

Rev. Seth D. Bode †† Sermon 276 †† Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

“Lord God, you have appointed me as a Bishop and Pastor in your Church, but you see how unsuited I am to meet so great and difficult a task. If I had lacked your help, I would have ruined everything long ago. Therefore, I call upon you: I wish to devote my mouth and my heart to you; I shall teach the people. I myself will learn and ponder diligently upon your Word. Use me as your instrument -- but do not forsake me, for if ever I should be on my own, I would easily wreck it all.”

“Sir, we would see Jesus.”

JESUS GIVES THE TWELVE REST FOR THEIR WEARY LABORS

Gospel of the Day – Mark 6

³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all that they had done and taught. ³¹He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while.” For there were so many people coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat. ³²They went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ³³But many people saw them leave and knew where they were going. They ran there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴When Jesus stepped out of the boat, he saw a large crowd. His heart went out to them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. He began to teach them many things.



The trouble in this world is different kinds of chargers. On one of my six trips to Indiana from Missouri and back, I happened to forget my computer charger. I checked all my device chargers along with the old chargers in my shoebox filled with them. I even purchased a charger Swiss army knife that intended to fill all my charger needs. Nothing worked. I finally found a similar make and year of my laptop computer in an electronics store and the workers let me disconnect their computer on display for my computer ... just to recharge a little, just to get a little work done.

Personality tests suggest that the same is true for human beings. We all recharge differently. Some people recharge by being in large crowds; by multi-tasking; or by making quick decisions. These people are fueled by Western culture and its favoritism for these activities. Demanding bosses, noise pollution, and frequent interruptions characterize these extroverted, outgoing people. If they are exhausted, they plug in and fuel up by being around multitudes of people. Others recharge by being to themselves. You might call them shy people, maybe even characterize them as difficult to get to know people, or solitary people. But the fact is that roughly 20%-50% of people are self-aware people who drain easily when around many others. They may even feel unsafe. But they recharge by being to themselves. I'd love to spend time with you, but I have to sit in my bedroom to myself for a little while. You may call such people introverts. So they must recharge.

Jesus knows this..... **Jesus Knows Just How You Recharge**

Last week we learned Jesus sent out His Twelve friends with the message of repentance, healing, and casting out demons. The Gospel walked all over Galilee on twenty-four legs. We spoke primarily to outgoing people. Our outgoing people were charged. This week, Jesus has provided a little rest and relaxation for the Twelve. That means that today we are speaking to those who are not outgoing or chatterboxes. We are speaking to those who do NOT feel naturally connected to a going Gospel.

Let me tell you about my Myers Briggs personality test. It was an online list of questions that supposedly measure how I get along with people and visa-versa. I had slight preference (6%) of INTUITION over SENSING; marginal or no preference (3%) of FEELING over THINKING; moderate preference (31%) of JUDGING over PERCEIVING; but the most interesting one to me was that I am 3% more EXTROVERT than INTROVERT. Remember, I'm the oblivious little boy who pays very little attention to things going on around me. I do not naturally recharge by being with people. You would characterize me growing up with concern for my own self, a self-awareness that soaks in the solitude. Yet this study proved that I have changed and am now more extrovert than introvert. How? My only conclusion is that primarily through my roles as a seminary student and pastor, the Church has changed me. Alright! YES! This is great ... Right?

Then I began to think ... Does the Church have the task of changing the Christian who is naturally introverted? Are we keenly and primarily interested in making extroverts out of our introverts? Do we seek to push the self-awareness and meditative thinking out of God's people? Is our goal to thrust one another back to the crowd regardless of God-given gifts? Or instead is it possible that attempts to change and push and thrust these introverts may cause them to give up altogether? I read a psychology writer this week who explained that introverts who do not get to recharge tend to give up on things that matter, like: eating well; exercising; and connecting with loved ones.

In Mark 6, we see that the Gospel has gone out into the world. The Twelve Apostles, as they were now called, now return to Jesus and debrief. They give a report of what they saw, heard, and did. Then Jesus seems strangely keen on getting them to relax, rest, restore, recharge. He brought them back to a private, solitary place where they can be secluded for some time, however ...

The Twelve are given no choice but to recharge in a private place. They don't get any say in the matter. He even takes the trouble of getting them in the boat to some deserted place on the other side of the lake, but isn't Jesus wasting time? Aren't they supposed to get the good news out there? What can Jesus be thinking, that he seems to hinder the church and the kingdom while the multitudes are hungry for salvation?

But Jesus Christ knows just how these Twelve need to recharge.

Yes, Jesus knows the sin that is involved with self-focus. He knows that sin is evil people curved in on themselves, selfishly meditating on what helps them. He even knows that statistically speaking two to six of his Twelve very own apostles are introverted. He knows they are bundled up in getting, not giving, as all humans are. No soul escapes selfishness in their sinful nature. Jesus even knows that such sins must be repented of and forgiven by His own perfect, solitary death on the cross. But Jesus also knows that the gifts of these disciples may be of advantage to His kingdom. And so He gives them rest.

Could Jesus have known what advice there is today? There are ways for the introverted to recharge. Advice in the secular sphere is offered in the form of candle-lit baths, walking, cooking, music, and art. This is how an introverted person may recharge if one feels like giving up. But in the Church there is room for such things. The Church also needs these things. The Church needs candle-lighting, walking, cooking, music, and art. As it turns out, the Church doesn't need to change those who are introverted! As it turns out, there are ways to recharge as well as serve Jesus. Then, maybe an introvert can even push some personal boundaries after recharging and get out of our comfort zones and say a few words of God's good news.

The Twelve were surrounded by people. We are told people saw them leave and knew where to find them. They ran! Their feet plodded all around! They met together! They beat Jesus and His Twelve friends to their destination! The text reads like they're surrounded in droves. And if 20%-50% of the Twelve Apostles really were introverted, two to six of them were about to lose it.

Yet again, Jesus does not push the disciples, thrusting them into the crowd. But in Jesus' own way, as Jesus is pleased to do, He begins to teach them. In so doing, He proves that receiving, not doing, is of the utmost importance in His kingdom. Yes, receiving, not doing, is the one thing needful. After all, if these Twelve were going to carry the confession and witness of the Savior to the whole world, they would need to charge up on every Word that comes from the mouth of God. They would need to keep everything Jesus teaches. So Jesus would need to recharge them again and again.

Only Jesus knew how to recharge the Twelve. The Twelve would never be personable enough, relatable enough, present enough, or pray enough. Not even Jesus' closest friends would be enough. Only Jesus would know how to be solitary without sin. Only Jesus would never utter a careless word, a curse or swear, a lie or sinful laugh. Only Jesus would as a sheep before shearers is silent, always know when not open His mouth. Only Jesus had this urge of compassion in His twisting stomach to teach them all and be their Good Shepherd. Only Jesus, the uniquely infinite, supreme perfect Being could sinlessly lay down His life for His friends. Only Jesus could take it up again in a joyfully lonely tomb.

Only Jesus would be enough to recharge them body and soul.

What does this mean for introverts as well as extroverts? Introverts understand that in the manner you recharge, it may be easier for you to appreciate when Jesus Christ has done it all for you. It may be easier for you to be still and know that God is God and put your faith in a Savior who comes with His own good works, His own 'it is finished.' But introverts, you have a task to not become an extrovert. Instead, seek to contribute your gifts in some way. Sometimes push your personal comfort zone. Extroverts, recognize the church people who complement your gifts. Realize you don't need to be pushy, just as Jesus was not pushy. You have some great gifts for purpose and meaning in this church. Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ Jesus.

The trouble in this world isn't the wrong kind of chargers; the trouble is knowing just how to recharge each of us. Jesus knows. For

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters,
He restores my soul.*

Amen.