

God's Repair Shop – Reflection for Trinity 7

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. 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. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. 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.

When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. 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.

Mark 6: 30-34, 53-end

I love a restoration programme, and there has been one programme over the last few months that has really caught people's hearts: The Repair Shop on BBC1. We all watch, often with rising emotions, as treasured items are brought in, often with no value other than the stories they hold, and marvel as with skill and dedication they are given appropriate care to be restored once more.

Jesus loved a restoration programme too. Over and over again in Mark's Gospel we are reminded that he looked around the communities where he was walking and working, and noticed that people's lives were broken, damaged or just worn down. Sometimes that was because of illness, or oppression. Sometimes because of their own poor choices, and sometimes because they had no choices at all. Jesus saw them all – and he loved them.

The people went out to find him as they realised that he was opening God's Repair Shop for them. They didn't need to be rich or educated. They didn't need to be popular or attractive. Jesus valued each and every person because each and every person is precious. People seemed to sense it, and came to him so that he might restore them. Jesus even notices when his own followers are worn down, needing basic things like food and rest, and draws them apart so they might be restored, ready to go and share with him in bringing healing to a world in need.

Some of us may be feeling in need of a bit of repair just now. We might need to hear Jesus drawing us away, inviting us to rest, so that we can be renewed. We might be looking at the world around us – friends, family, neighbours, colleagues – with the same eyes that Jesus looked, and notice people who need to know they are so precious that Jesus wants to welcome them and help them find healing and hope. Each of us is so precious that we are being restored ourselves in God's repair shop, and then we can share our skills—our prayers, our words of welcome or our practical help – as the church continues Jesus' ministry of being God's repair shop for the world.

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