

How long, O Lord, how long! He may have sighed when he got into that boat heading for a solitary place. There are moments when the solitary place is the only place for the heart to recover from the burdens of life. The heartache of grief can be soothed by the kindness of others, but sometimes what your heart needs to heal is a solitary place. We don't know what was on Jesus' mind when he got in the boat, but we can imagine, and imagining we can draw close to him who draws close to us when we are carrying heavy burdens.

That must be what the people thought when they pursued him. What's remarkable is what Jesus does. Rather than row harder and harder to get to that solitary place far away from the people pursuing him - a strategy we might understand - Jesus listens to his heart. What he feels is compassion, and compassion is what summons him toward the people with healing in his touch. [...]

I find this helpful. Following your compassion will never lead you astray. In fact, I believe following your compassion will always lead you to Jesus and to the people where he is present. [...]

What happens when you follow the compassion of Jesus within you is nearly always a miracle. I remember the immigrant woman who showed up pregnant in my office on Christmas eve. She had walked to worship from the neighborhood looking for hope somewhere, anywhere. Unwilling to return to a abusive home, she cried - literally - for help. Rather than send her away, compassion drew her near and over the years, with the loving kindness of this congregation she flourished in ways that can only be described as miraculous. A master's degree, two healthy children, a new home and a loving spiritual community. This is how compassion leads us in the way of Jesus.

Jesus asked the people to sit down, and he shared what was present. That's all: he shared what was present. A little bit of this and a little bit of that. Blessed, broken and shared. And, this is the life that Jesus invites us to live together. A bit of this and a bit of that; it does not have to be much. Jesus can and does do miracles with very little. What will you offer?