Come
Sunday Pentecost 10, Year A
Job 38: 4 – 18; Romans 10: 5 – 17; Matthew 14: 22 – 33
August 9, 2020

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

Jesus is not God. He is just another man. At least, that's what people believed.

The religious leaders two thousand years ago, and many of the people, did not, could not, would not, ever believe Jesus to be God. For them, that would be nothing short of blasphemy. And, they were very passionate about this.

Anyone who claimed to be God was a blasphemer. And, for the most part, the same would be true today. So, we can relate to them in this.

We have seen many in our day who have made the claim of being Jesus. David Koresh, Jim Jones, and some kid I met a few months ago... seriously. Wikipedia lists around 40 people in the last 120 years who have claimed to be Jesus. If someone here were to make that claim… we would write them off, avoid them, and probably warn others about them.

This is how most people, in the New Testament, thought about Jesus. And, how many still see him today; He was a man. He was born of some young girl from Nazareth, who married some construction worker from Bethlehem. He was born in a barn, raised back up north in Nazareth. He wasn't a noble. He wasn't anyone. Yet, thought the religious leaders, because He grew an audience who followed Him around, listened to Him, hung on every word… He thinks He is God.

However, notice that the Pharisees and others never deny His miracles. They never dismiss them outright, but try to give Satan the credit for them. "*It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons,*" they said (Mt. 12:24b). Yet, still, He's just a man.

It seems that even the disciples struggled with this. In our reading today, Jesus sent the disciples on ahead of Him.

As you know, He had gone to mourn His cousin, John the Baptizer, and to pray. He was, instead, met by more than 5000 people.

Yet, His sorrow was turned to compassion.

Jesus has compassion on those who had come to Him. He doesn't get to grieve at that moment. His grief is postponed. He, instead, turns His attention to the people who need Him. He preaches and heals their sick. Then He feeds them.

Only after all of that is done, does He dismiss the crowds, send His disciples away, and go up the mountain to pray.

The disciples get in their boat and head back across the lake. Yet, they have a hard time getting across, as the waves are pushing against them.

Then, early in the morning, somewhere between 3 and 6am, they see a figure coming towards them. It appears to be a person…but, it isn't in a boat… it is walking on the water. The disciples, again, come to their best conclusion… it's a spirit. The Greek word is Φάντασμά (phantasma)… a phantom. An unexplained thing. THERE! ON THE WATER!

I remember, when I was young teenager, doing some night fishing with my cousin. He had a little boat and we would go out to check the trotlines. It is a bit spooky on the water at night. We could, of course, hear the frogs croaking. The beavers slapping. The owls hooting. The breeze bending tree limbs. We could hear things jumping into and moving across the water. Perhaps, at that time, I had seen just enough scary movies to be extra unsettled. If had seen something coming toward the boat, something human looking, like the disciples did… I would

have been a bit freaked out, too. Okay, I would have been a lot more freaked out than I already was.

So, I understand their reaction. And, it appears that Jesus did, too. *"Take heart"* He says*, "it is I. Do not be afraid."* I don't know if having the thing speak to me would have helped to ease my fears, but it seemed to work for Peter. *"Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water*."

This part of Scripture has always been somewhat special to me. Not because of the well-known stories. But, because of the Jesus who is in those stories. The very human Jesus. The Jesus who grieves the death of a loved one. The Jesus who has compassion on the people who come to Him. The Jesus who will not let the crowd leave hungry. The Jesus who sends His friends away, simply because He needs a moment with His Father. I love that Jesus. The human Jesus.

But, He isn't just a man. He isn't just human. He is also divine. He IS God.

I mean, we also have here, the Jesus who doesn't just go to the grocery store and buy a bunch of hotdogs and bread to feed the large crowd. He takes what is there, and He does some crazy math. In dividing up the food, He multiplies it. I can't do that. I assume you can't do that. No human can do that.

And, now He is walking on water, in the middle of the night, with waves coming against Him. I can't do that. I assume you can't do that. No human can do that.

Only God can do that. The one who, with a word, created the universe. The one who, by the sound of His voice, put all things in order.

Listen to what He says to a struggling Job, "*Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements – surely*

you know! …"Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recess of the deep? Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?"

I am only human, I have done none of those things, or any of the other things that God mentions as He declares His glory to Job. I would bet, that you haven't either. But, Jesus…

When Peter asks to walk on the water, Jesus simply says, "*Come*". Just like when He created all things, He used His voice and spoke a word, "Come". Not, "Sorry Peter, just wait in the boat. I'll be there in a minute. Then, you can see that it is me."

Nope. He says, "Come."

I see Peter swinging his legs over the side of the boat as it goes up and down into the waves. Can you imagine? Trying to find your footing on water? Let alone, choppy water? In the wee hours of the morning? In the dark?

But, Peter does. Why? Well, because Jesus said, "Come."

Peter slides off the side of the boat. His feet hit the water … and he walks. Up and down with the waves, he walks. He walks to Jesus.

Do you remember watching Bugs Bunny? Remember when he would lead Yosemite Sam out over a ravine? And they would just stand there in midair until Bugs would point down… and Yosemite Sam would look down, look at the camera, take a big gulp, and then fall with that whistling sound?

This is how I imagine Peter on the water. He walks out on the water, gets to Jesus, then it hits him what he is doing. The improbability…the impossibility of it. And, well, he too, takes a gulp as he begins to sink into the water. You see, Peter, is just a man. And, as a man, he is only allowed to walk on the water …by Jesus, who is more than just a man.

Yeah we always cheer for Bugs Bunny, but in this case, we are Yosemite Sam; we are Peter. You and I have followed Jesus. You heard Him, through His Word and through the waters of baptism as He said, "Come." And, you did.

You see the turbulence of the riots, the pandemic, the elections, the hurt and the hate. You see the uncertainty and the fear. You watch as people do brutal things to other people. It is hard and you begin to sink.

The struggles get to be too much and the waters begin to rise around your feet. But, the One who has called you is the One who spoke and the universe leapt into existence. He is the one who tells Job to trust Him. He is the One who helps you in your weakness. He is the One who came and died so that you might live. He is the One who comes to you even now giving to you life and salvation. He is the One, who in the midst of Job's trials, who when you do not know what or how to pray, who when you are walking without knowing if you can take another step, simply says to you, "Come."

Trust Him. He has not let you down. He comes to you often through Word and Sacrament. He hears when you pray…and He answers. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Alleluia.

When all else fails…Come.

Now may the peace that passes all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.