

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

THERE IS JESUS CRUCIFIED

Mark 6.30-34, 53-56

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Analysis by Timothy J. Hoyer

30The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. 31He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. 32And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. 33Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. 34As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. 53When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. 54When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, 55and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. 56And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

DIAGNOSIS: WE GO ANYWHERE BUT THERE—THE CROSS

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) : *Here Is Not Good Enough*

People were coming and going (v. 31), changing their minds about whether life was better here or there. They left here and went

there to Jesus. They came to Jesus for healing, they went away healthy. When Jesus moved, they hurried on foot to where Jesus was. When Jesus came to a new place and the people recognized Jesus, they rushed about (v. 55). They brought the sick to him wherever they heard he was (v. 55). Every village Jesus went to had people bring him the sick. Every city Jesus went to had people bring him the sick. Every farm Jesus visited had people bring him the sick. If people were here in one place and Jesus was there in another place, the people left here and went there. Here, without Jesus, was not good enough. Here was no shepherd. Here was no one to lead them to green pastures. Here was no one to lead them beside still waters. Here was work, here was judgment, here was hunger, here was abuse, here was anger, here was sickness, and here was death.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : *There Is Better Than Here*

There with Jesus, there was hearing him teach the kingdom of God, there was healing, and there was Jesus as the one who united people in him. Jesus himself is what people had in common. When people had Jesus in common, they had his mercy and forgiveness and love in common as the way to relate to each other. Other people were no longer competitors or self-centered people. Where Jesus was there was the kingdom of God.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : *Now That I'm Here, I'm Going Back*

But when there was no healing, when Jesus had nothing to say, nothing to teach, no further reply (15:5), when Jesus was there on a cross, people left, rushing back to where they came from. No one came to touch the fringe of his cloak—they divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take (15:24). There is no benefit in Jesus on a cross. Compassion from a cross can do nothing. Better to go back to work, judgment, hunger, abuse, anger, sickness, and death, than to

stay with Jesus in his death. There is no kingdom of God here where Jesus is on a cross.

PROGNOSIS: JESUS GOES TO THE CROSS

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) : *Here Is the Cross of Jesus*

People come and go quickly. Here is never good enough. The grass is greener over there. However, they left too soon. They did not trust Jesus on a cross. Who would? No one. Death is God's final word for all. If Jesus gets God's final word of death, then where he is can't be better than where we are, even if we are perishing (4:38). Do you still have no faith (4:39)? God raised Jesus from the dead! Jesus is the place to be! Jesus is the place to rush to, to go on foot to, and he is now even the place to be in times of death, for by his death he gives us life with God.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (External Solution) : *Here Trust in Jesus Is Given To Your*

"Peace be with you," says the crucified Jesus. His peace is the kingdom of God, the being welcomed by God into his house as God's child. There at the cross is the best place to be, for it is the place in which God gives life, hope, resurrection, forgiveness, and the Spirit of Jesus—the green pastures and still waters we keep searching for in our rushing about. Now we say about Jesus, "Truly this man is God's Son." There is no more "messianic secret." The secret is out. The centurion blabbed (15:39). We know Jesus is God's Son, we trust him, because Jesus was on a cross.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) : *Here We Offer Jesus Crucified and Risen*

Today the church is the body of Jesus, the crucified Jesus. People are still rushing about. People still have no shepherd, or they run here and run there to this shepherd and then to that

shepherd, to whatever they have to do, whatever they think is fun, to working just so that one can have the means to buy a good time. That is life. The church offers Jesus crucified as life. The church offers a community that lives by crucifixion-experienced in love, mercy, forgiveness, and service, which are the hope and help here amongst the work, the judgment, the hunger, abuse, anger, sickness, and death. (In our world, people do not see death as God's word, but an event that will involve their dead husband opening the door for them to get through, or where they will "rejoin their memories." Others think that there is just life after death—it's just there. "Does Anybody, Much Less Everybody, out There Really Need to Hear Our Good News?" (This is the roundtable discussion planned for Crossings Third International Conference in January 2010.) But how do you know your dead husband can open the door? How do you know you rejoin your memories? How do you know life after death is just there? What do you have here to trust for that belief?) See that church, there we have Jesus crucified, whom God raised.