

PENTECOST 18 (2018)
Mark 9 Jesus Christ, King of a child

Mark 9:30–37 [The disciples] went on from there and passed through Galilee. And [Jesus] did not want anyone to know, for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.” But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you discussing on the way?” But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.” **And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.”**

In the Name of Jesus.

‘In MY Name—in the NAME of Jesus Christ:’ MEANS, ‘HE rules HERE; HE is King of THIS Kingdom; HERE He stakes His claim!’ “**And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms...**” ‘In...My...Name...’

‘The disciples DID...NOT...UNDERSTAND...’ when He CLAIMED earlier **THIS** RULE AND KINGDOM: His claim to the hands of men that would kill Him. “**The Son of Man is going**

to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.”

OF COURSE they did not understand! Who of US DOES?! REJOICE, believers! REJOICE, you baptized in the Name of Jesus! For This Kingdom and This Gospel— THIS...MANNNNN.....—none of this HINGES on YOUR ability, MY ability, to grasp, to figger out, to understand! And more than any great one here today—any child!—DEMOTES himself, herself, to the impossible, unnecessary task of ‘figgering-out’ their PARENTS! ALL the children need to know is that the ONLY REASON God above MADE parents, is for the sake of their children!

Herein lies the Mystery of God-in-the-Flesh, the Good News of His Baptism with sinners in the Jordan, the Gift we can all only adore—children; and WE, with whom the children bear, for whom the children pray. Hear and adore and worship; and by the Spirit’s resurrection of YOU, become little again:

¹⁶ And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the governor’s headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. ¹⁷ And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. ¹⁸ And they began to salute him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” ¹⁹ And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him.¹

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mk 15:16–19). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

As if we might need the help, the clue, Saint Mark goes on to say: ‘Of course, they were MOCKING Him!’ ‘Thank you, Saint Mark! Thank You, Holy Spirit, our God and Lord!’

The height of my reading and meditation this week was a term on the recliner with His Majesty, J, reciting with him the holy tomes of the Cat in the Hat comes back and Green Eggs and Ham. And, as all great ones know, when you complete each holy book, there’s really only one thing to do! Read-em-again! And—the great ones teach us—someone’s on the lookout for a single changed syllable, much less a missing WORD!

The Spirit’s book deserves as much credit as Dr. Seuss. Why must the Spirit from the Father and Saint Peter’s memory of all this pause to tell us the crown of thorns and reed of office beating Jesus’ head and the soldiers kneeling before Him was MOCKERY?!

‘Grant us, Spirit of Jesus, that child and his spirit and his mind, in your mercy!’

He endured that mockery of Him as King.

So we have The Promise! He will endure OUR worship of Him too!

My dear ones, standing before you today is NOT the sad replay of old Pastor ‘before the feelings doctor sarcastic guy!’ I’m being as gentle with you and myself as the Scriptures grant; as vulnerable as only Christ our King can be!

As days and years go, and we DEMOTE ourselves from great to pathetic, from child to tyrant, WE become coarsened and hardened by this world of soldiers, this Pilate world, this upside-down world of religion and power. And as the WORLD and its worshipers know that a man is in charge, things are right in heaven and on earth WHEN...I...GET...MY...WAY....!!!!

So, my dear ones, daily and much, you and I—though we KNOW better than the soldiers, the priests, the fellow crucified who reviled Him also!—WE are calm and secure and optimistic about the day, when the day, and the signs of the day, start pointing and turning and turning OUT, the way WE have insisted that it all must turn out!

Let your poor pastor confess his sins; learn also!

I was so tempted this week, last night, even this morning, to a great sin! I asked last week, last night, this morning, for a clear

day after lunch so the children can enjoy the fun we planned for.

And, of course, since the NAME of Jesus Christ was placed ON your miserable preacher fifty three years ago this coming Wednesday—well, half a century or more is surely enough to learn that the ONLY REASON GOD EXISTS is to turn out EVERYTHING...EVERY DAY...IN EVERY WAY...for the benefit of His children, even me!

Yes....but what does the Weather Channel say is going to happen today? What about the apps of my gizmos? How does the sky look to MY EYES!

For those of y'all who are not yet pledged to live as Lutherans, this is about as good as example as I can give you for the Lutheran devotion and adoration of our Baptism at the Name of Jesus. For unless HE calls us and treats us as little children, who can STILL BE TAUGHT SOMETHING, can STILL BE EMBRACED, and STILL BE GIVEN TO....

We, of all religious people, are most prone to despair of God's care of us. For though we have set all our hopes on His killing at the hands of men—the Kingdom HE CLAIMED!—we are as unedjicated and unschooled, or worse! When the work, the health, the money, the plans, the possessions, the elections, the WEATHERRRRRR.....falls outside OUR NAME, and rests only in His!

When He embraced that child, He was stretching for His coronation day, when men spread His arms and killed Him.

Now, risen from that death, He certainly is NOT going to DEMOTE His Kingdom into a pathetic copy of this world's powers and kingdoms, plans and exertions. Praise the Lord!

His Name, His Kingdom, is going on, just fine: where He turns our hearts and hopes from the most burning question inside us—‘Who of US is greatest?! Well, who of US is getting his way MOST?!?!’

And He teaches us to covet, to yearn for, to pray for that spot, within the bent elbows of the King all THIS around us can ONLY mock! The littleness and weakness that the old man in us is going to mock until the end.

The mystery of the Gospel, which we can only adore, is that His Kingdom is so far removed from what this world thinks of kings and their authority, that we should not be at all surprised to see those soldiers who crowned Him with thorns and beat Him with His own scepter, robed Him in purple and fell on their knees to worship Him...

If our King accepts the mockery of OUR religion, my dear Lutherans—we should not be surprised at all to see that ‘whole battalion’, that the Spirit took pains to note for us,
IN...HIS...KINGDOM!

Dear children of God: your faith in Jesus and your love for God are sincere and true! THAT is HIS pledge to you and me, His children, despite the fact that daily and much the whole world could mock our claim! YEP! But we’re still baptized, still forgiven, still ruled by That King: embraced in the Name of Jesus! Amen!