

March 6 2016

Scripture Lessons ~

*Psalm 107:1-91*

*Isaiah 55:1-9*

*Mark 6:30-34*

Sermon *I Want to Be Alone*

“I want to be alone,” “I want to be alone.” Greta Garbo, the actress of the golden age of Hollywood is famous for her line from the 1932 film called, *The Grand Hotel*. “I want to be alone.” In her sometimes broken English she said, “I want to be alone.”

Where do you go to be alone? Where do you get away from the noise of life and gather your thoughts? Where do you go to pray? Where do you go to be in the presence of God? The answers to these questions for me as an adult is different than when I was a child. I think I might have shared with you one time that when I was a young boy growing up as child in Colfax; we had a large easily accessible locust tree in our back yard. Often in the morning or often at dusk I would go out and climb that tree to think or to listen to the birds, or to the wind or watch the clouds or the sunset and then as I matured even later in the spring. Now, I don't climb a tree when I need to be alone and there are plenty of people even now who think I am out of a tree as it is but that is not the point.

During Lent we often associate being alone as a journey in the wilderness places of life which often leads to something negative often leads to something dangerous, temptations, and trials, hardships or lonely but not always. For in our Gospel lesson for this morning, I think that what Jesus sees as a desert place or a lonely place was, also a wilderness experience too. Now Jesus who had his share of wilderness experiences in life, a lonely place provided a setting for what I think was a healthy place, life giving, that is refreshing in the midst of the difficulties and burdens of life. Jesus and his disciples had just returned from their first foray from the mission field where they had preached, the good news, where they had cast out demons, and where they had anointed the sick for healing. I think, Jesus could see how exhausted they were and they needed to be debriefed from their long time away. He took one look at them and he said these words, “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place, to a lonely place and rest for a little while; come to a desert place, come into the wilderness, to a quiet place and pray for a while. For Luke says upon their return, their comings and goings they had no leisure to even eat their meals. Then when the crowd saw them get into their boats and leave, they followed, they gathered in a great throng. I am not certain how much quiet or how much rest or how much prayer that the disciples received in that lonely place.

I am not certain whether they had a chance to recharge their batteries much at all, in fact because when Jesus saw the desperation of the crowds of people, the need for comfort, hope Luke says Jesus had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. He began to teach them many, many things. One thing is for sure then in the midst of the busyness of life, even in the midst of what is half undone, even in the midst of a 'four alarm' desperation of the people around Jesus, Jesus recognized that he and his followers had absolutely no chance of sharing the good news, absolutely no chance of meeting the needs of others, if they did not take care of themselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually; if they did not take the time to let God recharge their batteries so to speak.

During Lent then one of our journey be into the wilderness, I think is a positive journey; that is a desperately needed journey, a journey that can mean the difference between our ability to joyfully share God's love with others or crumble under the pressure of daily life.

So I will return to my original question. Where is your lonely place? It doesn't really have to be a place at all but just a time, an attitude for faith. The second question, is how long has it been since you visited that place? I think those are important questions to ask on our Lenten journey this year. And together we say, AMEN.