

## See All The People

An Ordinary Time Sermon by Pastor Rob Hamilton  
Delivered on August 22, 2021 in the See All The People Series  
My first sermon in Geneva as Sr. Pastor

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

**30** The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. **31** He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. **32** And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. **33** Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. **34** As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. **53** When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. **54** When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, **55** and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. **56** And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

## Preamble

Today we're launching a 5 week series called See All The People. Its not as inspired by the song Lonely People by America as it is from the ending of Mark's 6th chapter that we've been studying the couple of few weeks. As I get settled in as the new Senior Pastor here, I think its important for you know what I think the church is called to do and be. As a United Methodist Pastor I know its our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation fo the world. At UMCG, we express that mission uniquely by saying we are called to make and nurture disciples of Jesus Christ to serve the community and world. And so in the fulfillment of that mission I want you to know that I look to Jesus on how we are called to make and nurture disciples who serve the community and world. Pretty straight forward. So let's look to see how Jesus is making and nursing disciples who serve the community and the world today in Mark chapter 6 and in the coming weeks Pastor Lisa and I will look at other examples of Jesus' forming disciples and serving the world.

So as we get ready to go deeper today, I want us to pause here and invite us to pray. I want you to pray for me, for yourselves, and for each other that God might use this time and these words to work in all of us. Please pray with me:

## Prayer of Illumination

Come Lord Jesus and speak to us. Speak to us through our gospel, shared worship and my meager words. Use what we have brought here today for your kingdom purposes. What of us that can't be used by you, set aside and help us to leave it where you set it. Amen.

## Sermon

At this point in Mark chapter 6, Jesus is well into his ministry of preaching the kingdom, forgiving sins and healing people. He had sent his disciples out two-by-two to preach and heal and now he's super famous. Like two weeks ago in our study of Mark's gospel, Jesus was selling out college stadiums and now he's packing arenas - well whatever the first-century Palestine version of an arena would be.

This ministry is exciting. People are being set free from emotional, physical, relational and spiritual pain, disease and isolation. The disciples had their first go at it alone and when we come to our passage this morning they are all exhausted. So Jesus suggests they hop a ferry and head out to a retreat center in the wilderness where they can recharge their batteries and get something to eat. I mean they were so busy because there was so much need, they were skipping meals and probably not sleeping much if at all.

They were able to catch their breath for a few hours as they trolled across the sea of Galilee, but as Mark records Jesus and his crew were way too popular to go unnoticed. And so the crowds heard from Bartholmew's Instagram post that they were headed to a deserted place and they rushed ahead and met Jesus at the boat dock.

Now if Jesus were like most of us, in his exhaustion he'd see the crowd and be overwhelmed by their size and all the suffering on display and he'd pay the captain to turn the boat around and tell his crew to stop posting where they're headed. But that's not what Jesus does. He looks upon the crowd, gets out of the boat because has compassion on them because





they are like sheep without a shepherd and he would heal them. In fact, Mark tells us that in all the cities towns and villages, where ever he'd go all the sick would come out to simply touch the fringe of his cloak and be healed. Because Jesus sees all the people and instead of minding himself, silently judging, or thinking of himself which we can be inclined to do, he has compassion on them and with that compassion does what he can to help.

So what does this mean for us as disciples of Jesus? I think it means Jesus calls us to see all the people with compassion and to meet their needs so that people can start being healed. I don't know if that means we'll be able to give sight to blind or help paralyzed people walk, but we can provide the healing God has made us capable of doing like some of these stories I read recently on BuzzFeed:

Brynnie told this story about how she was seen and treated with compassion. "I took my 3-month-old son and went to visit my best friend an hour away. I had barely enough gas to make it there, but she told me she'd fill up my tank. By the end of the day, we both forgot, so I headed home without enough gas to make it back. Finally, when my car told me I had only six miles left, I found a gas station. I had six dollars in quarters, and I figured that was enough to get me home. I had to bring my baby in his car seat into the gas station, and there was a long line. The man behind me was making happy faces at my son and cooing at him, which I shrugged off. Once it was my turn in line, I gave the cashier my quarters, put my kid back in the car, and started filling my tank. The man from the line came out, and started approaching me. I got scared for a second. It turned out he had paid the cashier \$25 so I could fill up my car!" "He said he'd seen his sister and his own daughter struggle to make ends meet, and he was just happy to help. I cried on the way home. I had been so stressed and scared, and he saved the day."



Or baobaopanda tells this story of being seen and treated compassionately: "When I was about 12, my extended family and I were having dinner out somewhere in Alabama. Well, some of the adults ganged up and teased me to the point that I retreated to the ladies room in tears. A few moments later, a lady from another table came in to comfort me. I've never been religious, but I was happy to let her pray for me right there in the bathroom. That was more than 30 years ago. I don't remember where we were eating or even what I was teased about, but I do remember the kind lady in the bathroom."



And lastly Elizabethofferlew tells this story, "I took my two young children to the store for the first time by myself. I had a full shopping cart, a newborn strapped to my chest, and a 3-year-old trying to escape into a busy parking lot. Panic must have been written all over my face because a young man in a pickup truck deliberately parked next to my car. He jumped out, offered to load my groceries into my car, helped my daughter into her car seat, and returned my shopping

cart to the front of the store. I almost cried with gratitude. He made feel like I could get through one more day!”

In all of these cases, these people were seen and treated with compassion. It was a small thing for these strangers to do but to be seen and have needs met changes lives, it starts to heal our broken world much like Jesus and his disciples healed their little corner of the world.



But the key is to:

- keep our eyes open,
- to not retreat from suffering to
- follow that little voice of Jesus that tells us to...
- act with compassion.

But I think we are called not just as individuals to see all the people like Jesus does and act with compassion. I believe we are all

called to do so as a church, as an entire community or band of disciples.

I realize I might be preaching to the choir a bit here because I am proud to be part of a church that serves others. At UMCG, we are filled with compassion and give generously of our time and resources to help others all around the world.

Sometimes, though, we get used to our surroundings. We don't see as well as we could or are so focused on the needs we've been meeting we don't always see ALL the people.

This past week I met with Geneva Mayor Kevin Burns and asked him how he might see communities of faith, like our meet needs in our community, and at the end of our conversation, he granted us this interview: Video available on <https://genevaumc.org/>

I appreciated my time with Mayor Burns, who grew up in a different branch of Christianity, and yet echos some of what we see Jesus doing in Mark 6.

Recognize there is need, even in a nice community like Geneva. Acknowledging that need - this is the seeing and not retreating part. Remembering that we are committed to each other and working together to transform the world.

Whether its seeking peace between ideologies that are in conflict. Addressing the changes that come with population growth and demographic change. And healing the climate or any of the other needs that God opens our eyes to and then places on our heart through the series, Jesus calls us to see all the people and do what we can to heal the world for in doing so God provides our own healing and wholeness. Amen.