

# Discipleship Moment

**Sermon Text: John 7:53-8:11**

Have you ever wondered why we go to church? It has always seemed weird to me. And then, as I was reading Mark's Gospel and I came across this statement, "And he left there [Capernaum] and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them" (Mark 10:1). It struck me that Jesus did not see the crowds of people following him and bothering him a problem, but rather, had compassion on them again and again. As a pastor, it is easy to feel tired of the crowds, there are lots of people needing your attention and asking important questions. There are people who are sick, have surgeries, lose loved ones, and these crowds wear down even the most compassionate person. But not Jesus, he always taught, always fed, always communicated with them (although he did try to run away a few times). What is it about crowds that Jesus had compassion, I think to myself. Then I realized: Jesus wanted to harness the opportunity to touch people from all different walks of life. Jesus saw the crowds as sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36), no one to guide them.

So, in our present age, God wills that his people be gathered together regularly with one goal, to hear his Word. Through Confession and Forgiveness, through the reading of Scripture, through the sermon, and through Holy Communion God is communicating to us. Jesus (the Word) is present in the Scripture, in the sermon, and Jesus is present in the Bread and Wine of Holy Communion. This is all a way for us, God's people, to hear from him.

In this Scripture, we heard about a sticky situation, a woman, who was caught in adultery was brought to Jesus by a group of Pharisees. They were intending to trap Jesus. They wanted to figure Jesus out, what opinion does this guy have about Moses' Law? They think. They brought their own premises, prejudices, and opinions to Jesus. We do the same thing. Surely Jesus would vote the same way I do. Or What would Jesus think about how my children treat me? We bring these premises, prejudices, and opinions with us. And Jesus meets out small-minded opinions with broad reaching promises, "Blessed are the persecuted" and "Blessed are the poor." We are confused and offended by Jesus sometimes, "pray for those who mistreat you" and "don't be anxious." Again, and again we find ourselves like these Pharisees—we try to nail Jesus down using our agendas. But Jesus isn't concerned with our categories. He wants to penetrate our hearts and challenge our presumptions and force us to face God.

We have two choices. We can leave transformed like the woman in this passage, or we can leave unchanged like the crowd.

Let us have hearts of repentance.

## Going Deeper

1. What is your favorite part about going to church? Why?
2. Do you feel God's presence in worship services? How do you hear from Him?
3. Matthew 9:36 says that Jesus saw the crowd and had compassion on them, because "they were like sheep without a shepherd." What do you think this means? Are there times you need guidance? Have you found that in worship?
4. Do you find yourself sleepy or zoning out during the worship service? During the songs, sermon, or prayers? Why?
5. Think of ways to actively listen to God during worship, either take notes, bring a journal and write in it throughout the worship service, take time after you receive Communion to thank God for His gifts, or other ways.
6. During the prayer time in worship, take the Prayer Request card and actively pray for each person as the pastor prays.