**Our Redeemer Lutheran Church Prospect Heights, IL**

**10th Sunday after Pentecost Sunday, August 9, 2020**

**AS WE GATHER**

The Gospel stories of Jesus often have a familiarity to us that may diminish what the sacred writer wants us to understand. Simply put, there has never been any individual on this earth like Jesus. He has divine power that can heal the sick, revive the dead, and multiply bread and fish to feed multitudes. And He can even walk on water. Nobody else has ever done that. Only Jesus. As we worship and hear the Gospel account shared today, let us rediscover in Jesus our one and only Savior.

HYMN: “From All That Dwell Below the Skies”  *LSB 816*

1 From all that dwell below the skies  
Let the Creator’s praise arise;  
 Alleluia, alleluia!  
Let the Redeemer’s name be sung  
Through ev’ry land by ev’ry tongue.  
 Alleluia, alleluia!  
 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

2 Eternal are Thy mercies, Lord;  
Eternal truth attends Thy Word.  
 Alleluia, alleluia!  
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore  
Till suns shall rise and set no more.  
 Alleluia, alleluia!  
 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

3 All praise to God the Father be,  
All praise, eternal Son, to Thee.  
 Alleluia, alleluia!  
Whom with the Spirit we adore  
Forever and forevermore:  
 Alleluia, alleluia!  
 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

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**INVOCATION**

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

**CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

Pastor: Let us humble ourselves before God, confess our sins to Him, and ask His gracious forgiveness.

**People: We confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven and before one another, that we are sinful human beings by nature and by deed. We have not always put God first. We have used His holy name in ways that do not honor Him. We have not always been thoughtful caretakers of His creation and have not shared His bounty with others at all times. We have been heedless in word and deed and have not always kept our thoughts, words, and deeds pure and honorable. We sinned in ways we know and in ways we do not even recognize. We have wished for that which is not rightfully ours and have not put the best construction on all things and on all people. We pray God to have mercy on us, to forgive us all our sins, and to bring us to everlasting life. Amen.**

Pastor: The almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, forgiveness, and remission of all our sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

**KYRIE**

Pastor: Lord, have mercy upon us.

**People: Christ, have mercy upon us.**

**Lord, have mercy upon us.**

**SALUTATION AND PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Pastor: Let us pray, God of love, in His ministry, Your Son, Jesus, showed His mastery over all the forces of nature, including those of great power. Help us to keep our eyes fixed on Him and to trust His guidance in all things as we pass through this world, confident in His care; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**OLD TESTAMENT READING** *Job 38:4–18*

4“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell me, if you have understanding.

5Who determined its measurements—surely you know!

Or who stretched the line upon it?

6On what were its bases sunk,

or who laid its cornerstone,

7when the morning stars sang together

and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

8“Or who shut in the sea with doors

when it burst out from the womb,

9when I made clouds its garment

and thick darkness its swaddling band,

10and prescribed limits for it

and set bars and doors,

11and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther,

and here shall your proud waves be stayed’?

12“Have you commanded the morning since your days began,

and caused the dawn to know its place,

13that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth,

and the wicked be shaken out of it?

14It is changed like clay under the seal,

and its features stand out like a garment.

15From the wicked their light is withheld,

and their uplifted arm is broken.

16“Have you entered into the springs of the sea,

or walked in the recesses of the deep?

17Have the gates of death been revealed to you,

or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?

18Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth?

Declare, if you know all this.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**EPISTLE** *Romans 10:5–17*

5For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. 6But the righteousness based on faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) 7or “‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” 12For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. 13For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

14But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” 16But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” 17So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**HOLY GOSPEL** *Matthew 14:22–33*

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the fourteenth chapter.

**People: Glory to You, O Lord.**

22Immediately [Jesus] made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

23And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. 25And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. 26But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” and they cried out in fear. 27But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”

28And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” 29He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” 31Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” 32And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to You, O Christ.**

HYMN OF THE DAY: “Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness”  *LSB 849*

1 Praise the One who breaks the darkness  
 With a liberating light;  
Praise the One who frees the pris’ners,  
 Turning blindness into sight.  
Praise the One who preached the Gospel,  
 Healing ev’ry dread disease,  
Calming storms, and feeding thousands  
 With the very Bread of peace.

2 Praise the One who blessed the children  
 With a strong, yet gentle, word;  
Praise the One who drove out demons  
 With the piercing, two-edged sword.  
Praise the One who brings cool water  
 To the desert’s burning sand;  
From this Well comes living water,  
 Quenching thirst in ev’ry land.

3 Let us praise the Word Incarnate,  
 Christ, who suffered in our place.  
Jesus died and rose victorious  
 That we may know God by grace.  
Let us sing for joy and gladness,  
 Seeing what our God has done;  
Let us praise the true Redeemer,  
 Praise the One who makes us one.

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**SERMON**

**It should have been a routine journey for the 12, who were no strangers to the sea. They had grown up around it, they could not get away from it, it had been as much a part of their lives as had the Mississippi to Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), this Sea of Galilee. Four of them were fishermen, i.e. had not only grown up around this Sea, but had interacted with her in a very intimate manner, and on a daily basis, and knew her well. While they knew full well reputation of the Sea, her penchant for bringing forth a storm out of nowhere, they had no fear of the Sea. It was on the shores of this Sea that the Rabbi Jesus had first gazed upon Peter the Fisherman and uttered the life-changing, history-making words “follow me” and Peter, a fisherman, followed Him.**

**You remember how it was in The Perfect Storm, the movie and the book. Now those guys, they knew the sea, got their living from the sea, respected the sea, fought with the sea, and ultimately were consumed by the sea. (Called “Perfect Storm” because....) It’s what every sailor fears, what he dreads, what he doesn’t think about because to think about it is to confront one’s mortality, to consider death, which brings up quite a few questions, now, doesn’t it? Like “what then?”**

It happened to the 12 in the early hours of the morning, the time when mind and body most vulnerable (Tom Clancy), time least able to process information, deal with surprises. These 12, who are no strangers to the sea and to dangers of it, find themselves caught in middle of Sea of Galilee, 3/4 miles off shore, in midst of one of sudden and raging storms for which this Sea famous, kind of which even claimed lives of many, including (no doubt), acquaintances, friends, family. And they were terrified, and who can blame them?

Imagine being at sea during that storm, or during any of the scores of simple thunderstorms that we experience here (nowhere else) each summer. Talk about “getting sea legs” = “getting used to the idea that there is no solid ground here” - even in the most vicious mid western tornado, we have solid ground to stand on - not so on the sea. And the wind’s a blowin’ and the rain is afallin and the boat is arockin - if by “arockin” you mean something akin to the tilt-a-whirl meets the scrambler - only with the very real threat of death by drowning, and they were terrified. “What”, they were thinking “is it going to be like when my body goes to take a breath of air into its lungs and it gets water instead?”

WHAT IF we are swept to shore, shattered into a thousand pieces on the rocky shoreline? Where is He? WHAT IF the boat is swamped by waves and we sink like a rock to bottom sea? Where is He? WHAT IF I die today? What will happen to my family? Will they find my body? What about my burial? Where is He? WE SHOULD NEVER HAVE STARTED OUT...WHOSE IDEA WAS THIS ANYWAY? Where’s JESUS?

About that time, a sight that would send chills down spine of heartiest sailor. A shadowy figure appears out of cauldron of rain and wind and crashing waves, and when lightning flashed you could catch glimpses of approaching figure, figure that looked much like that of a person, (and they thought that they were living in a gothic novel, but the gothic novel would not be invented for 1800 more years, or maybe an episode of Scooby Doo.) IT’S A GHOST, AND THE GHOST IS WALKING ON THE WATER, LET ME OUT OF HERE. Where is He? And as the murky figure draws closer their terror multiplies, and with every flash of lightening the chill grows colder, and finally, after an eternity that passed in a moment, the figure draws close enough to touch, and to be heard, as it says to them “**take heart; it is I; have no fear**”

What’s going on here, anyway? Remember “They’re, not very far from shore, so what’s really going on here is that Jesus is just wading in the water, you see Matthew really liked Jesus, got carried away...perhaps Jesus was on water, but in a boat...or the sea was probably frozen Jesus is doing His best Ice Road Trucker imitation. Either that, or the one who invented that incredible combination of 2 parts H, 1 part O, that wonderful creation so essential to that larger creation - earth, life, universe - that incredible compound H2O, with its particular characteristics, including that people can’t walk on it, simply and miraculously stepped out unto that raging mass of H2O and walked on the water? Why? 1) He is God. 2) To Give a Picture of Heaven to His disciples (And all believers).

“**Great Theology**” Peter would have said, “**and I agree with it. But let**’**s see if it works**” And Peter, the Apostle “**too impetuous to play it safe”,** the hands-on “**let me do it**” guy, gives it a try “**Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you**” and Jesus says “**come”.** Remember the movie “**Indiana Jones – the** **Last Crusade**” where Indy and His Father are just about to reach the place where the grail is kept. They come to the edge of a cliff with a deep, deep drop-off, and Indy has to take a step of faith out into nothingness, he does, and the bridge-like thingie appears beneath his feet. That’s what its like for Peter, who much to the dismay of Peter and those watching, did the impossible. He walked on water and said to himself “**Look at me, I**’**m walking on water”.** And then Peter thinking about the human body and physical properties of water and the interaction of the two, says to himself “**what do I think I**’**m doing. I can**’**t walk on water!**” He sees the waves, raging storm, feels wind, feels fear and Peter, which means “the rock” begins to sink like one. “**Lord Save Me**” Jesus, feet firmly planted on the firm base of the waters of sea of Galilee, reaches out.

“**You of little faith. Why did you doubt?**? It’s a Rhetorical Question – the answer is obvious. I’m a human. I’m not God, not Jesus, just human, that’s why I doubted. Two things are clear about Peter the Rock. 1) he is a believer - Christian. 2) faith often weak. Peter the Rock was a believer in CHRIST. When the call came to “follow me” he left business, home, family to follow Jesus. When told by Jesus to get out of the boat and walk on water, he got out of the boat and walked on the water. He will be first to publicly confess Jesus to be “**The Christ”.** Peter the Rock was often weak in faith, like here.

I think maybe Peter over thought it. He was actually walking on actual water, which, if Jesus says that you can do it, then you can do it. But then he over thought it. He was taking that walk of faith, until he began to doubt. He over thought it. God wants us to think - human brain a most wonderful creation, far surpassing mere computers - but even more so God wants us to trust Him, not our self, for good things in this life and next. Peter the Rock over thought it, and by that I mean that when Peter the Rock kept eyes focused on Jesus he was able to do marvelous, even miraculous things, but when his focus drifted inward to self, he was unable to do miraculous, even marvelous - he was going to drown and die in raging storm.

**Conclusion:**  Does Peter the Rock sound like somebody that you know? Peter the Rock sounds to me a lot like the average Christian, who believes, whose faith often weak, who God manages nonetheless to use for the work of His Kingdom.

“**Simon Peter, the quivering rock, the affirming denier, the cowardly hero...that work must also be carried on - mainly must also be carried on - by those who, like Simon Peter, know how to survive, because they themselves are survivors; who sympathize with cowards, because they themselves are cowards; who understand the terrors that shake the poor in spirit and paralyze the downtrodden, because they themselves are poor in spirit, downtrodden, and shake with terror**” Walter F. Murphy “Upon This Rock”

At Baptism Jesus said “follow me” and you followed Him. That marked the beginning of your ride on this roller-coaster journey through life that we call Christianity, the ups and the downs, the times of almost supernatural faith and the gut-wrenching doubts, the good, the bad, and the ugly. Hang on, enjoy the ride, because we know the end of it. Our God, who is with us for the whole way, is able to do what seems to be impossible, whether its walking on water or even getting us into heaven, in Jesus name, Amen.

**The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds focused on Christ, our Lord and Redeemer, Amen.**

**CONFESSION OF FAITH:** *Nicene Creed*

**People: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life ✠ of the world to come. Amen.**

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

O Lord, our God, we do not presume to know Your ways or inform Your judgment. We ask You to grant us Your Holy Spirit so that we may apprehend Your ways and know Your Son, Jesus Christ, by faith. Give us wisdom, that we may trust in Your Word amid the stormy seas of this mortal life and be safely delivered from all danger onto the eternal shores of heaven. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, our God, we have no righteousness of our own but only the righteousness of Christ into which we were clothed in Baptism. Grant us grace, that we may be faithful in every circumstance and bold in the confession of His saving name. Guard those who preach Your Word to us so that, hearing, we may believe and, believing, we may have everlasting life. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, our God, we ask You to bless us, our nation and those who lead us. Guide all elected and appointed civil servants in their judgments, that we may know justice in our land and peace among the nations. Make us especially mindful of those who need our special protection, the unborn, the aged and the oppressed. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, our God, we remember the sick, those who suffer, those troubled in mind, the grieving and the dying. Deliver them according to Your will and grant them the comfort of Your Word in their afflictions, that they may depend upon Your mercy in every circumstance. Hear us especially for *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.* Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, our God, we give thanks for the saints of old who trusted in You in life and now rest in Christ from all their labors. Deliver us from all evil, and lead us through all temptation so that at last we may join them in the marriage supper of the Lamb in Your kingdom without end. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, our God, we pray You to be our light in darkness, our strength in weakness, our courage in fear and our peace in distress. Speak to us by the voice of Your Word, that we may call upon You in the day of trouble and confess Your saving name before all people. Hear us on behalf of ourselves and those for whom we have prayed; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**LORD’S PRAYER** *Matthew 6:9–13*

**People:** **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

**BENEDICTION**

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

**People: Amen.**

HYMN: “O God, Our Help in Ages Past”  *LSB 733*

1 O God, our help in ages past,  
 Our hope for years to come,  
Our shelter from the stormy blast,  
 And our eternal home:

2 Under the shadow of Thy throne  
 Thy saints have dwelt secure;  
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,  
 And our defense is sure.

3 Before the hills in order stood  
 Or earth received her frame,  
From everlasting Thou art God,  
 To endless years the same.

4 A thousand ages in Thy sight  
 Are like an evening gone,  
Short as the watch that ends the night  
 Before the rising sun.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,  
 Soon bears us all away;  
We fly forgotten as a dream  
 Dies at the op’ning day.

6 O God, our help in ages past,  
 Our hope for years to come,  
Be Thou our guard while troubles last  
 And our eternal home!

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