

Sermon
Proper 13
Genesis 32:22-31
Psalm 17:1-7, 16
Romans 9:1-5
Matthew 14:13-21

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Psalm 17:1-7, 16
Matthew 14:13-21

“I call upon you, O God, for you will answer me;
incline your ear to me and hear my words.”(Psalm 17:6)

These words are taken from the psalm assigned for today.

I call upon you, O God, for you WILL answer me.

These are some very important words that I think we all need to hear, and be reminded of, from time to time. We CAN call upon God, at any hour of any given day, and God WILL answer us. God is never too busy. In fact, God is always waiting for us to call upon HIM.

The question is WHEN do we call on God?

Do we only call on God when things are bad?

Do we only call on God when we are in some sort of trouble?

Do we only call on God when we want something?

When do we call on God?

Do we ever think to call on God when things are going extremely well, for us?

When do we call on God?

In today's Gospel reading we heard that Jesus was tired and he wanted to get away to be by himself. He had just received the sad news of the death of John the Baptist, so he got into a boat and went to a deserted place. We are told that the crowds heard about Jesus getting into a boat, and so, they followed him on foot.

What a surprise it must have been for Jesus, when he stepped off that boat, and saw all those people waiting for him, on shore. We are told that there were five thousand men, besides women and children. There were a LOT of people waiting for Jesus!

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Did Jesus look up and say, “Go away! I'm tired! I don't feel like being bothered! You people get on my nerves! You always want something! Can't you see that I want to be alone?”

Did Jesus say any of these things to that crowd of people, who were standing at the shore, waiting for him? Did Jesus allow any of these thoughts to enter into his mind? No he did not!

We are told that Jesus had compassion for them, and even though he was tired, and needed to get away for a little while, he took the time and cured the sick that they had brought with them.

After reading today's gospel, I thought of two other words besides COMPASSION, that Jesus showed towards that crowd of people, waiting for him on shore. The two words are, HOPE and HOSPITALITY.

We are told in today's gospel reading that Jesus stepped off that boat, and immediately opened up his mind and his heart to that crowd of people, who were standing there patiently, waiting for him. We are also told that Jesus, like any good hostess, though tired and worn, fed the crowd of five thousand plus people, enough food, of bread and fish, until they were full, before he sent them on their way.

We are also told that Jesus, not only fed that crowd with the loaves and fish, but also took the time to teach them, by patiently telling them stories called parables. Jesus also fed their souls and their hearts. He fed them spiritually, by giving them that spiritual food called HOPE.

Jesus did not let the crowd leave that deserted place empty handed. He allowed the crowd to leave, with their hearts full of JOY and HOPE.

This crowd of five thousand plus people, came to Jesus, not physically hungry, but spiritually deprived. Jesus, who was acting as God's agent, here on earth, fed their spiritual souls, through the breaking of the bread.

“Could HE actually be the Messiah that is to come? Why! Who else could take five loaves of bread and two fish, and feed over five thousand people? HE must be the Messiah.” I'm almost sure everyone in that crowd, as they were leaving, had those very thoughts, on their minds and in their hearts.

Can you imagine the thoughts that must have been going through the heads of the apostles? They must have been wondering to themselves, “How could five loaves of

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bread and two fish feed so many people, and then leave twelve baskets full of leftovers?”

The crowd, in today's gospel reading, did not know what to expect when they went out to wait for Jesus at the shore. They only knew that they had to be with him, no matter what, or how long it took. They also knew that Jesus was the only one who could and would be able to cure the sick that they had brought with them.

As Jesus ascended into heaven, Jesus promised the apostles that he would always be with them. It was the receiving of the Holy Spirit that would allow the apostles to go out into the world, and spread the Good News of God in Christ.

It was only through the teachings of the apostles, was that crowd of five thousand plus able to meet the Risen Christ, and be able to understand more fully all that Jesus had taught them.

Today, Jesus gives us that same assurance that he left with the apostles. Jesus promises each of us that he will always be with us and that he will never leave us alone.

Today, it is through the breaking of the bread that we meet the Risen Christ. It is through the breaking of the bread that the Risen Christ invites all of us to come and dine with him at HIS table.

It is through the breaking of the bread, and the receiving of the Body and the Blood of Christ that Compassion, Hospitality, and Hope stands waiting, patiently, with open arms, for all of us to call upon HIM.

The crowd of five thousand plus people who stood waiting for Jesus to come ashore did not know, at that time, what to expect when they encountered Jesus. They had not as of yet met the Risen Lord. Their lack of knowledge did not stop them from seeking out the Lord. Their hearts were filled with HOPE and ANTICIPATION.

Today, through the teachings of the apostles, we all know what to expect when we do take the time to call upon the Lord. Today, through the teachings of the apostles, we also have met the Risen Lord, and He has also left our hearts full, with HOPE and ANTICIPATION.

The psalmist writes:

“I call upon you, O God, for you will answer me.”

The question is:

“When did you call upon God?”