

Good Morning. Jane and I are very happy to be able to be with you all this morning. It is good to be out in a place where God obviously paused during creation in order to take some extra time to make it particularly special.

Have you ever had a really busy day? I mean that in a good way, not a bad way. A busy day being who you were meant to be, and then doing the things that God put you here to do. That question kept coming to my mind, as Jane and I were making our way here on Friday. I couldn’t help but think about what a day Jesus had just had.

They were most likely up fairly early that morning, which would have been normal, and when it came time for worship on that Sabbath they would have headed down the street to the synagogue which was just a couple of blocks away. As a matter of fact, if you were visit there today, you would see that the ruins of that very same synagogue is still there, just a short walk from Peter’s house.

While they were there, Jesus healed a man in front of the whole congregation. I have no doubt that along with that healing there had to be words also, a teaching that went along with His action, because when all the people who were there got together at coffee hour after the service all they could talk about was this new amazing teaching and how it came with a different type of authority from that which came from the Scribes.

After the service, Jesus and the rest went back to Peter’s house and then, after sundown, which brought an end to the Sabbath, people started lining up. They came with illnesses and struggles, and they were healed. It went on into the evening and, finally, when it got late, the people headed back to their homes, I’m sure hoping to return in the morning with more people in order to be amazed again. It was a good busy day. It was the kind of day that ends with a smile on your tired face.

You know, when I think about passages like these, I think that it is safe to say that they inspire and intrigue us. They teach in a way that is still amazing and they might even give *us* something to talk about at coffee hour or over pancakes at Flipper Sunday.

We gravitate towards words like, “God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life.” We immediately recognize “I am the Way, the Truth, and the life,” and “Prepare the way for the Lord,” and “Follow me and I will make you fish for people!” These, and so many others, are great, powerful words from wonderful passages that we have heard since childhood.

But sometimes, it is the part of the passage that seems ordinary that carries the most powerful part of the message. Sometimes it is in the words that we seem to skip by that, if we

were to linger just a bit longer, we would find profound truths. And I think that we have one of those this morning. Maybe you caught it.

Jesus woke up early, before the sun rose, and went off by Himself to pray. When the others woke and couldn't find Him, they went looking. I mean, people were showing up and you could imagine that there was a certain amount of fear among the newly minted disciples at His absence.

And when they found Jesus, they said something that in many ways framed Jesus' whole ministry. The disciples found Him and told Him one of the basic truths of our human existence ever since we decided to go it on our own. In simple words that often get quickly passed over, they told Jesus that "Everyone is looking for you." That acknowledgement might seem like a pass over statement, but at a deeper level, they were proclaiming a profound truth. In a troubled and lost world, everyone is looking for Jesus.

Now, I know, in our time that may not seem so obvious. In Helena, for example, where, according to the Chamber of commerce, 60% of the population list their religious affiliation as "None", that statement might seem a bit over the top. But I think that it is true, none the less. And it is the same in Greenville, and New York, and Missoula, and Chicago, and around the world. Everyone is searching for something that has gone missing in their lives.

There is an emptiness within us that needs to be filled, an emptiness that goes all the way back to the day that we were expelled from the garden. Everyone is searching and the other truth is that they are going to find something. The emptiness that now exists within us will be filled.

It might be filled with stuff. Do you know what one of the biggest businesses, or at least one of the fastest growing businesses across our country is? I don't know about Helena, but in Greenville it seems like they are opening upon every corner. Mini storage units. We are searching to fill the emptiness, and we need places to put all those things that we are gathering in order to do that.

Or maybe it is physical relationships that we use to fill the void. Or maybe power and prestige, or image and beauty, or substances that dull our ability to recognize that something is missing. Whatever it is, the fact is that we are all searching. We are all looking for the one thing that will make our lives OK and far too often we settle for the first and easy thing that comes along.

C.S. Lewis said it like this in his book, *The Weight of Glory*, "We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is being offered to us. We are like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

Which brings us to...us...to the church. In a world, that seems distracted, and divided, and eerily satisfied with it's dissatisfaction, *we* have found the sea or, at least, we have found the road leading to it. And it has put us a mission.

The mission is twofold. First, we are to embrace with joy the road we are on. We are to immerse ourselves in the journey that we are called to be on together. Whether it be at St. Peter's or the Diocese of Montana, or Christians throughout our country or the world, we are called to be sacred partners, in community together, on the road to the sea, or maybe to the mountains, or to a lake in the country. We are made for a special place that is no longer outside of our imaginations. We can see it, just over the horizon, and we are to draw near to Christ and embrace each other in a loving community so that we can become all that God is hoping for us to be. That is the first of the two great commandments to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind.

Then, in order to love your neighbor as yourself, we are to invite others onto the road with us so that they might find joy, and engage peace, and embrace something currently beyond their imaginations.

It reminds me of my summers when I was in college in Boston. I would work during the week and take a few additional classes on the side, but when Friday hit my friends and I would cram into our beat up cars and head to Cape Cod for the weekend. And as we were approaching the bridge that led across the water, the interstate would stop dead packed with thousands of people doing the same thing. And, as we crept along, we would roll down our windows and even get out of our cars and simply enjoy our journey together. I'm sure that those who looked down on the interstate from the overpasses thought we were insane as we laughed and met new people all heading to the same place...all on the way to the sea, wishing that the people from the bridge would join us.

The world is searching and whether they recognize it or not, they are searching for what we already have. Our mission, through love and service and teaching, is to help them to find HIM. After all, He came to be found, and it is only in finding Him that we are able to then find ourselves and each other.

Everyone is searching! Our mission is to be pointing.

Amen