

SCRIPTURE STUDY, SERMON & WEEKLY DEVOTIONS



PENTECOST 11 A
9TH AUGUST 2026

SAVE ME

Dennis Webster

Revised Common Lectionary Related

Pentecosts 10A

1 Kings 19.9-18

Psalms 85.8-13

Romans 10.5-15

Matthew 14.22-33

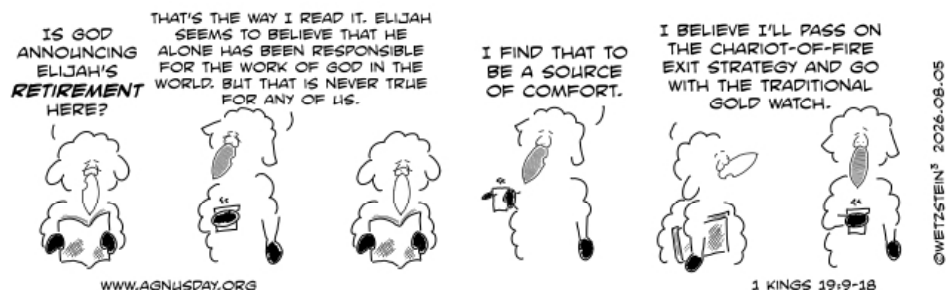


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Book of Common Prayer (1662) Collects

Let thy merciful ears,
O Lord,
be open to the prayers of thy humble servants:
and that they may obtain their petitions
make them to ask such things as shall please thee:
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



INTRODUCTION

Often, people misinterpret what it is that the Lord requires of us. There are some who demand signs and guaranteed success or privilege. This could not be further from the reality that the Gospel presents. There is no promise of any sort of utopia. Instead we are presented with a God whose compassion is to be with us no matter what we face.

The Sermon uses the simple image of holding hands to show what faith and God's care look like in real life: guidance, protection, comfort, belonging, and love. Just as a parent holds a child's hand on a narrow path, God meets us in vulnerable moments with steady presence rather than judgment.

It centres on Matthew 14, where Jesus responds to grief with compassion—healing, teaching, and feeding the hungry from his own hands. Later, in the storm, the disciples are terrified, but Jesus comes to them and says, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” Peter dares to step out of the boat, but when he becomes distracted by the wind and waves, he starts to sink and can only pray one short, honest prayer: “Lord, save me.” Jesus immediately reaches out and takes Peter's hand. Faith, the Sermon explains, doesn't start with certainty or achievement—it starts with calling out, reaching for the One whose hand is already reaching toward us.

The message widens to show that God often meets us not through dramatic signs, but through quiet nearness, like Elijah discovering God in the still, small voice. Even when circumstances don't change, we are not abandoned—Jesus promises, “I will not leave you orphaned.” The same hands that healed and fed were later wounded on the cross and shown again in resurrection, proving that love can endure suffering and still bring restoration and peace.

Because we have been held, rescued, and comforted, we are called to extend that same compassion to others—especially those who feel unsteady or afraid. Salvation is not only a dramatic “rescue”; it is God's saving presence that steadies us, invites us to prayer, and sends us to be present with others. The takeaway is simple and shareable: when you are sinking, pray “Lord, save me,” trust the hand already reaching for you, and then offer your hands—steady, prayerful, and helpful—to the people around you. “Take heart. It is I. Do not be afraid.”

Take Me

I still vividly remember, as a little girl, accompanying my mother to my grandmother's shop, just two miles down the road. My mother would hold her old wicker basket in her right hand, while my right hand nestled safely in her left. At that age, I didn't think much about that arrangement, especially as we navigated a narrow path with thick hedges and uneven fences pressing in on us. Looking back, it's clear that my mother was at the edge of the path, guiding me along while I remained on the inside, her hand offering both direction and protection.

Then came kindergarten. As we walked in a line, we were expected to hold the hand of the person next to us. This practice continued until around the third grade, when we crossed the road to the 'big' school. By then, holding hands had become 'infantile.' Later on, holding hands took on a different meaning altogether. It became a commitment, a way of saying, "You are mine," "I feel safe with you," "I am with you," and "I belong to you." Perhaps you can recall a time when holding hands held a different significance for you.

In moments of healing, there's a time when it feels right to hold a patient's hand—offering comfort and strength—where touch conveys a clear message of safety, compassion, and whatever version of 'love' we embrace at that moment. It reminds me of a brief yet profound lesson from Jesus in one of the shortest sermons Peter ever delivered: "Lord, save me." In that moment, Jesus reached out to Peter, but how did we arrive at this scene?

Picture Peter out on the Sea of Galilee, showing a level of curiosity that mirrored Jesus' own compassion during his ministry. After hearing about the beheading of John the Baptist, Jesus heads to the shore of the lake, where a crowd has gathered. Faced with their sorrow and grief, he heals the sick, teaches them, and listens to their stories. Rather than dismiss them when they're hungry, he instructs his disciples to feed them. He gives thanks to the Creator, breaks the bread and fish, and shares it, providing more than enough for everyone present. The true essence lies not just in the spectacle, but in the bread itself, with everyone receiving from the same hands—his hands—blessing, breaking, and sharing.

Later, Jesus sends his disciples ahead, disperses the crowd, and retreats to a quiet place for prayer. Then a storm strikes, tossing the disciples about in their boat. They spot a figure walking across the churning waters and fear they are seeing a ghost. Yet Jesus calls out to them, reassuringly: "Take heart; it is I. Don't be afraid." I can't help but think that wouldn't have immediately calmed my nerves. But one person on the boat needs to test this reality—Simon, whom Jesus calls Peter. He replies, "If it's really you, let me come to you." Jesus simply says, "Come." And so, Peter steps out.

When the wind and waves continue to buffet him, and Peter starts to lose confidence, distracted from Jesus. The very rock upon which the Church would be built begins to sink. "Lord, save me," he cries. Immediately, Jesus reaches out and takes his hand. I can almost picture the moment with a chuckle as Jesus gently teases him, "Oh, you of little faith!" His compassion shines through, just as it did when he was grieved by John's death, teaching and healing the crowd, and feeding the hungry.

In that moment, Jesus takes Peter back to the boat, and the storm calms. The disciples then realise that Jesus is indeed the Son of God. At the core of everything is God's love and the promise of His presence. God's intervention is always at work, but we must remember that, like with Elijah, God often speaks not in the dramatic or the spectacular, but in the quiet moments when we listen closely. Not through earthquakes, winds, or fires, but in the stillness that makes us aware of the Lord's presence.

The hands of Jesus will reappear in our narrative. The same hands that heal and teach will be bound and flogged; the hands that are lifted on the cross will later be shown to the disciples, bearing scars, yet those very hands will break bread and fish, raised in blessing. The Lord has endured the greatest suffering that love can bring, yet he has still brought about restoration, wholeness, and peace. That hand is reaching out for you and for me, urging us to extend the same compassion to others.

Hands convey so much. They guide us. When someone is unsteady—physically, mentally, or emotionally—a partner is there to help. Hands

steady, reassure, welcome, bless, and pray. Paul reminds us that salvation comes to those who call on the name of the Lord. Peter didn't develop Paul's theology from reading Romans; rather, he expressed a faith that had already taken root in his cry for help. Faith doesn't begin with certainty or accomplishment. It starts with reaching out to the One whose hand is already extending toward us.

Elijah learned that it's not about the grand display but the quiet, reassuring presence that reminds us we are never alone—even when we become distracted and look away. Sometimes, all we can do is echo Peter's words: "Lord, save me." We may not need a new miracle, and the circumstances may not change, but the comfort lies in knowing we're not alone as we face whatever comes our way. "I will not leave you orphaned," the Lord assures us.

When the Lord asks us to follow His example, it's a clear sign that He means it. Love has the power to transform everything—even if it doesn't change our circumstances. Through love, we can do so much. As members of the Body of Christ, we are called to show love and support to those who are uncertain. Hold them close. Love them fiercely. Be present with them. This is not just about rescue; it's about salvation—exactly what the incarnate Word came to teach us.

In moments of doubt, we raise our own unsteady hands—perhaps holding them together in prayer—and allow ourselves to be still. In that stillness, the Lord speaks to us: "What are you doing here?" We remember Paul's words: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." And to our friends, Paul reminds us that while our feet are beautiful, the compassion we receive from God is meant to be shared with others. So, extend your hands. Steady. Prayerful. Helpful. And always hold onto this promise: "Take heart. It is I," says the Lord. "Do not be afraid."

Discussion

Early Memories of Holding Hands: Can you recall a time when you held a child's hand as a child, or as a parent holding a child's hand for guidance and protection?

- Holding hands transitioned from a childhood practice to a romantic gesture and a symbol of commitment.
- Holding hands provides comfort and strength in moments of healing, emphasising the power of touch.

Jesus's Compassion: Jesus demonstrates compassion by healing the sick, teaching, and feeding a grieving crowd after John the Baptist's beheading. But it is Peter who steps out of the boat onto the stormy sea to meet Jesus, but begins to sink when he loses focus.

- Jesus reassures Peter, saves him from drowning, and gently chastises his lack of faith. God's intervention is always at work, often in quiet moments rather than dramatic displays.
- When have you been aware that you are being held, even when the situation around you was stormy?

Jesus' Hands: Symbolise healing, teaching, suffering, restoration, and the call to extend compassion to others.

- Faith begins with reaching out to God, who is already reaching out to us, as exemplified by Peter's cry for help.
- How can you love and support those who are uncertain, holding them close and being present with them?

Power of Love: Love has the power to transform everything, even if it doesn't change our circumstances. Many people view it as if God loves us, we would be spared the ways of the world.

- Given that Elijah endured the earthquake, wind and fire before being aware of the presence of God, is it right for us to assume that as Christians, we are exempt from suffering?

Divine Assurance: In moments of doubt, remember God's promise:

- "Take heart. It is I. Do not be afraid." Peter's quick prayer to Jesus, "Save me!" saw Jesus grab Peter and restore him back into the boat, where eventually, calmness but an awareness of God prevailed.
- Do we have the right to demand that sort of saving? What if it is the Lord's desire for us to be more fully in the presence in the place prepared for us?



5 Day Devotional

This five-day Devotional encourages you to accompany Jesus through times of fear, doubt, and ordinary needs, learning to recognise His constant presence. On each day, the image of Christ's hand reaching out to Peter—and to you—is developed, so that faith may call, receive, listen, and then go on to show compassion to others.

Day 1 Matthew 14:30-31

Peter's prayer is no longer than it is sincere: "Lord, save me." He does not deliver a speech, put forward a plan, or make a promise to improve. Instead, he states his need and addresses it to Jesus, relying on the fact that the One who had called him onto the water is still close to him when he begins to sink.

What this situation shows us is the tender aspect of faith: it usually does not start with confidence but with dependence. As Peter turns his attention to the wind and the waves, he finds out what each of us does—fear can seem more convincing than God's promises. Nevertheless, Jesus replies at once in a personal way by reaching out and taking Peter's hand, thereby reminding him that rescue is not merely an idea but involves actual contact with the living Christ.

Let your prayer be simple today. Should you be overwhelmed, distracted, or feel ashamed about your 'little faith', recall that Jesus is not put off by need; He reaches out to you right where you are, and His hold on you is stronger than your ability to hold on.

- In which area do you currently feel as if you are 'sinking'—that is, emotionally, spiritually, or relationally?
- Say Peter's prayer slowly: "Lord, save me." What would you like that prayer to mean today?
- Which of the things known as "wind and waves" most frequently draws your attention away from Jesus (such as news, finances, health, conflict, or uncertainty)?
- What experience have you had of Jesus' assistance in the past, even if your situation did not improve at once?
- Do something practical based on trust today (for example, making a phone call, admitting something, taking a moment to pray, or asking for help) since it shows that you are dependent rather than self-reliant.

Day 2 John 14:18

The promise that Jesus made—"I will not leave you orphaned"—addresses the deep longing that lies beneath many fears: the fear of being all alone in the situation. Whether others fail to understand, whether the solutions come slowly, and whether faith seems weak, Christ's presence is not merely a theory; it is a promise rooted in His nature.

The image of hands in the Sermon reminds us that God's closeness can usually be felt in simple ways—such as through guidance, steadiness, protection, and a quiet reassurance. To be 'with' someone can be just as effective as repairing something; Jesus does not merely save us from drowning, for He is also with us in the boat, in the storm, and during the waiting.

Think about it today that God might be meeting with you not mainly through wonders, but through companionship; His presence could be felt as a sense of calm in your chest, in the form of a well-timed word, the strength to carry on, or the grace to make the next faithful step. You are not left alone; you are cared for

- Which part of your life would you most want to believe that when you hear "I will not leave you orphaned"?
- How would your daily routine be different if you assumed that Jesus was present before you had become confident or calm?
- What is an everyday place that you fail to notice God's care (for example, your routine, your work, your home, your commute, caregiving)? In what way might His presence be manifest there?
- Who has acted as 'the hands of Jesus' for you during a difficult period? Give thanks to God for them and think about telling them.
- Today, take three one-minute pauses: breathe, loosen your shoulders, say to yourself, "You are here with me," and then note anything you notice.

Day 3 1 Kings 19:11-13

Elijah had expected God to make an impressive entrance, but the Lord appeared in a whisper. That quiet presence does not ignore the storm; rather, it brings the soul back to its centre. Just as the disciples did on the sea, we are likely to misinterpret what is taking place when fear is strong—mistaking God's manner of approaching us for a threat or assuming that silence means he is not there.

The Sermon tells us that God's intervention is always taking place, even though it is often noticed in a state of stillness. If our minds are busy racing, we become prone to distraction and despair, just as Peter did when he looked away. Stillness is not the same as being passive; it is attention—meaning spending enough time directed toward the Lord to recognise His voice and obtain His steadiness.

At present, you no longer need to create a miracle to be faithful; all you have to do is make space to listen. Although God will not immediately alter the external circumstances, He can enhance your inner life by giving you clarity, courage, and the comfort that you are seen and guided.

- What form of noise is most likely to interfere with your ability to listen to God (for example, inner worry, busyness, media, resentment, and fatigue)?
- At what point are you inclined to regard God's presence as being linked to dramatic results rather than to quiet faithfulness?
- Today, take five minutes in silence and consider the first feelings or thoughts that come to you when you stop trying.
- Ask God: "What are You doing here with me?" and put in writing any phrase, scripture, or conviction that occurs to you.
- What is one small and specific step that you feel God is inviting you to take this week?

Day 4 Romans 10:13

The idea that anyone who invokes the name of the Lord will be saved is both extremely broad and at the same time deeply personal since it includes everyone and you too; salvation in this context does not simply call for agreement; it is something that must be received as a lifeline, and Peter's phrase 'Lord, save me' already illustrates the teaching of Romans before Paul ever wrote those words.

You don't need to have a perfect knowledge of theology or show off your devotion when you call on the Lord; what is needed is honesty and a clear direction—that is, turning your need towards God rather than towards yourself. Let your faith be shown by praying—at times of temptation, in moments of fear, in times of sorrow, and in times of gratitude. Prayer in this way turns ordinary moments into meetings with Jesus, so that rescue becomes a relationship and dependence becomes peace.

- What prevents you from quickly addressing the Lord (is it pride, shame, cynicism, disappointment or distraction)?

- Express this in your own words when praying: "Lord, I need You to rescue me from _____."
- What alteration would there be in your habits if you regarded prayer as a lifeline instead of seeing it as a performance?
- Think back to a situation in which you felt spiritually 'rescued'. What did God make use of—Scripture, a person, a moment of conviction, or an unexpected peace?
- Select a simple breath prayer for today (for example, inhale 'Lord Jesus' and exhale 'save me') and use it each time anxiety appears.

Day 5 Romans 10:15

When Jesus takes your hand, He also shows your hands how to serve; the message of the Sermon is plain—that compassion which you receive should be shared. God's love does not end with personal comfort; it extends outward through the Body of Christ by supporting the uncertain, welcoming the weary, and being near to those who are in pain.

It doesn't mean that you have to deal with everybody's difficulties. At times the most Christlike action is to be there, to pray, and to offer gentle support. You can use your hands to bless, to give help, and to reassure people. In a world which tends to withdraw from those in need, true love opts for closeness—meaning showing up, listening carefully, and providing practical assistance.

Ask God today to give your "feet" and your "hands" beauty in the most simple manner—by sending a message, by sharing a meal, by offering a prayer, by holding a boundary with love, by visiting, or by kindly speaking the truth.

- Who among the people you know is currently feeling uncertain and may need more steady presence than advice?
- What counts as a practical thing that you can do this week to extend "the hands of Jesus" (for example, by offering help, encouragement, prayer, or companionship)?
- What situations make you reluctant to show compassion since it seems inconvenient, messy, or emotionally expensive?
- Today, ask Jesus to make His presence real to one individual by naming them. You might also let them know that you prayed.
- In the coming 24 hours, carry out one specific act of love and present it to God as a form of worship, not as a means of gaining His approval.

End notes and further reading

Harrington, Daniel J Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Matthew
Moloney, Francis J, SBD, Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of John
Johnson, Luke Timothy: Sacra Pagina: The Gospel on Luke
Collins, Raymond F., Sacra Pagina: First Corinthians
Andrew McGowan substack.com/@abmcg
N.T. Wright, Twelve months of Sundays Year A

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Let your faith and relationships
be shaped by love and patience
for God's love is
revealed in lives, not letters.



Tatungalung Totem

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