

## PENTECOST 3 (2021)

### Mark 4 Ezekiel 17

<sup>33</sup> With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. <sup>34</sup> He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.<sup>1</sup>

In the Name of Jesus.

‘HIS OWN,’ my dear ones, is OUR BOAST—since OUR BOAST is that we are ‘NOTHING-BUT-GIVEN-TO...—BY THE SPIRIT OF JESUS!’ “To His OWN disciples—more and more!” The BAPTIZED! MORE AND MORE. Note well! The teaching of Jesus is NOT for the very thing our beloved Lutheran church lusts after and advertises to and sells its soul for: the crowds; the curious; the customers. His parables are for the proud and self-satisfied. His MORE is for the baptized, the sinners, the little ones He cares about to the slightest detail.

So even I may pray; REALLY pray! NOT babbling on and on, trying to tilt and influence the clouds and stars above to today’s desired advantage. No! But with all the phoniness I can MUSTER and not DENY but embrace and boast: TEACH ME TO PRAY!

Prayer: the certainty of ‘God-so-given-to-me’ that That God cannot wiggle out of paying attention to me—AS IF! As if He’d ever want to, after the Christ-Event! The cross, the tomb, the skies—ALL, One just like ME, says FAITH! And GLAD to BE just like: You, me, all the birds who seek shelter and rest and calm, after everything else proves a mirage.

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<sup>1</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (Mk 4:26–34). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

HE is that seed growing—how? No man knows!

Oh, men can INDEED imagine the Law—especially in the Hand of an angry Sky, angry Heaven, angry God! That is why MOST religious people I have met—I mean Lutherans—are great scolds and finger-waggers and advice givers but where is the COMFORT? Long-suffering? Cup of cold water...

No man ever conceived the Holy Spirit's Gospel: that GOD became little with the little—and there's lots and lots of us little 'uns! Hallelujah!

It's all about Jesus!

HE is that SMALLEST of seeds—and that's where He wants us always to start, daily, with our Baptism, with Him, with the sinners, confessing that WE CANNOT MATCH God our Heavenly Father—and trusting that God our Heavenly Father is not LOOKING for US to match HIM!

NOT NOW!

NOT...SINCE...THE...SON...OF...GOD!

Start small.

Live small.

Die small.

Rise small.

OK—SIMPLIFY, PASTOR!

Will God take your call so very late in the day?  
AFTER you have tried to unravel the tight knots of living  
with every other resource you have—with so little evident  
FAITH—like ME!—almost NO FAITH!—that EVERY  
other resource seems so much more capable than the bare  
word of our Baptism into Christ?

Is there trouble in your life? UN-Faith says: Use your  
BRAINS! MONEY! INFLUENCE! POPULAR  
OPINION? Hustle, hustle, hustle! Maybe the screeching  
INTERNET has an answer! No finality there. No gracious  
God for certain. No hope.

When we run through ALL our idolatries first—our  
towers and banks of trust FIRST--....CAN we offend our  
GOD more?

When we leave prayer and His Word and His Spirit to  
last place and least—come now, is the Offended God going  
to turn His ear to us, much less GLUE His ear to our  
desperate state, when He is the LAST HOPE we have?

Sure thing! Jesus-sure! Jesus Christ/God guarantees it! In fact, He pledges that there is no other God!

Oh, it is a FINE miracle of The Holy Spirit, that when anxiety of losing idols like money, or even anxiety about our standing with the Living God is addressed FIRST with HIS pledges and gifts and certainties: the Word, the Body and the Blood, the assembly of the baptized...

But you're going to be OK with God on HIS sowing and growing and reaping schedule. Not on yours.

The LAW says 'Here's the goal—now measure yourself against that goal, and YOU conclude what heaven thinks of YOU!'

The Gospel says:

God is little now, in Jesus Christ, the King of God, the Son of God. Little like those confessing their sins in the Jordan, with HIM! Little like the resurrection story in The Gospel According to Saint Mark!

Let's review!

There's a young man in the tomb. Was it the same young man who ran from those who arrested Jesus, after they tore away his bedclothes? Running away naked, with NOTHING in this world in which to wrap himself?! And there the young man sat, in the tomb—otherwise empty.

DRESSED in the same wrapping in which they wrapped the despised King!

How LITTLE can you become! Remember: the young man ran away, ashamed NOT of being butt-nekked, but ashamed of Jesus. And so did all the rest! What does the young man say Jesus wants spread?

“Tell my so-called DISCIPLES—” Ach!!! But He does NOT say ‘so-called’—not He!—they ARE MY disciples; because, WHO in the world needs the teaching of the Gospel MORE, than the betrayer, those who abandoned me—oh, and make sure you find My Best Bud, Who denied three times, calling curses down from heaven to swear that he doesn’t even know my Name?! When the nations read how much I’m into THAT MAN, no one will ever feel left out of heaven again!”

And—joy to the world! To WHOM does the young man entrust the message of a King NO ONE has ever looked for? The women, trembling and bewildered, who say nothing to no one—the text says. But, here we are!

LOOK...FOR...THE...LITTLE! My dear ones! THERE—LITTLE—you will find a place to rest your wings for certain, with how many others?

What, precisely, did the Lord ADD to the story of growing seeds of grain and the far-branching mustard seed? What was the ‘He explained everything’?

We need not GUESS. The Gospel according to Saint Mark tells us.

<sup>13</sup> And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. <sup>14</sup> But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. <sup>15</sup> Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” <sup>16</sup> And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them. <sup>2</sup>

A hypothetical situation. Imagine that you have a son; maybe a grandson. I’m just thinking wild here. The characters in today’s sermon are fictional: not based on any person living or dead.

Say the boy is between two and three. T for two and T for three and T for—terr---ific?!

And say that he is learning to weaponize his EGO. ‘No!’ ‘Go away!’ ‘I will NOT!’

And suppose that you try, one day--for all 73 hours of that endless day--to make him take a nap. And it just doesn’t work.

The Gospel today tells you that YOU are experiencing a miracle. (The little sinner is baptized, by the way.)

How will this child grow to love others, acknowledge God, honor father, be a weirdo in society: blessing rather than burdening?

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<sup>2</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (Mk 10:13–16). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

The same way—Lord, have mercy!—that poor dad and grampa and the rest will be saved. Christ is with us all the way. And since our baptism and with His Body and His Blood, even WE can receive the Kingdom of God as a little child.

We do not deserve Christ. We will NEVER fit ourselves for Heaven. And the words we learn bear only the slightest resemblance to anything going on inside: ‘I’m sorry. Thank you. Please. I love you.’

Note well! UNLESS we receive the kingdom of God, heaven, Christ, just like such a petulant wonder-boy, we are lost for certain. Praise the Lord.

If Jesus was a Moses-clone, he’d make plants grow the way your poor pastor tries: plant, see some green, then lose all patience and pull and pull. This is where scolds and finger-wagger Lutherans come from: those who grow up from being terrible-two to being phony-forty, phony-fifty, and worse.

So, cheer up, little children! If you are still hard to bear with, and find a lot of fingers wagging at your life, your religion, your way of life; when your Heavenly Father puches you on the bee-hind now and then, to get your attention, and, oH!, the tears!

He hasn’t given up on you. HE sees growth; gives it; creates it; anew. “I am baptized. Happy day!”

But, pastor! How AM I going to be saved?!

Tell me something PRACTICAL to do, right now, today, so that I may rest assured that all the good things Jesus did were done FOR ME and that God is only angry when I DO NOT boss Him around?

According to Jesus, your Teacher, little ones: you will drop all your worries about YOUR standing with God—and anyone else's standing with God—when you have the good sense to sit under a tree, and watch the birds, and listen, and learn to believe in the Name of Jesus.