

## Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map

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Mark 6:45-52

August 6, 2017

### Faith relies on the Lord to be our Rescuer

- Stunned to read: *They were completely amazed,<sup>52</sup> for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.*
- After this Jesus feeds the 4,000. <sup>17</sup> *Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: “Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you **still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened?** <sup>18</sup> **Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? ... <sup>21</sup> ... “Do you still not understand?”***
- here *hearts hardened* = dense, obtuse, thickskulled, blind to the obvious
  - ♦ *completely amazed - utterly confounded, completely dumbfounded* GWN

### Faith relies on the Lord to be our Rescuer.

- ❖ Saving faith trusts God’s promise to keep us safe with him.
  - What is God’s job? What does it mean to be your God?
    - ♦ Last Sunday we saw - God is the Source of all good things.
    - ♦ **God wants to be our God**, our Lord, our Guardian, Protector, Rescuer
    - ♦ He is God and rightfully the Lord over all
      - But people held captive to sin-loving hearts and minds, death’s life robbing control, and Satan’s cruel lies are ruled by other masters.
      - Jesus **redeemed** all - fully paid sin’s debt - to free from captivity
    - ♦ God’s covenant promise: *I will be their God and they will be my people*
      - This is life & freedom - restored fellowship with God as your God.
      - **Only** under his reign, in his kingdom are we **safe and blessed**.
  - Saving faith trusts God’s promise that he claimed me and will keep me.
    - ♦ Listen to Jesus’ **claim that calms** with **power**.
    - ♦ **Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.**
    - ♦ *It is I = I am the I AM* - Yahweh. The LORD known for rescuing his own
    - ♦ Under my care, you have nothing to fear. Nothing can separate us!
    - ♦ Jesus’ power to save combined with faithful love = our eternal safety
    - ♦ Not a promise of no troubles. A promise nothing can separate us.
    - ♦ **Your God:** what you rely on to rescue you - your greatest treasure
      - Christians treasure being God’s children & rely on him to keep safe

Our faith is threatened by the *thickskulled lie*: *I believe in God. I know he is real. Since I believe he exists he and I are cool. That’s all I need to get to heaven.* The existence of the Almighty Holy God, who hates evil, causes the demons to tremble. Faith is **not** mere knowledge that God exists. Saving faith relies on God’s promise to rescue us and keep us safe with him - now and forever.

The 12 confessed Jesus is God - their Lord - the promised Messiah/Savior.

Jesus acted to rescue them from being obtuse, thickskulled, clueless about the **full meaning of having God be their God**. Jesus exposed a stone barrier in their hearts - for demolition to expand God’s reign of life in them.

- ❖ To keep us safe, our Lord needs to rescue us from being thickskulled.
  - No matter how much we know about God - there’s room in our hearts for his kingdom to expand his reign in us, walls to be broken through.
  - This is our daily life of repentance: exposing where our thinking, desires, behavior, habits, and convictions broken down and made new.
  - We recognize ourselves in the disciples:
    - ♦ Relying on our strength to rescue ourselves against a head wind
    - ♦ So involved in our mission, we forget our God specializes in rescue
    - ♦ When our Savior shows up, we’re surprised, even terrorized
    - ♦ Even when we recognize his rescue, we limit his rescue to big things we can’t handle, instead of relying on his rescue day in - day out.
  - It is critical that we live to have our God be our rescuing Lord. If Jesus is not our Lord, the one in charge, he can’t be your Savior/Rescuer. For you won’t let him save you from your self.

To encourage all of us to open our eyes to see and **seek God’s daily rescue** from anything and everything that would seek to separate us from him - let us close with a made up story most of you have heard in one form or another.

A flash flood warning went out, but this Christian man stayed in his house confident: *I trust in the Lord. He will rescue me.* A neighbor came by in a canoe as the flood water started rushing the front door. He declined the neighbor’s help. *I trust in the Lord. He will rescue me.*

Later in the day, having moved to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to stay dry, the local Water Rescue Squad came by, encouraging him to leave his home for safety. He refused. *I trust in the Lord. He will rescue me.*

They passed the word on to their superiors. As night was falling they sent out a helicopter. Sure enough, the man had climbed up on his roof to stay dry. With spotlight and lowered harness they tried to rescue him, but he refused. *I trust in the Lord. He will rescue me.*

The waters rose. The man was swept away and drowned. As he was welcomed into heaven he has one question for Jesus. *Jesus, why did you let me die. I trust in you to rescue me. Why didn’t you?* Jesus replied, *What do you mean? I sent you a neighbor in a canoe, your local water rescue squad, and a helicopter. I tried to rescue you 3 times. ... But now, by my grace, you are safe with me forever.*

### Faith relies on the Lord to be our Rescuer.

Above all, we need Jesus to rescue us from ourselves - our thickskulled ways.