

PENTECOST 8 (2018)

Mark 6

Mark 6:14–29 King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him." But others said, "He is Elijah." And others said, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised." For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her. For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly.

But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. For when Herodias's daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. And the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you." And he vowed to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom." And she went out and said to her mother, "For what should I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist." And she came in immediately with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." **And the king was exceedingly sorry,**

but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. And immediately the king sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

In the Name of Jesus.

That was Mark 6; hear Mark 15; hear and be filled!

²⁶ And the inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." ²⁷ And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁹ And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, ³⁰ save yourself, and come down from the cross!" ³¹ So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. ³² Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.

³³ And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. ³⁴ And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”¹

OUR King! Praise God! Not sodden Herod; not inspirational like Jeroboam the Second of Israel in Amos’ day. No; OUR King is David come again, David of Psalm 22, in our flesh, forsaken by God, yet the Son of God Himself! Why ME, of all men, of all kings; why God, has Your face turned sour toward ME?!

The Spirit of Jesus proclaims that THAT’S why we are bold to call Him OUR King! For He rules a Kingdom that no man joins; but one established for all who have run out of kingdoms in this world.

THIS King of ours is the One for Whom Saint Paul praised God in the Ephesians lesson today:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ***has blessed us in Christ*** with every spiritual blessing ***in the heavenly places***, even as ***he chose us*** in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. ***In love he predestined us for***

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mk 15:26–34). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, *to the praise of his glorious grace*, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him *you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

My dear ones: Saint Paul FILLS us with the pledge and guarantee of the Holy Spirit! But, MAN, the other two lessons seem to pop the bubble, don't they? Amos sent home by king and high priest; John the Baptist silenced most shamefully, most effectively.

WELLLLLL.....

It pops our bubble if the air we're seeking to be filled with is the breath of man, the kingdom defined by sinful man and his boasts, the word of man.

Not YOU! And I pray not I either!

Daily we see each of the Ten Commandments lined up and bowled down—men dream!—by the clamor and mobs and courts of our land! The true God; sanctity of life; holiness of marriage; keeping your word. Each of the Ten is a JOKE to the Herods and Jeroboams and high priests of our land.

But do not despair, my friends! I have told you often: as soon and our country becomes an Islamic Republic, most of the Ten Commandment things will be enforced as Law for our land again. We Christians will have a DIFFERENT SET of problems then; but let tomorrow worry about tomorrow!

OUR King has established a kingdom IN this world that is not OF this world! By His Spirit!

For the Spirit Who resides in us resides in us BY His Word, WITH His Word, THROUGH His Word, IN His Word! The Word, though: not...of...the...Law! The Word

of the Gospel! The Good News that the Kingdom God rules cannot compete with other kingdom; for the Kingdom of Heaven will not compete with castles made of sand.

My friends: the Scriptures make clear that lots of hot air CAN and DOES blow from preachers' blowholes. Since your poor pastor has stood up on his hind legs in this pulpit, I have mostly been hit with real terror that y'all would hear from me the noise of men rather than the Life-giving Holy Breath of Jesus.

Which is why your poor pastor does not stray far from the Small Catechism of Doctor Martin Luther. The Law clearly stated and clearly taught: a killing Law, though meant to give Life. The Gospel so clear: the Son of Mary and the Eternal God is my Lord: He has bought me with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death that I may be His own!

Let that be our sweet lesson for today, drawn from this rough Gospel. God speaks through men, STILL! But as the quote on your bulletin from our Lutheran Confessions states: your minister is only the Spirit's minister, saving-FAITH'S minister, when and where the Gospel is not twisted at all, nor the gifts of Holy Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar.

Your Law for today: admit and turn from how much the breath of man—YOURS, AND OTHERS’—can fill your minutes and hours each day; and yet how long can we go along, my Christian friends, with the dead of the world in our day, without the Lord’s Prayer, without meditating on the unchanging will of God in the Ten Commandments, without bursting with joy over our Baptismal adoption?!

As much as you have strayed from the simple yet Heavenly teaching of the Small Catechism of Doctor Martin Luther, listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, speaking through your voice of God: the Spirit still speaks; the Small Catechism can still save you and your children, and your friends, and your enemies.

Pray God the Father that the Spirit of our Baptism would fill us, as air does a bubble, a balloon. But how weak is THAT?! For there IS NO bubble, no balloon that is a disciple of Jesus, apart from that Word!

My bubble was burst one day; and it saved me; y’all very well may, like it or not, save your poor pastor from all he deserves!

I confessed to dear brother Charlie years ago that I get

bumped out sometimes when people absent themselves from the Divine Service; and I don't care what the reasons are; there are always all sorts of reasons to avoid receiving Christ's Body and Blood and Pardon and Spirit.

And dear Charlie said to the poor pastor: 'Well, pastor, I try to tell everyone from church that it's a good idea not to miss a week of service, if at all possible. It's ALWAYS a good idea to hear God's Word and the pastor's sermon!' A smile, hope, fresh air filling the poor pastor!

And Charlie continued: 'Like this morning in church; your sermon!' Boy, was I on the edge of my seat! 'Yes,' said dear brother Charlie, 'this morning, your sermon, I had NO IDEA WHAT IN THE WORLD YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT! But I'm SURE that someone else benefited from it; and I'm sure my turn will come next week, or the one after!'

There has never been a Lutheran minister more coddled, more enriched, more prayed-for, more pardoned, more WITHOUT EXCUSE if I lose my salvation and faith!

Charlie did not start life as a Lutheran; but he's got the Small Catechism of Doctor Martin Luther down in a way I can only hope to one day!

The Spirit speaks, brings to life, saves, corrects,
forgives WITH His Word, IN His Word, BY His Word,
THROUGH His Word! The Word of Christ and the Gospel
and our King, forsaken here, ruling yonder!

No bubble fills itself; no balloon, no empty container.
But when the Spirit speaks and breathes and installs Christ
as King among those who call no kingdom ours HERE,
then Jesus is our King for certain.

ONE...LAST...TIME: I NEVER run out of copies of
the Small Catechism of Doctor Martin Luther: take one,
please!

My job is never to tire of teaching the Small
Catechism of Doctor Martin Luther. I don't know what
else I'm good for! Make use of this voice while God spares
me still.

So says the Spirit, and so says your Voice from God
today in the Name of Jesus. Amen!