

The First Sunday in Lent (2021)
Mark 1

Holy Spirit, Light Divine, shine upon this heart of mine; chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day.

Let me see my Savior's face. Let me all His beauties trace. Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to Thee. Yes!

Mark 1:9–15 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

In the Name of Jesus.

“I NEED a cookie!” “I need my dinosaur tail!” “I need a clean diaper! Clean diaper! Everybody likes a clean diaper!”

SOMEONE is listening to the Holy Spirit: “Repent! Also: believe the Gospel!”

Though the Lord Jesus bids His children NOT to cast their pearls before swine, piggies have ears; and piggies listen; can piggies turn needy and human the prayer-ful again?

Your piggy pastor has been eavesdropping on a real, hard-boiled pray-or, sin-nor, baptized Spirit residence and target of demons, care of angels: and as comfortable with the wild animals as the first Son of God. “Roar!”

ALL the happy words of Life and Salvation, dear children of God—ALL of them are interchangeable! “Repent!” is just another way of saying ‘Be NEEDY!’ “Put your heart into the Good news that comes when Jesus Christ comes to town!” is a sorta long-winded way of saying ‘Put your and your neediness in the ears, on the shoulders, in the hands of the One Who is so unlike you but ONLY happy now to identify Himself with YOU: the Son of Man!’

When God applied for job, it was clear that HE would never be in need, as long as He is God. From the bushes in the Garden, then, religion grew like a weed; government; boasting; idolatry; self-esteem; the ruination of our children: ‘When will YOU grow up?!’ ‘Adam, where are you?’ ‘I was afraid!’ ‘THAT is NOT what I asked! Not HOW are you. But WHERE are you?!’

NOW—you can trace the footsteps of God now—the ONE Whose ways are ‘UNTRACEABLE’, the Bible says. All the way to the cross. NOW, the Father, His Son, Their Spirit—they are stumbling OVER One another to present THEMSELVES....LIKE...US: NEEDY! AS IF...as if HE needs our prayers, our needs, to stay in business. Hallelujah!

“I need to pull you in the wagon!” “I need outsides!”
 “I need Mickey Mouse Clubhouse!” “I need a bath!”

AS IF...as if this anonymous ‘NEED-OR’ has this YUGE staff just LIVING and BREATHING to jump to the needs! How is THAT working out for him?! So far, not bad. We big’uns have experience—and time, we dream—to ruin him, steal his childhood, his faith, the pray-ing, his need.

The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

Our entire Christian life! Baptized, Spirit-filled, driven...BY...HIM!—BYYY the Spirit Who NEEDS us to call on Him with the Need of Needs: Lead us NOT into temptation! And when we insist on going there anyway, get...us...OUT!

“I need kisses on my head. I bonked it!”

“I need to pick you up!”

“I need to a cookie!”

WhY, my dear ones, do we not CONFIRM the two-year-olds, give them the Bread to eat and the Wine to drink? The One Who declared the coming of the kingdom of God IN His coming said ‘Do this’ and ‘all of you’ and ‘take’ and ‘eat’ and ‘drink’ and ‘for many!’ Piggy-pastor’s experience is that by the time the little ones have been tempted beyond endurance and wanna be all ‘growed-up,’ rarely will they be communing with me. Ain’t got what they need. Are they needy at all?

Blessed are y’all, children, if you need. ‘Need!’ That is ALL that ‘Repent!’ means.

‘Need!’ is what ‘Pray’ means.
N...o...t...h...i...n...g... else.

‘Lay your head down in peace in the Absolution the most needy man you’ll ever meet elbows Father, Son and Holy Spirit out of the way to horn in on their action and assure you, ‘THIS MAN..RIGHT HERE...THIS MOMENT...AND FOR GOOD...I now take away your need and give what you need. More and maybe even totally different that what you ask, what you say you need.’

What grows from this? ‘Treat EACH one who looks just like God now—eyes, nose, fingers, toes, footprints, needs—treat each as GIFTS from the One Who needs to HAVE...OUR...NEED! And hear THEM crying out, ‘I need. I need. Gimme, gimme, gimme.’

Learn how to wrap up your God IN your need. Unless we turn and become like this the kingdom of God remains a distant dream.

‘Time-out for you, young child of God! NO is the answer now, to your need! YOU need to be taught a lesson!’

‘I need a cookie, Pa-pa; Paul-Paul, I need a cookie.’

I heard grampa tell dad, ‘I don’t care what he just did wrong. If YOU don’t run right now and get him a cookie, get out of the way, unless you want oinkin’ grampa to run over you!’

Children of God, even I CAN pretend to be like you, like him! Never give this up!

I was practicing ‘neediness’ this week, falling asleep. Y’all, no doubt, are well practiced at this. Pray that I learn and learn and need.

Falling asleep: ‘I need my grand-daughter, Emma Grace, to safe deliver this week! I need her staff to be kept safe too!’

‘I need my savior-spouse to be happy and healthy. I need her creations to love you more and more. I need them to love each other despite what the world is teaching them.’

‘I need to be smaller. I need my worries to transfer to your account. I need good government. I need good weather. I need faithful friends. I need ears into which to put your Good News. I need...’
Somewhere around there, my friends, I practiced my final falling asleep.

You know how that goes. What a happy way to live, to die, to repent, to believe, to fall asleep and to rise in the Name of Jesus.