

Mark 6:1-6
July 8, 2018 – 7th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Grace Still Comes to Us

- ✦ **He comes knowing.** (vv.1-2a)
- ✦ **He suffers offense.** (vv.2b-3)
- ✦ **He leaves amazed.** (vv.4-6)

In the Name of Jesus our merciful, yet determined Savior, dearly redeemed family of God:

A few weeks ago a friend texted this to me: “It would be interesting to do a sermon on why we’re afraid of Google, Facebook, and Amazon (and how much they know about us) and see if we’re afraid of God for the same reasons (and if we need to be). We’re all just trying to hide like Adam and Eve.”

Is that fair? How concerned are you about personal privacy, enough to read privacy statements? Fine print: “We are required by law to send this. This is what we’re going to do. If you don’t like it, you cannot use our product. We can change this anytime we want.” Considering all the ways personal information is misused, there’s plenty of reason for concern about privacy in commerce, crime and government. Parents have every right and responsibility to monitor their kids’ accounts. (Just try to keep up!) Some have ruined their own lives and hurt their families with TMA – too much information.

The real question today: Do you have anything to hide from God? If you say, “Yes!” there are a few things God wants you to know because **Grace Still Comes to Us** in the Person of God’s Son. First...

✦ **He comes knowing.** (vv.1-2a)

Remember all those questions the LORD God kept asking Adam and Eve? He had been coming to the Garden of Eden in love because they were His family. Then they rebelled by disobeying His command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. “*Adam, where are you?*” God knew what bushes he and Eve were hiding behind. “*Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?*” God already knew the answer. To the woman, “*What is this you have done?*” God knew Eve would blame the serpent, just as God knew Adam would blame the woman and God. That’s because God is omniscient; He knows everything – even our thoughts and words before we think or speak. But notice, He **comes** as the LORD God **knowing** the sin and rebellion that is killing us and could separate us from Him forever. **Grace** drives Him to come in compassion to recall and restore us.

Even Jesus’ family did not believe He is God. Remember a few weeks ago when Jesus’ mother and brothers were coming to take Him away? “*He is out of his mind,*” they said. (Mark 3:20f,32-35) Jesus would read people’s mind, but they didn’t even seem to notice only God can do that. Again and again, Jesus proved He is God, but it comes so naturally that the miracle escapes them – like the sun rising and setting each day, or leaves growing in sync every spring, or days getting shorter after June 21st.

Before **Grace** arrives, **He comes knowing** what He will find and what He will say. First in the Garden with Adam and Eve, but then through prophets like Ezekiel (2:1-5 EHV¹) in our First Reading. God’s people of Israel were *rebellious, disloyal, brazen-faced and hard hearted*. Jesus, the Prophet of the LORD, could expect the same from His relatives in Nazareth. Yet He “*went to his hometown...*,” and “*when the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue.*” See God’s **Grace**? **He comes knowing**, but comes anyway. And He knows just what we need to hear when He arrives – not a ton of speeches on human opinion, politics, worldly wealth, etc. As a traveling rabbi Jesus preached from Isaiah 61:1,2 (Luke 4:16-30). “*Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.*”

¹ Scriptures from EHV ~ *Evangelical Heritage Version* (<http://wartburgproject.org>). NPH, © 2017. Order: 800-662-6022.

✠ He suffers offense. (vv.2b-3)

What Scripture was that? Listen to how sweetly **Grace** speaks! *“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed,¹⁹ and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”* (Isaiah 61:1f; quoted in Luke 4:16-30) Wow! Freedom from the power of sin, sight for the spiritually blind, comfort and favor from the Savior-God for freedom from oppression of the guilt and regrets of all you’ve done in the past – how could anyone reject that? Why hide from God?

For Jesus’ kinfolk in Nazareth, the answer was easy. *Many who heard him were amazed. They asked, ‘Where did this man learn these things? What is this wisdom that has been given to this man? How is it that miracles such as these are performed by his hands?’³ Isn’t this the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And aren’t his sisters here with us?’ And they took offense at him.* They admitted Jesus did miracles and even asked for more. (Luke 4:23) But they could not get past the fact that they knew Jesus’ earthly family. They were too blind to see He is the Son of God by the virgin birth God promised in the Garden to Adam and Eve. That first Good News – Gospel was spoken to Satan in the serpent that tempted them. The LORD God said: *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”* (Genesis 3:15 NIV84) **Seed** for the woman could only come from God the Holy Spirit. All of Scripture points to the fact that Jesus is God from all eternity. No reason to take **offense**. **Grace comes**.

Still people do take **offense**. Some of you have shared outrageous things they say about the Bible on Internet blogs, websites, chat rooms. Watching documentaries can be frustrating too because rarely does anyone quote the Bible accurately. If they could just deal with one apparent contradiction and find the answer, all would be well. What is the contradiction that human reason cannot explain? Here it is, so simple a child could wade in it, so deep as to drown an elephant: *God punishes every sin + God forgives every sin.* See all your sins punished on the cross + See every sin forgiven on the cross and sealed by the empty tomb. See Jesus guaranteeing all this from God’s throne. **Grace Still Comes to Us**.

✠ He leaves amazed. (vv.4-6)

Also with a warning. *“Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own house.’⁵ He could not do any miracles there except to lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them.⁶ He was amazed at their unbelief. Then he went around the villages teaching.”* That was after they tried to throw Him off a cliff.

Would Jesus have to leave you **amazed** at your unbelief? Would He be **amazed** at spoiled children who think it’s their parents responsibility to keep them from being bored? If you’re bored, you’re thinking of yourself instead of all the people who need your prayers and your words to tell them about Jesus. Children of God, we need to grow in **Grace**. Would Jesus be **amazed** at older children of God trying to hide their Internet history? Not just men, but women too are being trapped by pictures that can never satisfy, but only soil your soul with guilt. Would Jesus be **amazed** that you and your family rarely talk about God between church services? How is that loving God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength? Only **Grace** can overcome your selfishness to love your neighbor as yourself.

In His Revelation (3:19-21) to John, Jesus says to the angel-messenger-pastor at lukewarm Laodicea: *“I rebuke and discipline those whom I love. So take this seriously and repent.²⁰ Look, I stand at the door and I am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in with him and dine with him, and he with me.²¹ To the one who is victorious I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.”*

Grace Still Comes to Us to rescue us from stubborn rebellion. But He will not force Himself on anyone. Let Jesus be **Amazed** in a good way as faith cries: “Leave, ah, leave me not alone!” Let **Grace** have His way and say, “I will never leave you or forsake you.” Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.

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