jesus taught and healed, the disciples got a little break. But then Jesus had them help Him feed all the people and gather up all the leftover fragments.

Jesus the Good Shepherd provides more than we need. He provides abundantly for our bodies, but especially for our souls so that as Psalm 23 says,

“You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.

“through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen”

“And this peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)