**Sunday 21st July 2024**

When reading this part of Mark, it shows how Jesus, with His disciples, was in need of a short break.

It says in :31 ‘And He said he said to them, ‘Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.’ It demonstrates how Jesus understood the importance of taking a break from daily routine: ‘Take a break otherwise it will break you.’

The time Jesus wanted to take off was most likely more than only a break. It was as much a time of relaxation as it was a time of reflexion or debriefing with His disciples about all what happened.

But, all in all, it proves to us the importance of some rest and quietness before someone can embark on the next episode in someone’s life.

However, the rest of the story tells us that Jesus didn’t have much rest at a quiet place. When arriving at their place of rest they were met by a large crowd. The people He had left were watching where He was going and had followed Him.

The CofE/Lectionary in all its wisdom, or lack of it, had left out the rest of our reading and skipped immediately to the end of the chapter.

But, a lot did happen in the verses between 34 and 53. Not only the feeding of the 5000, but also Jesus coming to His disciples who were in need by walking to them over the water.

The point I would like to make in this event of Jesus desire for some rest, is about using the opportunity.

Jesus was in need of a rest, together with His disciples, but when the opportunity rose, He made use of it.

It was a choice He made to help the crowds. He could have chosen to become angry seeing all these people again going after Him.

Or, He might have felt very disappointed that He had no chance to go to a quiet place with His disciples. But, instead, Jesus had compassion on the people and he fulfilled their needs.

It brings us, me included, to look at ourselves and how we respond to the need of how others need Jesus Christ as much as we need Him.

Are we open to see the need of others to know Jesus Christ for themselves, or do we rather only look to our own needs.

Do we rather say; I deserve a time of rest now, so I don’t care anything else.

When we see others who are looking for Jesus Christ in their lives, do we simply neglect it by walking by on the other side of the road like the priest and the Levite in the story of the Good Samaritan?

We might all have good reasons not to take the chance to honour God in a certain time when the opportunity arises, but Jesus did.

He might have been tired and wanting to have a break, but when the opportunity arose, to show God’s Kingdom to all the people around Him, He took it.

Rick Warren, who said the prayers for some USA presidents at their inauguration, once wrote 2 books named: Purpose drive Life and Purpose driven Church.

Reading in one of his books I remembered how he wrote about the experience in his own church: 'There are waves of the Holy Spirit, and if you miss one wave of the Spirit you wait for the next.'

There’s only one problem with that, and that is that you never know when the next wave or opportunity will come.

It’s not that we should never look after ourselves, or fulfilling our own needs, but we can learn a lesson here by taking the opportunity when it arises to glorify God, like Jesus did.

It is about being ready to use the opportunity to make others aware of God’s Grace, which has been made accessible for all through Jesus Christ.