

## PENTECOST 7 (2018)

### Mark 6

**Mark 6:1–13** [Jesus] went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. And Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.” *And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief.* And he went about among the villages teaching.

And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts— but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. And he said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

In the Name of Jesus.

ANOTHER occasion to praise the Lord that HE says we are clean in His sight because HE SAYS SO: He has baptized us! And He has cleansed us and will all the way to Life, even though we are often petulant children: ‘I don’t NEED a bath! I’m not that dirty!’

Praise the Lord! Though He MARVELS at their unbelief, the Good Physician does not quit His job! He keeps healing! However: *And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them.*

He ‘COULD NOT’?!!!!

I do not remember a scarier call to repentance and fear over the wrath of God! If even JESUS cannot heal me....! What then?

What then? The text says! His apostles, His Word, His Spirit, His Churchhhhh.....

“And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts—but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics.”

AS IF...as if our Jesus could not be any littler! He makes Himself littler still! ‘I know! If they despise ME and My preaching and My Word, then I will hide all of Myself and My Spirit and My healing and My salvation in Peter, who says HE will never let me down! And, I’ve got Judas here! We’re all set!!’

‘Is this not the carpenter? Nice signs and wonders and healings and biblical wisdom unmatched! But such treasures in SUCH a package? No thank you! Not for me!’

He MARVELED at their unbelief! For if they knew HIM, how well did He know THEM?!

‘Is not that the town gossip?’

‘Is this one here Mr. Superior over everyone else?’

‘Are y’all not a gathering of the practically perfect? A hospital overflowing—but not one sick person?’

He COULD NOT do any healings—for no one was sick—so they diagnosed themselves.

I printed for y’all great words of comfort and faith from the Large Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther. He wrote the people used to be SCARED and CHASED into doing the Christian religion: receiving Christ’s Body and Blood, confession and Absolution, and so on. And then, he wrote that since the Reformation, people were freed of the fear—and thus careless. He even writes there, as elsewhere, that the Reformation and the shining forth of the Gospel one last time was, in MARTIN LUTHER’S estimation, a big mistake!

See how we are NOT Lutherans because we follow every last word the man spit out!

The LAW is a much more sure-fire way of DRIVING people to dance at the end of your string: attend, give, applaud, flatter, make a lot of noise!

The GOSPEL?! Nothing ‘sure-fire’ about the Gospel! It’s just little medicine, in the most neglected place, for the sickest of the sick. And this poor man standing here is glad the Holy Spirit spoke through useless Luther! Even if no one else ever will be!

He marveled at their UNBELIEF!

WHAT UNBELIEF!  
THERE...WAS...IN...CHURCH! Or, the synagogue!

Ah! Just because they had no FAITH does NOT mean that they were not going to fill their lives, their hopes, their boasts with THEIR RELIGION! And so it goes, until now, and until Life!

‘He told them to wear sandals.’ THANK YOU, Mr. Holy Spirit! Needed that info! Evidently, we DO!

‘But not a second set of clothes!’

They need good shoes because they will need to travel to find those sick enough for the little Holy Spirit and His

tiny, little Savior. And either the exertion will be too hot for a second shirt, or they won't LIVE—not HERE!—be here long enough to need a change of clothes.

Our God gives us our seconds and minutes, my dear ones, to present our little selves to the littlest of the world: those who are sick, and who CAN BE convinced! Sick in God's eyes—devoted to idolatry and to the using of other little ones as if WE were boss!

And right where children are misbehaving, the servants of the little ones belong with loving acceptance coupled with correction. Heaven is healing there.

And right where the little ones we bump up against all day long are displaying their sad fear of God, of the Gospel, of Healing and Salvation so little and so near—'I don't need help! I can do it all myself!!!!'—our sandals can not have carried us to a more fitting place!

And, freedom! If the sick refuse medicine, move on to the sick begging for it.

(Emily Dickinson's diagnosis and its end!)

Your poor pastor has marveled often over the two thieves on the cross, who mocked Jesus with the crowds. Because I don't pay close attention to the Word, I marvel that those in such a place have NOTHING better to do, than to join in with those GLAD to see them up on crosses too! Not even a moment there for a little self-reflection and review of their lives? 'Well now, perhaps my life has not gone as it should!'

Nope! Glad to find someone in a state even MORE pathetic!

Today's lessons tell us all to pay closer attention to the Word. The Incarnate God marvels when what WE MAKE of our religion leaves us just MOUTHING the cry for mercy, while our hearts are set on BROADCASTING—and MEANING IT!—that OTHERS need much more help than ourselves!

Daily and much the Incarnate God marvels at our unbelief.

Our hope? He kept on: preaching, healing, dying, the grave and then out.

And He has placed God and life and healing in the

mouths of the women at the tomb who told no one nothing because they were so afraid!

And He re-enlisted Peter to get out this Gospel according to Saint Mark!

And He has located ALL OF GOD in your little church, with your poor preacher, and with y'all.

Praise the Lord that He pays attention UTTERLY to what HE SAYS about us: Our Baptism in the Name of Jesus! Amen!