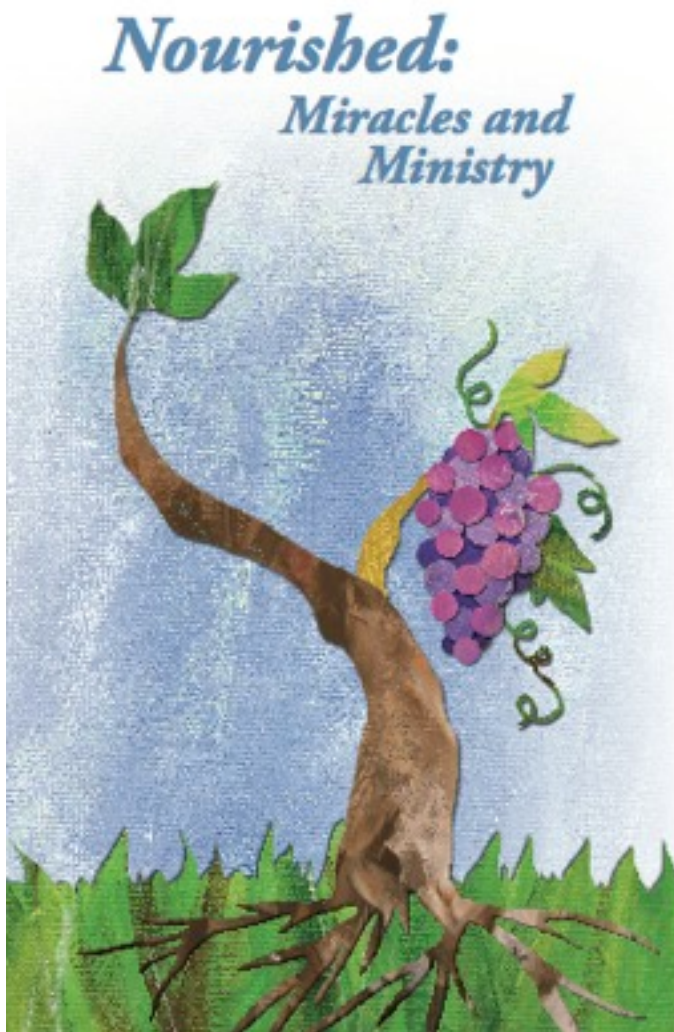


Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church



Weekly Sermon Series



Miracles and Ministry

Jesus spent three years with the disciples, planting seeds and growing roots. As the true vine, he provides the same nourishment for each of us as we are called to be his disciples today. Have you thought about who you are called to be as you've grown in your faith? How are you prepared to go with power and authority in Jesus' name? What does that mean for you? Jesus called the disciples together. Is it possible that they were not continually by his side, but off at their work and with their families? Just like us, they went about their daily tasks, and on weekends, or at special times, they were physically present with Jesus.

This time, Jesus asked them to leave their daily work and go two by two, with power and authority, from village to village, to teach, heal and cast out demons in his name (Matthew 10:2-4). "Go with nothing," he said, "and enter into the homes of the people who offer you a place to bring my message. Stay with these people for as long as you remain in their midst, and care for those who are hungry for the truth. Don't go looking for people in authority or the wealthy. Care for the people who want to hear the good news."

In other words, don't go back home to pack your bags, or load up your Bible and spiritual help books. "Simply go with humility and rely on me," said Jesus. "Stay among the people, love them, bring my message and then, in my name, act as you have seen me act."

Why do you suppose Jesus instructed them to do this? Is this the same message Jesus gives to us? When we come tethered with baggage and with our plans already made, there is no opportunity for the people we want to serve to offer their hospitality and kindness. If we are loaded down with stuff, we are setting our own agenda and not letting Jesus guide our time and our message in the experience.

I picture the apostles going off each weekend to minister as they are instructed, being received or rejected, and walking on to a new place. And I see each of us asked to do just what the apostles were asked, to share Jesus' love and our faith by going into the community, neighborhood, church, grocery store, hospital, etc., to care for and love his children. He will give us the words to say and the tools we need to heal the wounded soul.

It is easy to minister to our friends and family, as I am sure the disciples did each time they returned home. But Jesus calls us away from the safe place and sends us out into the world. Are you ready to go?

Jesus, help me be a channel of grace to bring the joy of the gospel, both in word and deed, wherever you send me! Amen.

-- Week of March 7, 2010