

**Script Worship Resources - *Pity Less* / <https://youtu.be/5BVJlcYsN1o>**

**Pentecost 8, Year B,**

18<sup>th</sup> July, 2021

**Jeremiah 23:1-6 CEV / Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 CEV**

**Prelude**            ***The Ash Grove*** (*Let All Things Now Living*)

traditional Welsh melody, played by Annie Center

<https://youtu.be/vnnk7Rb7daQ>

**Welcome/Announcements**

**Pass the Peace**

**Call to Worship**

We gather together in the name of Jesus Christ—members of God’s family, and brothers and sisters to one another.

There are no outsiders here among us, no one has any special standing or bragging rights. For we have been brought together by the redeeming love of Jesus. Let’s join together in worship!

**I'm glad to welcome you to online worship with Olympic View Community Church. We seek to welcome all of God's children to join us in bearing witness to the radically transforming power of God's love.**

**As we gather today, let’s think about how we are cared for by our compassionate shepherd, as we listen to the haunting rendition of Psalm 23 sung in the original Hebrew.**

**Reflection Video**    ***Mitzmor Le David Gad Elbaz*** (*with Lyrics*)

uploaded to YouTube by Martha Duran

<https://youtu.be/1FAsbKVWA10>

**Invocation**

Caring and Gracious God, you are the shepherd who gathers us together today to celebrate with grateful thanksgiving the community in which we live. We are nourished by its diversity, brought about by the unique gifts each person contributes. Be with us in this time of worship and encourage us to never cease welcoming the strangers we meet and accepting the gifts they bring. Grant that they will enrich our lives and will be a reminder of the joy that comes when all will be one in you. Amen.

**We light a candle today to represent the Spirit burning within us, and among us, guiding our time together. (light candle) Amen.**

**In our reading from Jeremiah today, we have the call to be good shepherds of God's sheep, and the prophecy of the perfect shepherd to come. As we listen to these words from the prophet, let's reflect on what being a good shepherd should entail, and what makes for a bad shepherd.**

## **Words of the Prophet                      Jeremiah 23:1-6 CEV**

You leaders of my people are like shepherds that kill and scatter the sheep.

You were supposed to take care of my people, but instead you chased them away. So now I'll really take care of you, and believe me, you will pay for your crimes!

I will bring the rest of my people home from the lands where I have scattered them, and they will grow into a mighty nation.

I promise to choose leaders who will care for them like real shepherds. All of my people will be there, and they will never again be frightened.

Someday I will appoint an honest king from the family of David, a king who will be wise and rule with justice.

As long as he is king, Israel will have peace, and Judah will be safe. The name of this king will be "The Lord Gives Justice."

## **Scripture Video                      Jeremiah 23:1-6** ***A Righteous Shepherd For Israel*** Lectionary bible reading

<https://youtu.be/ogC8fOizmLM>

## **A Time of Prayer**

Today we come together as a community to share together our joys and concerns, and lift them to God in prayer. If you would like to share a specific request to be included in our communal prayer time, please leave a comment in the video below, or email myself at: [vicarglenn@gmail.com](mailto:vicarglenn@gmail.com), and I'll make sure to include that request in next week's service, as well as send a prayer chain email, if you would like.

## **Joys and Concerns**

**Let's keep Myrna in our prayers this morning, as she recently found out she needs to move to a new apartment, as her complex will be closing soon. While she has been blessed to find a new place, she has a lot of packing and decisions to make, as her new apartment is smaller.**

**Let's also continue to keep Patti Berg in our prayers, as she continues to recover from her recent health struggles.**

**Also lift George DeBon as he continues to adjust to life in his new setting, and without his beloved Betty.**

**We give thanks this morning for all the groups that are able to use our space for worship and other purposes, and for those who are looking for new space or to return to us to meet again.**

**Let's bring these concerns and others in our lives to God together in prayer.**

Loving Shepherd,

You lead and guide, You walk alongside, You prepare, you feed, you call, all of your sheep, even those of us who are lost, those of us who stray constantly, those of us who stay close to your comforting staff.

We are grateful for the lush green pastures of our lives, and we pause now to offer our thanksgivings for the goodnesses in our lives...

There are so many who walk in the shadows of fear and suffering and despair, and we pause now, to offer our prayers for the broken and bleeding places in this world...

We also offer our prayers for the sheep of our own flocks, in our families and friends, in this our church and our community...(pause)

O Loving Shepherd, We have all we need, as we live in You. Amen.

**In our gospel lesson this morning, we hear of Jesus and the apostles seeking respite from the crowds and their ministry to them, yet the crowds find them and they are back at work. As we listen to these words from Mark, let's reflect on how we find rest, and what our perspective is when we are greeted by those in need.**

## Gospel Lesson

## Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 CEV

After the apostles returned to Jesus,<sup>[a]</sup> they told him everything they had done and taught.

But so many people were coming and going that Jesus and the apostles did not even have a chance to eat. Then Jesus said, "Let's go to a place<sup>[b]</sup> where we can be alone and get some rest."

They left in a boat for a place where they could be alone.

But many people saw them leave and figured out where they were going. So people from every town ran on ahead and got there first.

When Jesus got out of the boat, he saw the large crowd that was like sheep without a shepherd. He felt sorry for the people and started teaching them many things.

Jesus and his disciples crossed the lake and brought the boat to shore near the town of Gennesaret.

As soon as they got out of the boat, the people recognized Jesus.

So they ran all over that part of the country to bring their sick people to him on mats. They brought them each time they heard where he was.

In every village or farm or marketplace where Jesus went, the people brought their sick to him. They begged him to let them just touch his clothes, and everyone who did was healed.

## Scripture Video

## Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

### *Christ Healing The Multitudes*

Lectionary bible reading

<https://youtu.be/UxY7t7C4Zrg>

## Message

### *Pity Less*

When we think of God, what image comes to mind? For some, it may be a gentle father figure with a flowing white beard, sitting on a magnificent throne in some far away nirvana. For others, the Almighty is just that, a powerful, wrathful being ready to enact eternal judgment on those who do not follow a certain path, or planning a climactic battle of epic proportions at the end of things. While the biblical narrative contains all of these images and more, probably the most prevalent are those of the parent and also that of the caring shepherd.

All of the lectionary readings for this week definitely draw on the shepherd image, from our reading in Jeremiah to the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, which we heard sung in Hebrew. It's clear from our texts that God is portrayed as being compassionate. In fact, Jesus, God incarnate, is described as “compassionate” in his attitude toward human beings at least eight times in the gospels and is implicit in the entire witness to his life, including his healing ministry. But what do we think of when we imagine a compassionate God? Is it a deity that takes pity on us from afar? Someone who feels bad for our struggles and wants to comfort us remotely? It is no accident that this word is used so naturally of Jesus.

For it is of the very essence of the prophetic traditions of ancient Israel, which Abraham Heschel named “divine pathos.” He states, “To the prophet...God does not reveal himself in abstract absoluteness, but in a personal and intimate relation to the world. He does not simply command and expect obedience; He is also moved and affected by what happens in the world. He continues, “God is concerned about the world and shares its fate. Indeed this is the essence of God's moral nature: His willingness to be intimately involved in the history of man.” The *passio Christi* – the passion of the Redeemer – is nothing more or less than the incarnation of the *pathos* of the God of Israel, the Creator.

But to truly understand our relationship with our deity, we need to consider the real meaning of compassion. We might begin with the word itself. English, with its latinization of basic human experiences, obscures the picture behind the word. German is much more direct. The German word for compassion is Mitleid – quite literally, “with suffering.” That is the literal meaning of “compassion” as well, but most of us do not hear it. We think of it as a synonym for pity. Pity is something you can manage from afar but not so compassion. You do not have compassion, really, unless you suffer with those to whom you refer. The precondition for compassion is unconditional solidarity with the ones for whom you feel it.

In our gospel lesson today, Jesus' compassion for the crowd, sheep without a shepherd, is not condescension. It is the mark of his identification with his kind, and it will not achieve its full expression until, at Golgotha, he has gone all the way – identifying with our lot not only in birth and life, but also in death. For Christians, this is not just a “statement about a good, generous, and loving human being, Jesus of Nazareth. It is a statement about God – namely, the One before whom we live out our days and are accountable. As recipients of such compassion, we contradict our own being, our new being, if we fail to enact the same compassion for others.

So what does that look like? What does being more compassionate and less “pity-full” look like? First and foremost, it's truly getting involved. It's doing whatever it takes to truly understand the situation and perspective of another. It's easy to pity the homeless person on the street and give them a couple of bucks. It takes effort to find out why they are homeless, and seek to modify the situations that led them to that place. It's easy to drop off

some canned goods for the food bank but it takes effort to understand why there are so many suffering from food insufficiency, and trying to do something about it. It's easy to write a check to help refugees but much more taxing to understand what led to them fleeing to begin with, and trying to resolve the root cause. Don't get me wrong. Charitable efforts to raise donations and help provide physical relief to suffering are worthwhile efforts.

The point I'm trying to make, and scripture demonstrates, is for believers, that this is not the end of our work. We are called to more. Like the early apostles, we are to work together with our Redeemer to show true compassion, to get out in the crowd, in spirit if not in person, and truly heal those who suffer, not just give them a band-aid. For too long, the church has allowed an inward focus on ourselves and our focus has shifted away from compassion to pity. We send checks to charities; we let others do the work we are called to, using positive catch words like "missions" and "outreach." While our impact as individuals can be limited, our impact together as a community with the resources we do have is often untested. The question we, as the body of Christ, need to ask ourselves, is are we willing to be truly compassionate, or will we be satisfied to be pitiful? What are we truly called to? I hope and pray we can truly follow the path of our Redeemer and walk alongside others, instead of watching from a distance. May it be so. Amen.

## **Call to Serve.**

The Shepherd cares for us, providing all that we need in abundance.

The Shepherd calls us to love one another in truth and action.

May our gifts reflect our trust in the Shepherd's care. May our offerings show our willingness to love one another.

**As we continue to seek to be a place of compassion and support to our community, we ask that you give prayerful consideration as to how you may support our efforts. If you would like to make a donation, gifts can still be mailed to our church office, or online donations can be made through the link in the video description. Thanks again for all your support, and may we continue to work together to keep being a place of ministry that seeks to promote the growth of God's shalom around us.**

**Today, as we listen to the following familiar hymn, Come Thou Fount played by Annie, let's think about how we can show real compassion in our own lives, something more meaningful and real than the pity that is so common today.**

## A Time for Reflection

### Reflection on the Word [Video]

***Come, Thou Fount*** (of Every Blessing)  
played by Annie Center

<https://youtu.be/vnnk7Rb7daQ>

## The Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of love, you abide with us; you provide for all our needs and guide us in your ways. Out of gratitude for your care, we bring our gifts before you. Use them for your work of caring, that all may feast at the table of abundance, walk without fear, and drink deeply from the cup of compassion. Amen.

## Blessing/Assurance

Loving Shepherd, guide us into Your ways. Help us to never leave anyone behind, to remember the last, the lost, the least are Your beloved, and we have a mutual responsibility to care and love one another. Keep close to us in the shadows and save us from the wolves that seek to devour us with the world's concerns for wealth, power, and notoriety. We know You have prepared a place for us, with cool waters and green pastures, a way of life where evil cannot harm us, especially when we remember that we dwell with You forever. Guide us into Your way of life, Loving Shepherd. Amen.

**As we extinguish this candle, let's carry it's divine spark into our own lives this week, shining God's like into the lives of all we encounter. Amen.**

## Postlude

### ***My Tribute***

words and music by Andrea Crouch,  
played by Annie Center,

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<https://youtu.be/PuP7rJdigOo>