

Year B 9th Sunday after Pentecost Sunday, 21 July 2024 (Proper 11)

DJK

Readings

Proverb 22:6

2 Timothy 3:16,17

The Gospel: Mark 6:30-34,53-56

We have two problems today in our readings.

One:

The new Jewish Christians were making the new Gentile Christians feel like second class Christians.

Surely Christians wouldn't do that?

It was about circumcision - a very small thing in the scheme of things but the Jews made a big deal about.

Jewish people are required to have their boys circumcised by law – so all males are circumcised and have obeyed the law.

The new Gentiles Christians, that's the Greeks, the Corinthians, the Ephesians, and so forth, were never brought up with circumcision it wasn't part of their law or their culture – so the weren't.

So, the Jews thought that they had one up on the Gentile.

Not only were they Christians but they still obeyed the old law.

So, the Gentiles were made to feel as though they didn't belong – they were Jones' and Smiths not Schultze's and Schmidt's – not the real deal. It's probably one of the worst things you can say to someone – you don't belong – go away.

So, Paul has compassion on them – he teaches them.

Remember before you knew Jesus you were without hope and without God. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Jesus is our peace, who has made the two groups, Jews and Gentiles, one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility between you.

He did it by fulfilling the law himself with his obedience unto death.

Paul is as plain as Paul ever gets: *Jesus purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as

the chief cornerstone. You are now a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

So, in his compassion Paul teaches – he comforts the Gentiles – he rebukes the Jews.

What does Timothy say: *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2*

Timothy 3:16,17

Paul reminds the Gentiles of their equality no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens.

Paul reminds the Jews that the old law is finished – circumcision is not required – in fact Paul says they should have a circumcision of the heart – a true and open heart is the only offering God will accept.

Teaching sorts the problem – but more so this teaching comes out of compassion.

Jesus is faced with the second problem in our readings.

Jesus and the disciples have been on a tour of duty. It says they had been teaching and performing miracles. They were exhausted. It says: *because so many people were coming and going, they did not even have a chance to eat,*

Jesus sees the problem and says: *Hop in this boat, come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.'*

The problem is that the people saw them leave in the boat – so they ran on foot to meet them.

You can do this on the sea of Galilee (Lake of Galilee).

They couldn't get away.

When they landed Jesus saw the crowds, coming, he got on top of the hill and told them to go-away- we need some rest???

That's not what it says.

It's says: *he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So, he [sat down] and began teaching them many things.*

Can you imagine – being tired and hungry – you are looking for an escape, a break – Jesus takes you away on a retreat and then bang – the whole mob are there.

How would you feel? Sleep deprivation and hunger are the worst experiences.

Jesus has compassion on the crowds and taught them many things.

What did he teach them.

The importance of looking after self?

It says Jesus thought they looked like sheep without a shepherd.

Maybe he taught them about a good shepherd – who cares for all his sheep.

The message for us today is that Teaching is a good and godly solution to problems – and we are talking about deep personal problems – rejection, the need for a good leader, life beyond bread and fish.

Val Stiller has died she'll be buried on Wednesday – we remember this house of teaching behind us – the Hugo Stiller Building named after her husband Pastor Hugo Stiller.

When the Hugo Stiller building was dedicated in 1975, there were 145 children ready to use that building. The day of its dedication it was already too small. Ashley Rooke was the superintendent with his 23 Sunday school teachers.

Now the building is too big for our few kids.

We can lament and lament about the Golden years.

We can still live in the past, the 40's, 50's, 60's, when Australia was 95 percent Christian – and 85% of them attend church. When the pastor could have bible studies bursting at the seams.

We can talk all day about how strong the Lutheran Church was in mission, in developing the nation, in the care and preservation of aboriginal people and culture.

It's just not like that.

Christianity is a minority religion – fact

We can't go into why now, but it is a fact.

Did too many Schultze's marry Joneses? Did we let too many of our kids go to state schools?

Who knows?

We have to work with what we have – Jesus' message is to teach. Not count how many kids there are in the class – just teach with compassion.

We are working on a Sunday school model right now.

There are bible studies available right now. Join a group – lead a group.

These particular studies are called "Bringing Jesus" I have done them several times, the men's group have nearly finished it. They are the easiest studies I have come across but they lead into the deepest discussions and learning I have ever seen.

That's good teaching – deep and meaningful, very challenging, and yet accessible to the ordinary person. Please come – have fun.

Pastor Paul and I are offering three studies to prepare us for the for the next synod in October – the first 3 Sundays in August – and the last Sunay in August is a district event at Cornerstone College for our Zone. This is a must – this is where the teaching of the church is challenged by another teaching.

We take Paul's message to teach when people are hurting.

We take Jesus' example to teach with compassion.

There is only one thing a teacher needs – that is people to teach.

Lord inspire in us the will to learn form your word and be mother and fathers of faith for our kids and community. Amen.