

Sermon for The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Date: July 25, 2021

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Genesis 9:8-17

Epistle Reading: Ephesians 3:14-21

Gospel Reading: Mark 6:45-56



Sermon Text: Mark 6:45-56

Sermon Title: Always Jesus Only Jesus

Introit: Psalm 145:1-3,6-7; Antiphon: Psalm 145:5

Hymns:

LSB 712 – Seek Ye First

LSB 754 – Entrust Your Days and Burdens

LSB 578 – Thy Strong Word

Songs:

I Believe in Jesus - Keith Matten

Only One Name - This Hope

Shine Jesus Shine

Stand Up Stand Up for Jesus

Liturgy:

Divine Service: Lenten Liturgy

Liturgy:

Creative Worship



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Text: Mark 6:45–56

Immediately [Jesus] made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. And 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, but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was. And 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.

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Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Risen Lord Jesus. Amen.

It had been a long day. Jesus had just fed over 5,000 men, and their families, with five loaves of bread and two fish. Just before that He had taught, with authority, with those words no one else had ever spoke; strong, powerful words. They were different. He was different. Then the twelve baskets full of leftovers.

Then the day is over and Jesus sends them away. He doesn't go with them. He sends the disciples away in a boat while He goes off to pray. The time on the water was not easy. It was hard. Exhaustion, struggle and fear. The wind was against them. Every boat length of progress tiring... while Jesus was off praying. Where is He when you need Him?

You've been there. You've had those days. Where is He now? Good days, good weeks that end far too soon, and then back to the grind, back to adversity, struggle and fear, with the wind in your face. Challenges and trials that keep coming and seem never to end. It feels like Jesus isn't there when you need Him.

That night on the sea, He was there. When He was praying, He saw them. He saw them struggling. He saw the adversity and struggle. Our Good Shepherd never stops watching over us. He never lets us stray too far. He's always there. He doesn't just zap Himself onto the boat. That's not Jesus' way. He walks on the water, because that's where the disciples were.

Mark's Gospel tells us He intended to pass them by. They weren't really in danger. It was tough, hard work, but they were making progress, slowly, difficult, but progressing. So Jesus was just going to let them see Him; a glimpse so they know He is with them, so they know they are not alone. He is going ahead of them, to prepare for them.

That should have boosted the disciples a bit, but it doesn't. They think they are seeing a ghost! They wanted Jesus with them but not like this! They think the worst and cry out. Scared and confused, like sheep without a shepherd.

We can feel like that too. Jesus is there with us when we need Him. He promised that. Yet maybe, like the disciples, it's just not in the way we want Him to be here. He doesn't zap Himself into our lives, or into the middle of our problems. He is with us, though, through the people He uses to care for us. Parents, spouses, friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, pastors. These people, through whom God, has mercy on us, helps us, gives to us, and provides for us in body, mind and soul.

Disappointed? Did you have in mind something else? You want Jesus but not like this? Disappointed? Don't be. Just repent, and give thanks to God for these gifts He has given you. Don't think He cannot do great things through such simple people, through such simple means. Look at Noah. Through an ordinary old man and his big old ark, God saved His creation, along with the entire human race that now populates every country and continent.

Through and from that man, would come our Savior. God didn't zap Himself into our world and our troubles there either. When our Savior came, He was walking then, too. He came through a virgin, was born in a animal stable, grew up in the back-water town. He traveled about with a rag-tag group of twelve guys who weren't the brightest bulbs on the tree, and eventually He was condemned and crucified. The disciples were scared then too. Denying, running and hiding behind locked doors. Like sheep without a shepherd.

But on the third day Jesus spoke nearly the same words, to those frightened disciples, that He spoke in the boat. Take heart. it is I. Do not be afraid. His Word does what it says. The Shepherd is with His sheep and they have peace.

That is the way of peace for us too. The Word of God teaches us, no matter how bad things seem, they are never out of our heavenly Father's control. The Word of God speaks peace to repentant sinners in the forgiveness of our sins, which comes through the confession of our sins. The Word of God joined to ordinary water that does the most amazing thing. It washes us clean. It unites us to Jesus. It makes us children of God, and gives the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is here with us in the boat, in the ark of the holy Christian Church. His Word and Spirit are with us too, to give us peace among the winds of adversity in our unpredictable sinful, sin-filled, world.

Disappointed? That all we've got!? The Word spoken by this humble man. A man as sinful as you. That's all we've got? Wouldn't you like something a bit more spectacular or impressive? We want Jesus but not like that?

Disappointed? Don't be. St. Paul said, through Holy Spirit-inspired Word,, through "Thy Strong Word," Jesus is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think, in accord with His power at work within us.¹ Jesus doesn't choose, or use, the powerful and spectacular things of this world to give His gifts. He uses the weak, the feeble, the clumsy and lowly, the despised things and people to do the greatest work.² He uses lowly and despised things, like a cross. To do His work.

1 Ephesians 3:20

2 1 Corinthians 1:27-28

That day, with Jesus in the boat, the wind dies down and they were able to make it to the other side. When they get there, Jesus picks up right where He left off. He begins healing, driving out demons, teaching, caring, and shepherding. The clamoring crowds come, and He turns none away. Not even the despised people.

It is still true today. Jesus picks up right where He left off. It may feel like Jesus isn't with us, or is passing us by, but He is not. His promise to Noah is His promise to you.

Let one who is godly offer prayer to You at a time when
You may be found; surely in the rush of great waters,
they shall not reach him.³

Because the Father offered up the Flesh and Blood of His Son for your sin, for my sin, for the sins of the whole world.

The water the Father now sends is not a destroying water, but a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit.⁴ He comes to us in the Body and Blood of His Son given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins⁵, which is given to you here. As it passes your lips and you swallow it, it swallows your sin and death, and gives you peace and life eternal. Here Jesus says to you. "Take heart. It is I. Do not be afraid."

The sign of this covenant isn't the bow in the clouds, but the cross before your eyes, marked on your forehead and on your heart, when you were drowned and raised in that Holy Baptismal flood. This sign tells you, 'I will never leave you or forsake you,⁶ because I took your sin in your place.' "Now I am with you always, to the very end of the age."⁷ I am the Good Shepherd.⁸

Disappointed? I pray not. You have a Savior who is with you in the really good days and the really bad days. He is with you in adversity and in times of ease. In the spectacular and the ordinary. In plenty and in need. In sorrow and in joy. In life and in death. Jesus is the Savior who is here with you and for you, so that you will be with Him in Paradise.

With such a Savior:

Entrust your days and burdens To God's most loving
hand;

3 Psalm 32:6

4 Small Catechism – Baptism: How can Baptism do such great things?

5 Small Catechism – The Sacrament of the Altar.

6 Hebrews 13:5

7 Matthew 28:20

8 John 10:11

He cares for you while ruling the sky, the sea, the land.
For He who guides the tempests Along their thunderous
ways
Will find for you a pathway And guide you all your
days.⁹

Amen.

**Proclaim God's Word,
Encourage one another in faith,
Witness to God's love and
Serve all people**

