

PENTECOST 9 (2021)

Mark 6

Mark 6:45–56 45Immediately [Jesus] made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.

46And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. 47And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. 48And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, 49but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, 50for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, **“Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”** 51**And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, 52for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.**

53When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. 54And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him 55and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was. 56And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.

In the Name of Jesus.

Well, THAT's a relief! The best we could hear! We can be IMMERSED in God being kind, His gifts—the day can be one double-rainbow after another!—and we may still not understand, if something hardens our hearts. It's out of our hands! Praise the Lord!

This is—it is the FIRST WORDS of this document I

read today, my dear ones!—

This is “The Glad Tidings, the Happy Report, the Good News, the Gospel, of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

Couldn’t be GOOD-er news than this today.

We have hated and rebelled against God from our maculate conception. But He ATTACHING Himself to us; He being KIND to those who tell Him to drop dead, daily and much; His Love for His enemies—Christ!

Christ puts NO WEIGHT on who ‘GETS HIM’ and who does not.

Don’t you see what this means?! Even I—your poor pastor—even I MUST be confident that God is a tender Father to me, hanging on my every word of prayer, giddy with plans for me. NOT...BECAUSE...OF...ME! But because of Jesus the King, God One of us now.

Not me; Him! Not you; Him! Not crowds that swamp Him to heal Him or to hurt Him. I’ve never heard happier gossip!

Yes, yes. Goes against ALL religion. Can’t hold people by their toes and shake money out of them if you can walk on water but you act like Jesus and ‘try to walk by unnoticed!’

Jesus Christ: what are you doing?!

If you got it—FLAUNT it!

It's almost as if Jesus had never met a Christian from 2021 America! 'Me 'n Jesus are TIGHT! Just LOOK at how I glow!' 'Be careful out on your walk, pastor! Don't get hit by any speedboats!'

Or, if He HAD met our sad lot, He forgives us for our NOT understanding; and forgives us for pretending to get Him. That's gotta be it.

The Good News that IS Jesus Christ—ach!
Boundless-better: the Good News that your poor gossip here is chatting to you: Your Pardon, your Baptism, your Holy Supper—it's all yours now, whether your 'get Him' or you do not 'get Him.'

That Peter and the others in the boat did 'not yet understand' about Who He is, even after the feeding of the 5000, walking on the water, healing those who just touched his hems, and other such tricks—this is NOT, my dear disciples, an invitation to 'out-perform' them; or anyone! It's an indictment—of us all. And the reason that Jesus could walk on water and yet hope to pass by unseen; but when He was stripped naked and laughed at until He died in suffering, He made sure He was at the crossroads of all the world, for all the world to see.

So, cheer up, dear children of God! You're HIS now: God's, the Father's, your Brother Jesus's chums, temples the Holy Ghost is pleased to dwell in. NOT because YOU AND I 'get something' about heaven or anything else unseen; or even about ourselves. 'I, a poor, miserable sinner.' Fitting words; impossible to mean it through and through. But that's not the point. The point is to shut our mouths for just a moment, so the Spirit of Jesus can get a word in edgewise. 'I forgive you, in His place, at His command. Now if you want to be obedient, wherever you go, whatever you do, God is at peace with it, with you.'

How many times a day does it seem that people are basically telling you to drop dead? Your most ardent prayers and requests mean nothing. Your complaints are ignored. Your feelings are a big red target at the rifle range.

The Good News—times the Good News times the Good News, until the End!

Christ is not going to weigh up insults against Him or His Father, before today deciding to beam warm sunshine and shower life-giving rain—or even bring September tout d' suite and give us a break! He will pour kindness and love, until the end, on the good and the evil. On the good; and on the evil; Whew! Good News!

And so, when we tell God to drop dead, daily and much; He has a different agenda, beyond making us behave, see sense, 'get Him.' He dropped dead; God, instead of us. He even did it—dropped dead!—as a Man, just like us. So that we'd believe the report; at least the

dying part.

His rising? Well, that's where your Baptism comes in! You too: when people actively or ignorantly tell you to drop dead—oblige them. Die, rise, preach the Gospel to every creature! So says the Spirit! So says the Spirit in each of you.

Any sin against the Father and the Son will be ignored. But Jesus will NOT stand to have the Good News and His Spirit silenced. Least of all, by His disciples!

³¹ And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

³⁴ And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.¹

My dear ones, despite the Small Catechism of Doctor Martin Luther making it clear a hundred ways that we are SAVED as just a gift, a bone throwed to a dawg, a lightning strike we could never expect and can never ‘get’...

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mk 8:31–35). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

We are STILL going to try to ‘SAVE OUR SOULS.’

So, the Spirit of Jesus tells you what to do: the least harmful way of trying to save yourself.

Keep attached to those who tell you to drop dead. Live, as if you can drop dead, but still live. Love with no reference to what anyone else does. Work, without watching the clock, counting the drops of sweat. Cheer on those who call upon Lord. And cheer on even more those who don’t ‘get Him’ at all.

Does this ‘save us?’ Well, the couple-a times your poor pastor has thrown himself into it, it makes me glad for my Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God: the forgiveness of what I get and what I cannot understand.

When Jesus tried to pass by—WALKING ON THE WATER—unseen by His disciples, He made God clear as can be. He has a different agenda; different from every man’s: our obsession with protecting ourselves, saving ourselves.

Jesus could have ducked down behind a big wave or two, passed by—while His men were struggling. They’d’ve been fine, it seems. No need to scare them, by having them see Him walking on the water.

But they saw Him. So, He soothed them. And the weather calmed. And He died on the cross. And He is coming again, to ‘get you!’ Without any thought to how you ‘get Him’ in the Name of Jesus.