

Don't you look forward to a day off? But then a boring old relative turns up? Don't you look forward to holidays /Long Service Leave? Then Covid turns up! The Apostles had been really busy on this first big mission trip and reported back to Jesus **all they had done and taught**. But they could hardly talk or eat because **so many people were coming and going**. There was only one thing to do: take a day off, or a holiday or some long service leave. **Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest. So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place**. This sounds great and it is a great lesson for us. There is a rhythm to the Christian life. Time spent with Jesus, and time spent in work/ministry... meeting with God in the secret place, and serving people in the market place. Jesus and his apostles were off in the boat to spend time together in the quiet place. How refreshing this time would be!

**But, many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot and got there ahead of them**. Oh No!! There goes the refreshing time! What a bugger! But is Jesus annoyed? Not at all! **Jesus had compassion on them**. The people were drawn to Jesus and Jesus was drawn to them. His heart went out to them. They were lost souls, **like sheep without a shepherd**. Jesus loved them, cared for them, reached out to help them. If people then were **like sheep without a shepherd**, they are surely even more so today. If people then needed a Saviour who was compassionate, they need it even more today. The lost souls of Murray Bridge desperately need a compassionate shepherd/ Saviour. How would this Shepherd show compassion in MB today? 4 ways:

1. BY TEACHING PEOPLE. **Jesus began teaching them many things**. I wonder what he taught them? I think he taught them **the kingdom of God is near**. The Roman and Jewish Kingdom of this world was imploding with sin & selfishness. The Kingdom of God is coming to replace it – a Kingdom of **righteousness, joy and peace in the HS**. Jesus taught them to **repent**, to leave the old sinking ship of this rotting world and to jump into the **Kingdom of God** and live with God in love on earth and in heaven. Jesus would have also taught them how good and loving the Heavenly Father is and how he wants all people to be saved, and sent Jesus not to judge people but to save them. He would have told them by his words, and shown them by his deeds that God is compassionate towards them & wants none of them to be lost. How would we show the people of MB?

2.BY FEEDING PEOPLE. The day of teaching people wore on & people got hungry. Jesus told the disciples to feed them and they had no clue what to do. Their only suggestion was **send them away to buy their own food.** Jesus had a much better idea. He found out there were 5 loaves and two fish and **he gave thanks and broke the bread and divided the fish among them all; they all ate and were satisfied.** We live in a world that is ignorant of the meaning of life, and is hungry for the bread of life. Only Jesus can satisfy the deep needs of people. Govts try and do some good. People try and do some good. Some are helped. But unless Jesus is part of the answer there will be no satisfactory answer, whether it is in MB or in Mobilong or in Syria. How can we learn with the disciples that it is only with Jesus that we can teach people the meaning of life and satisfy their deepest hunger for love and for eternity? How ...?

3.BY CALMING PEOPLE. Next the Apostles are back in their boat crossing the lake and a severe storm comes up. And Jesus comes walking on the water, and they are afraid of the storm and even more afraid of the unknown figure walking on the water. **They saw him and were terrified, they cried out because they thought he was a ghost.** This is such a fearful world. Maybe you are filled with fear; how will you pay the bills? How will you survive the dreadful relationship you are in? What's the future of your congregation or of the Lutheran Church? These are the questions we ask when we don't take Jesus into account. Jesus says to fearful hearts: **Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.** Jesus makes all the difference. Jesus calms the storm on the sea and in the human heart. He climbs into the boat with us and the storm stops and peace prevails. His compassion calms the storm. This is what the people of MB need to know. This is what we need to tell and show the people of MB. How will you do this...?

4.BY HEALING PEOPLE. **They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick to wherever they heard Jesus was...they placed the sick in the market places. They begged him to let them touch even the hem of his cloak and ALL who touched it were healed.** Why don't we see this in MB? Jesus hasn't changed. Have we? Don't we believe Jesus still shows compassion and heals? Don't we show compassion and tell others about the *healing Christ of all mankind? It is not our task to do doctors out of a job. It is our task to invite Jesus to show compassion by words and deeds; through us... Through the church.* Come, Lord Jesus: teach, feed, calm and heal our sad world. Amen.