

SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD"

11-15-92

Mark 6:31

The Whole Nation Was Shocked

ON THE MORNING OF NOV. 22, 1963, AMERICANS ROSE BELIEVING WITH EVOYANT HEARTS THAT THERE WAS PEACE IN MUCH OF THE WORLD AND THAT LIFE WAS GOOD, BETTER THAN ANYWHERE ELSE. BUT AS NIGHT FELL, AMERICANS WERE ENGULFED IN UNCERTAINTY, GRIEF, AND SUSPICION AND THEY SENSED THAT SOMETHING WAS TERRIBLY WRONG IN AMERICA. THAT MORNING, PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY HAD BEEN SHOT AND KILLED IN DALLAS, TEXAS.

Where I was at the time of you was too.

I REMEMBER THAT DAY ~~OUR TEACHER CAME INTO THE ROOM WITH TEARS IN HER EYES. SHE TOLD US THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS DEAD AND THAT SCHOOL WAS DISMISSED. WE WENT HOME TO FIND OUR PARENTS LISTENING TO TELEVISION REPORTS WITH SOBERING INTEREST. ALL WONDERED ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED AND WORRIED ABOUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN. FOR WEEKS AFTERWARDS, THERE WAS A SENSE OF LOSNESS. WE WERE LIKE SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD.~~

ALL OF US LONG FOR A LEADER, IN HOMES, CHILDREN LOOK TO PARENTS FOR GUIDANCE. ON OUR JOBS, WE SEEK DIRECTION AND TRY TO FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS. EVERY TWO TO FOUR YEARS, WE HOLD ELECTIONS TO SURFACE THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL BE ENTRUSTED WITH GOVERMENT. PEOPLE LOOK FOR ETERNAL TRUTHS IN OUR CHURCHES THROUGH TEACHING AND PREACHING THAT ARE FAITHFUL.

IN MARK 6:30-34, WE FIND JESUS IN THE MIDST OF A PEOPLE WHO WERE LOST. JESUS' DISCIPLES HAD JUST COME BACK FROM A MISSION AMONG THEM. AFTER PERACHING, TEACHING, AND HEALING THE DISCIPLES WERE TIRED, BOTH PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY. JESUS SAID TO THEM, COME AWAY BY YOURSELVES TO A LONELY PLACE AND REST A WHILE.

SUMMER IS A GOOD TIME TO GAIN PERSPECTIVE. WE GO TO THE MOUNTAINS, THE BEACH OR ON A SIGHTSEEING TRIP. WE CALL THIS TIME OF GETTING AWAY "VACATION". IT'S A TIME OF REST AND RENEWAL, A TIME TO CATCH OUR BREATH. THERE'S WISDOM IN JESUS' INSTRUCTION FOR US TO COME AWAY BY OURSELVES. THE DISCIPLES NEEDED TO REGROUP, TO RENEW THEIR LOYALTY.

ANOTHER REALITY PRESENT IN THE TEXT IS THAT JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES HAD JUST LEARNED OF THE BRUTAL DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST AT THE HANDS OF HEROD. THEY WERE SHOCKED AND SADDENED, AND THEY WONDERED ABOUT THE COST OF THEIR DISCIPLESHIP. THEY NEEDED TO EXPERIENCE THE CONFIDENCE OF THE MASTER.

BUT AS JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES SET OUT FOR THAT "LONELY PLACE" THEY WERE NOTICED. PEOPLE SAW THEM, CROWDS FOLLOWED THEM. SOLITUDE BEGAN TO MIX WITH SHEPHERDING.

THE PEOPLE WHO FOLLOWED WERE DESPERATELY SEEKING. THEY WERE NEGLECTED, VICTIMIZED AND WITHOUT A TRUSTWORTHY PERSON TO LEAD THEM. THEY WANTED TO BELONG. THEY LONGED FOR SOMEONE TO PROVIDE, TO PROTECT, AND TO POINT THE WAY.

HAVE YOU EVER HAD SOMEONE FOLLOW YOU LIKE A SHADOW? SOMEONE WHO WANTED SO MUCH TO BE WITH YOU AND BE LIKE YOU THAT THAT PERSON TOOK EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO FIND AND FOLLOW YOU? THERE WAS A LONELY BOY WHO PICKED UP ON A PASTOR. HE LOVED THE PASTOR SO MUCH THAT HE SHOWED UP ON THE PASTOR'S DOORSTEP EVERY DAY. AT TIMES HE APPEARED UNANNOUNCED, WHICH WAS AWKWARD AND DISTURBING. AT FIRST, THE PASTOR TOOK IT IN ~~STRIDE~~ STRIDE. BUT THEN AS TIME WENT ON THE VISITS BECAME A NUISANCE, THE PASTOR GREW IMPATIENT AND ANNOYED, AND HE SOUGHT WAYS TO AVOID THE YOUNG BOY.

THIS IS A COMMON RESPONSE TO INTRUSIONS. BUT IN MARK'S GOSPEL JESUS' RESPONSE IS DIFFERENT. WITH ALL THAT BURDENED HIM AND THE DISCIPLES, ONE COULD EXPECT JESUS TO BE IMPATIENT AND ANNOYED BY THE CROWD. NOT SO! JESUS SAW THE CROWD COMING AND HAD COMPASSION FOR THEM.

HIS COMPASSION WAS NOT PROMPTED BY THEIR POVERTY OR HUNGER. IT WAS NOT CAUSED BY THEIR SICKNESS OR BLINDNESS OR PAIN. JESUS HAD COMPASSION FOR THEM BECAUSE OF THEIR LOSTNESS, THEIR CONFUSION. IN VERSE 34 WE READ: "HE HAD COMPASSION ON THEM, BECAUSE THEY WERE LIKE SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD."

JESUS SHOWED HIS LOVE IN A SPECIFIC AND SURPRISING WAY. HE BEGAN TO TEACH THEM. NO HEALINGS ARE MENTIONED HERE, NO DEMONS ARE EXORCISED, NO MISSIONS ARE FORMED OR PLANS OF ACTION DEVISED. THIS NEEDY AND LOST MULTITUDE IS MINISTERED TO AT THEIR POINT OF DEEPEST NEED, KNOWING AND BEING KNOWN BY GOD. THEY NEEDED TO HEAR THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD'S POWER AND LOVE, WHICH WAS NOW BEING REVEALED IN THEIR MIDST. PERHAPS THE THOUGHTFUL ONES IN THE CROWD FOUND IN JESUS' TEACHING A FULFILLMENT OF THE PROPHECY OF JEREMIAH: "AND I WILL GIVE YOU SHEPHERDS AFTER MY OWN HEART, WHO WILL FEED YOU WITH KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING." THE CROWD WAS NOT TURNED AWAY. THEY WERE NOT REBUKED. THEY WERE INVITED TO BELONG AND WERE CALLED TO BECOME GOOD CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

~~_____~~
HAS THE CHURCH TODAY FORGOTTEN THIS STYLE OF COMPASSION FOR LOST AND SEARCHING PEOPLE IN OUR WORLD? WHERE IS THIS SENSE OF CONCERN THAT WILL MOVE US TO A MINISTRY OF TEACHING THE SAVING TRUTHS OF JESUS CHRIST?

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS TEACHES US THAT CHRIST BREAKS DOWN THE DIVIDING WALLS AND BRINGS PEACE. HE OFFERS RECONCILIATION TO GOD. THOSE WHO WERE FAR OFF ARE BROUGHT NEAR. THOSE WHO WERE SEPARATED AND ALIENATED ARE NO LONGER STRANGERS, BUT ARE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD. THEY BELONG. BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES ARE INCLUDED.

THERE IS A GIFT THAT COMES WITH CHRIST'S PEACE; FELLOWSHIP. JEWS AND GENTILES, WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY LIVED DIVIDED LIVES IN THE SAME TOWN, THOSE WHO WOULD NOT AND COULD NOT SIT AT TABLE TOGETHER WERE NOW "FELLOW CITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD." WHEN THE SHEPHERD COMES, THE LOST, MISGUIDED, HUNGRY, AND SEARCHING CROWD IS BROUGHT TOGETHER TO BECOME A PART OF THE FLESH WITH ONE LORD, ONE SHEPHERD, ONE FOLD.

DR. F. BELTON JOYNER, JR. SUPERINTENDENT OF THE RALEIGH DISTRICT IN NORTH CAROLINA TELLS AN AMUSING STORY ABOUT BELONGING. ONE EVENING WHEN HIS FAMILY WAS LIVING IN DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA, WHERE HE WAS PASTOR AT OLD TRINITY, HE TOOK HIS DOG SNOOPIE FOR A LATE EVENING WALK. IT WAS QUIET AND VERY DARK. SUDDENLY THE SERENITY VANISHED. HE AND SNOOPIE SAW A HUGE CREATURE LUMBERING TOWARD THEM. IT LOOKED LIKE IT WAS HALF ELEPHANT AND HALF HORSE. SNOOPIE BEGAN TO BARK WILDLY AND TUG AGAINST HIS LEASH. BELTON STOPPED UNSURE OF WHETHER TO TIPTOE PAST WITH CAUTION OR FLEE IN TERROR. THE HUGE ANIMAL CAME CLOSER, THEN BELTON SAW THAT IT WAS A GREAT DANE AND THAT AROUND ITS NECK WAS A COLLAR WITH A LEASH ATTACHED. HE KNEW THE DOG BELONGED TO SOMEONE.

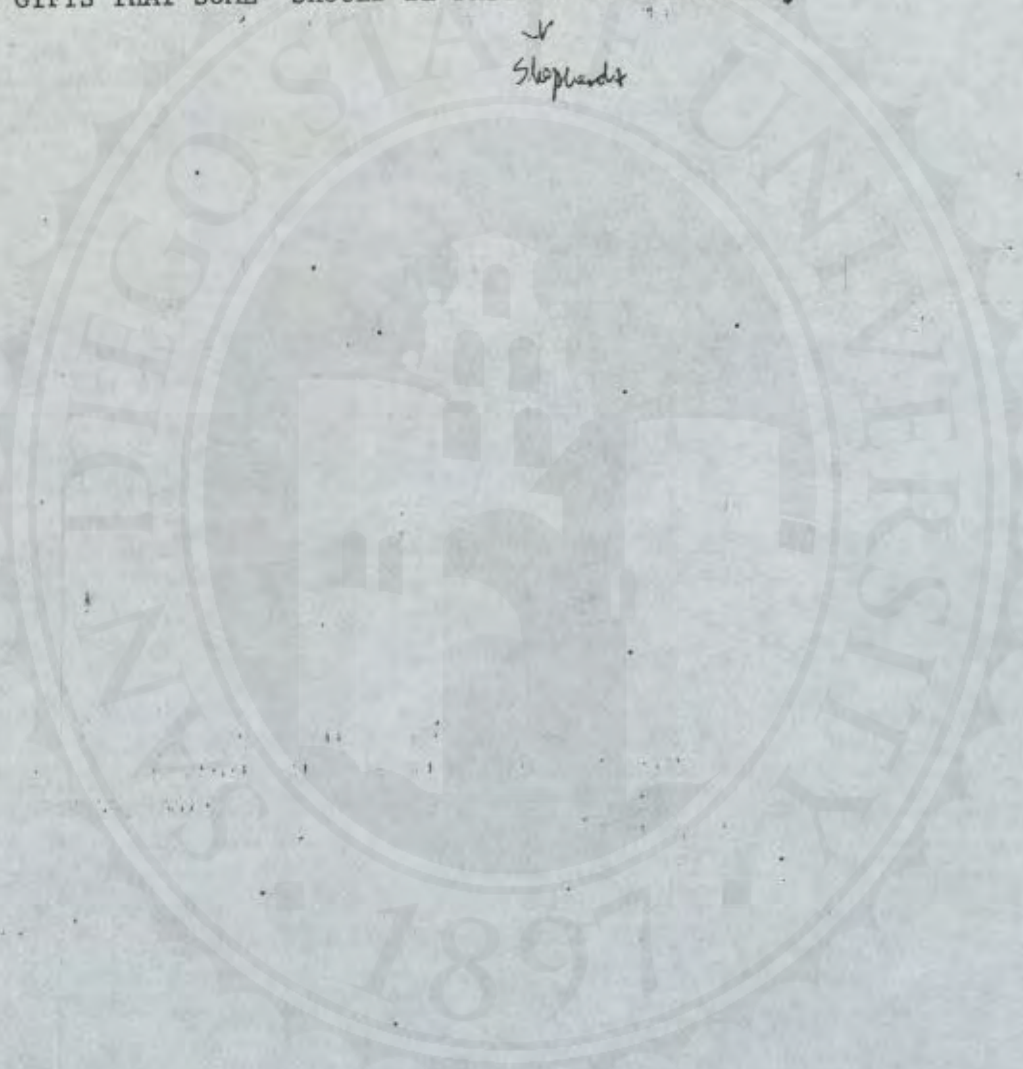
SURE ENOUGH NOT FAR BEHIND WAS A SMALL WOMAN HURRYING BREATHLESSLY AFTER. JUST BEFORE THE GREAT DAME GOT TO A QUIVERING SNOOPIE, AND JUST BEFORE HE REACHED BELTON SHAKING IN HIS SHOES, SHE GOT HOLD OF THE LEASH. "YOU DON'T NEED TO BE FRIGHTENED," SHE SAID, HE'S AS GENTLE AS A KITTEN. • HE WON'T HURT YOU." HE DIDN'T AND LIKELY WOULD NOT, ESPECIALLY IF HE WAS UNDER HER CONTROL. THEY EXCHANGED SOME KIND WORDS AND WENT THEIR SEPARATE WAYS. A DOG WITH ITS OWNER, LIKE A SHEEP

WITH ITS SHEPHERD, IS THE PICTURE OF PEACE. WHEN ONE BELONGS TO A GREAT TRUTH OR TO A GREAT GOD, THERE IS A SENSE OF ORDER AND DIRECTION AND ALL CAN REST IN CONFIDENCE.

WHEN JESUS SAW THE HUGE MULTITUDE OF LOST PEOPLE, HIS HEART WENT OUT TO THEM IN COMPASSION. HE BROUGHT THEM IN, HE SHOWED HIS LOVE FOR THEM THROUGH HIS TEACHING AND HE BECAME FOR THEM A GOOD SHEPHERD. THEY WERE, TO HIM, PRECIOUS SHEEP.

IF THE CHURCH TODAY WOULD FIND NEW VALIDITY FOR ITS MINISTRY OF TEACHING, LET IT FIND IT IN THE STORY FROM MARK'S GOSPEL. WE CARRY FORWARD A MINISTRY IN THE NAME OF CHRIST AND RECEIVE HIS GIFTS THAT SOME SHOULD BE PASTORS AND TEACHERS,

✓
Shepherds





They went out ...

Mark 6:12

1897

MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE

July 6, 1997

10:30 A.M.



PREPARATION OF OUR HEARTS FOR WORSHIP

"Let the people be in silent meditation and prayer upon entering the sanctuary."

WE PRAISE GOD

PRELUDE
CHORAL INTROIT "We Have Come Into His House" Organist
Chancel Choir

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

§HYMN OF PRAISE "America The Beautiful" # 564

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: I will sing of the Lord's great love forever.
People: I will make your faithfulness known through all generations.
Leader: Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you.
People: Blessed are those who walk in the light of your presence.
Leader: We rejoice in your name together!

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God forgive us when we do not receive you in our midst. So often we miss your very presence and the nearness of your gracious love. We ask the wrong questions; we look for miraculous signs; we fail to see you in the ordinary of our days. Forgive us our slowness to accept you and receive you as Savior of our lives. Amen.

DECLARATION OF PARDON

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

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"The Apostle's Creed"
The Presbyterian Hymnal

WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD

"Break Thou The Bread Of Life"
-Stan Pethel

Chancel Choir

ANTHEM

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Leader: Lift up your hearts.
People: We lift them up to the Lord.
Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.
Leader: Let us pray.

Thanks to Jesus

PASTORAL PRAYER
CHORAL RESPONSE

"O Lord Have Mercy"

Chancel Choir

BAPTISM & RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

RITUAL OF FRIENDSHIP "What A Friend" Congregation

GIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY MUSIC "Give Me Jesus" Chancel Choir
-arr. Jester Hairston

DOXOLOGY "Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow" Congregation

OFFERTORY PRAYER
THREEFOLD AMEN

GOD SPEAKS TO US

SCRIPTURE Fred Aryee Mark 6:30-44
MUSICAL SELECTION "Save Me Lord" Chancel Choir

COMMUNION MEDITATION

"Sheep Without A Shepherd"

Rev. George W. Smith

WE CELEBRATE THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE
HYMN OF APPROACH "Become To Us The Living Bread" #500

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

SERVING THE BREAD AND THE CUP

THANKSGIVING AFTER THE SUPPER

INVITATIONAL HYMN "Somebody's Knocking At Your Door" #382

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION "God Be With You" Chancel Choir

§Congregation standing
¶Congregation sitting
...Worshippers will be seated

TO OUR GUESTS: You are welcome to our worship service and all activities of the church. Please help us to know you by filling out a visitor's card from one of the Ushers. You are invited to meet with others in the Fellowship Hall for refreshments following the Worship Service. Please come again and invite your friends and neighbors to come with you.

USHERS FOR TODAY are Malvin Bruce, Joe Littlejohn, William Ponder, Rufus Purdie.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE CHRIST AS YOUR SAVIOR, we invite you to come to the front of the sanctuary during the Invitational Hymn. Elders Lola Buie and Louise Fowler will be at the front of the sanctuary to greet you.

PREPARING FOOD FOR THE HOMELESS TODAY will be **THE PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN**. If you are asked to help prepare or purchase food, please do it with a smile! We love your time and talent. Thank you.



CHRIST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SAN DIEGO

3025 Fir Street
San Diego, California 92102

Phone: 239-2346/2347

FAX: 239-8830

MINISTER: Rev. George W. Smith
MINISTER OF MUSIC: Vacant
CHANCEL CHOIR DIRECTOR: Mrs. Dolores Stevens
ORGANIST: Ms. Juanita Dentham
YOUTH CHOIR DIRECTOR/PIANIST: Ms. Geraldine Pipkins
CHURCH SCHOOL CO-SUPERINTENDENT: Ms. Freddie Jackson
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