

Eleventh Weekend After Pentecost (RCL/A): “  
Romans 10:5-15; Matthew 14:22-33  
August 8-9, 2026  
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Manasquan, NJ

Truth be told, I've always felt embarrassed for Peter that he sank so quickly and had to be rescued in today's Gospel. There's a cartoon on the door of the Council mailbox cubby that reflects that kind of judgment. It shows Jesus standing there, Peter facing Him in swim trunks, all set to “take the plunge” with a rubber duckie innertube around his ample waist. The caption reads: “Peter's early attempts to walk on water with Jesus displayed an inadequate amount of faith.” ☺

This year I'm not so much feeling sorry for Peter, though, as admiring his chutzpah, daring and faith. I really have no idea why he'd challenge the Lord to allow him to walk on water, other than wanting to be just like Jesus in all things.... But ruling out stupidity and craziness as other possible motivators, we'd have to conclude that #1: Peter had enormous trust/faith that the Lord could do as he asked; and #2: Peter was bright enough to know to Whom to turn for rescue.

Have you ever been in a tight spot, a dangerous, tricky, challenging situation, muddled through it on your own, only to realize afterward it would have been much less stressful and there would have been a better outcome if you'd just asked for help instead of playing the Lone Ranger? “*Lord, save me!*” is a prayer we should be **proud** to pray, not embarrassed by! It shows we have the wisdom and common sense to know **Who** is powerful to save, and that we have a living relationship with that saving Lord, our Savior Jesus Christ.

The psalms are called the prayer book of the Bible and they are full of cries for God to save. As a matter of fact, we'd do well to bookmark or pin the psalmist's words as prayers-to-borrow during our own tough times when homegrown words may fail us. On the top of my personal list, Psalm 69, which includes this impassioned plea:

*<sup>1</sup>God, God, save me!  
I'm in over my head,  
<sup>2</sup>Quicksand under me, swamp water over me;  
I'm going down for the third time.  
<sup>3</sup>I'm hoarse from calling for help,  
Bleary-eyed from searching the sky for God...*

*And me? I pray.  
GOD, it's time for a break!  
God, answer in love!  
Answer with your sure salvation!  
<sup>14</sup>Rescue me from the swamp,  
Don't let me go under for good,  
Pull me out of the clutch of the enemy;  
This whirlpool is sucking me down.  
<sup>15</sup>Don't let the swamp be my grave, the Black Hole  
Swallow me, its jaws clenched around me.  
<sup>16</sup>Now answer me, GOD, because you love me;  
Let me see your great mercy full-face.  
<sup>17</sup>Don't look the other way; your servant can't take it.  
I'm in trouble. Answer right now!  
<sup>18</sup>Come close, God; get me out of here.  
Rescue me from this deathtrap.*

Sure, we probably consider that too dramatic for **most** chapters in our lives, but if we live long enough we're sure to feel at some point or points that we're drowning in sorrow or pain or grief or guilt or anger, and we realize that God is the only One who can save us from

emotionally or spiritually drowning in our troubles and never surfacing again. The shorthand for that long lament from Psalm 69 is 2 words: “Lord, save!”

If we know to Whom to turn (capital W, hom) in times of trouble, we probably have a faith mentor to thank, someone who taught us and showed us from little on up that “*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble*” (Psalm 46:1) : a grandparent, a parent, a Sunday School teacher, maybe a coach or a Scout leader, a babysitter or a neighbor. Who is that person for you? I never heard **my** faith mentors, my Grandma Flossie Horton, my Dad Lee, my Mom Mimi, my Aunt Beu, my sisters Sharon and Sally, pray the words, “Lord, save me!” but I saw them endure great sorrows with their faith unbowed, and I saw them worship each week and pray every day. I didn’t need them to tell me the Source of their strength, the wellspring of their faith, the renewer of their hope, the aquifer of their love. I knew, even as a child, the answer was God. They were living proof that there is One to whom we can turn to in any circumstance, in the gravest trouble, even of our own making, or the deepest loss possible, the death of a child: One who will rescue us from deep waters and carry us to safety.

We are in need of teachers for our 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Sunday School class, so this weekend’s 2<sup>nd</sup> lesson from Romans 10 called out to me. Here’s part of it, in *The Message* contemporary translation:

**11-13** Scripture reassures us, “No one who trusts God like this—heart and soul—will ever regret it.” It’s exactly the same no matter what a person’s religious background may be: the same God for all of us, acting the same incredibly generous way to everyone who calls out for help. “Everyone who calls, ‘Help, God!’ gets help.”

**14-17** But how can people call for help if they don’t know who to trust? And how can they know who to trust if they haven’t heard of the One who can be trusted?

And how can they hear if nobody tells them? And how is anyone going to tell them, unless someone is sent to do it? That's why Scripture exclaims,

A sight to take your breath away!  
Grand processions of people  
telling all the good things of God!

The more familiar version of the final verse is: *"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"*

It's a blessing when our faith mentors live under the same roof as us when we're small. But that's not always the case. **You** can share the faith that keeps you afloat, **you** can share your love of Jesus, with little ones who need to know how much God loves them – and what God expects of them. There's a verse from a hymn we don't sing too often, but that I love: "Hark, the Voice of Jesus Calling":

If you cannot speak like angels,  
If you cannot preach like Paul,  
You can tell the love of Jesus,  
You can say he died for all.  
If you cannot rouse the wicked,  
With the judgment's dread alarms,  
You may lead the little children,  
To the Savior's waiting arms.

The Lord empowers what the Lord desires, I have no doubt the Lord is calling at least a couple folks among us to answer the call to "lead the little children to the Savior's waiting arms." If you hear the call and are willing to answer, please contact Donna Dreibelbis, our Sunday School superintendent, or Deacon Ned, our Director of Youth & Family Ministry.

We might call Simon Peter "grandiose" for asking Jesus to make him walk on water, and we might not be wrong. We might say Peter was show-boating, wanting to be the center of attention once again, and we might not be wrong. We might say he was simply giving Jesus a chance to showcase His miracle-working power even more than He had with multiple healings and multiplication of loaves and fishes, and we might not be wrong. But

we definitely need to say Peter trusted that the Lord could do **anything**, and we have to agree he was right. Maybe we, too, can pray, “Lord, command me -- to trust **You** despite all my doubts in myself. Lord, command me to ‘walk on water’ – to step out of the boat of earthly security, to step out in faith into the unknown, to trust I will not sink for You are upholding me in Your grace. When I falter in faith, remind me that You are the sure Source of help in any and every situation. Make me proud to cry out, ‘Save me, Lord!’” Amen

Pastor Mary Virginia Farnham