

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

PILGRIM PEOPLE
serving God
by serving others

**JULY-AUGUST
2022**

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR NERSES BALABANIAN

In chapter 8, we are in Gentile territory and Jesus is teaching and feeding this time 4000 people. Jesus wanted to feed them. Like in the story of feeding the 5000 when the disciples did not know how to feed the crowd, here we find a similar situation. If the 5000 were Jewish people, now the same story repeats in the gentile world. Jesus uses similar elements of bread and fish, (different numbers), to make a point that Jesus is the source of feeding BOTH the Israelite and the gentile world.

Next, we find the Pharisees are asking for sign. Sign? How many signs one needs to get it? Like asking for a sign from Moses when they passed the red sea. Where is God. Show us a sign? Seriously?

Then Jesus and the disciples are back to the sea on a boat one more time. Again, food becomes an issue. There was an issue of not having enough bread to eat; and here is what Jesus says:

¹⁷“Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? ¹⁸Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember?” (Mark 8:17-18 ESV)

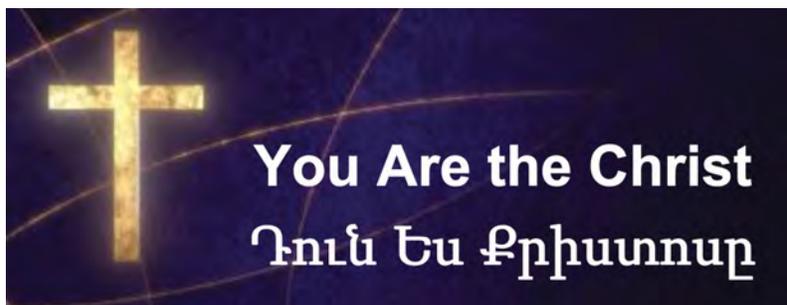
How strange...

This is the reality we live in. We want signs. Is your faith really going to increase if you see a sign? I don't know, but one thing I know, he continues his mission.

Jesus continues having compassion towards the people and feeding them, healing them, teaching them...

We move on to the next teaching of Jesus:

And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, *²⁷“Who do people say that I am?” ²⁸And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” ²⁹And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.” ³⁰And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him. (Mark 8:27-30 ESV)*



They move to the North to the border of the Holy Land and the Gentile territory. They arrive to a beautiful area, south of Mt Hermon, west of

Jordan. It is a fertile country. **Herod the Great** built a grand marble temple to glorify the Roman emperor, and his son **Herod Philip** enlarged the city to honor Caesar.¹ Thus the place is called **Caesarea Philippi**. What a place to reveal the identity of our Lord Jesus Christ full of idols and corrupt political power.

Jesus asks a basic question: **“Who do people say that I am?”**

Jesus is not having an identity crisis. He is teaching his disciples a very important lesson. Because how many times even the disciples did not understand who Jesus was.

They answered: **“John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.”**

Let me go to chapter 6

¹⁴King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead.¹⁵But others said, “He is Elijah.” And others said, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.” ¹⁶But when Herod heard of it, he said, “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.” (Mark 6:14-16 ESV)

So, here we go, they answered what the outside world was saying. But Jesus wanted to know their opinion, **“But who do you say that I am?”** Until now the disciples called him **rabbi, teacher** (4:38), also we read that they asked within themselves **“Who is this?”** (4:41) Yet, Peter always has an answer: **“You are the Christ.”**

This is a very important declaration in all gospels, especially here in this gospel according to Mark. Peter's answer is the center of this gospel, my dear brothers and sister. “Peter's confession occurs in the very center of the Gospel! This passage serves as a hinge between the first half of the Gospel, where Jesus' power is so prominent, and the second half, where his weakness becomes predominant.”²

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PACC EVENTS OF 2022

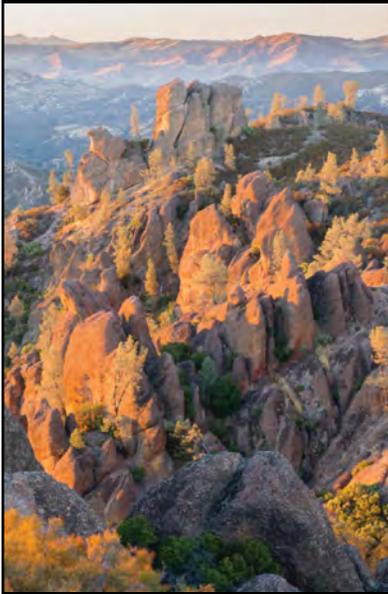
Vacation Bible School **July 31-
August 4**

Rally (Renewal)
Sunday **September 11**

Harvest Banquet **October 15**

Church
Camping Trip **October 28-30**

SAVE THE DATE!
OCTOBER 28-30
Church Camping Trip
Pinnacles National Park



Questions?
Scan the QR Code
or text Amy Bressette
559-696-5038

Thanksgiving
Sunday **November 20**

Congregational
Budget Meeting **December 4**

Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service **December 24**

Christmas Worship
Celebration Sunday ... **December 25**

SUNDAY, JULY 24 SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The PACC Annual Meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, July 24, 2022**, following worship will act on the Board of Trustees' proposals to repair the Goorabian Family Life Center (GFLC) roof, installation of campus solar system on the roof of the GFLC; and payment of both proposals using the Endowment and Memorial funds. **Plan to attend!**

You Are The Christ

Continued from page 1

Jesus then declares not to tell anyone yet...yet... like he said to the blind man and others. He is delaying the public declaration for now, so that he teaches and prepares the road for his disciples.

What is next?

Let me tell you who is this Messiah:

³¹**And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.** ³²**And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.** ³³**But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."** (Mark 8:31-33 ESV)

Jesus explains the task of the Messiah:

- 1) He should suffer many things
- 2) He should be rejected by Jewish authorities
- 3) He should be killed
- 4) He should be raised from the dead after three days

Wow... no parables, no stories, direct speech about the identity of the Messiah is Jesus' task on this earth. The same Peter who declared who Jesus is came and rebuked Jesus: "What are you talking about, man? I just declared that you are Christ, the Messiah." (my interpretation). Why can't Peter accept that the Messiah should suffer and die?

In the OT, we see the promised Messiah is described in many places, including the prophets. "He will be a king. He will be a shepherd. He will be

a Redeemer. However, there was one element that the rabbis seemed to overlook: the Messiah would suffer."³ Indeed, who wants to follow a Messiah who will suffer, be rejected, and die? The Rabbis somehow overlooked passages like Isaiah 52-53; Psalm 22. Israel was waiting for a Messiah who would liberate them from pagan dominion, such as the Romans in Jesus' time. Peter and the disciples could not get it. Yet, Jesus is fulfilling God's plan from the beginning. His suffering is not in vain, it is to redeem the universe from sin. The punishment for sin before almighty God was death. And if Jesus is the Messiah who came to save, this means he should die to make full payment for our sin, not his, but ours.

How is this rabbi, who can calm the sea, who can walk on the sea, who can heal the sick, who can give forgive sins, who can raise people from death going to suffer and die?

Matera said: "Jesus is the expected Messiah in the most unexpected manner."⁴

So what was Jesus' reaction:

But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.

"Turning around," it seems Peter ran towards Jesus. The other disciples were behind Jesus following the leader, but Peter came forward to rebuke. Jesus now and rebukes Peter saying, "**Get behind me, Satan.**" Why did Jesus equate Peter with Satan? In Matthew 4, Satan tempted Jesus to worship him... Satan does not want Jesus to be crucified, so that Jesus will not be raised from the

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You Are The Christ

Continued from page 3

dead, so that sin will not be defeated, so that humanity will not be redeemed.

“Peter, set your mind in the right place. How God works is not how humans work.... Watch out, Peter...” That is a good warning to me and to you. Don’t bring your agenda to Jesus and ask his endorsement for it.

-Next, Jesus is not only teaching who he is the Messiah and what his mission is, he is also teaching who the disciples will be, and how one can be a disciple: **the cost of discipleship.**

Here it is how to follow Jesus:

1. Deny yourself.

And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. (Mark 8:34 ESV)

“Jesus does not ask disciples to deny something to themselves but to deny the self and all self-promoting ambitions.”⁵

Discipleship is not a part-time volunteer job that whenever you have time you will follow Jesus. It is total surrender. Let your will be done, not my will.

Illustration: Speaking about denial self, my former student who denied Jesus, spoke against Jesus, mocked Jesus, surrendered to Jesus seven months ago, and she called me to tell the good news. She has a talk show on TV; she was a big-time self-promoter; she had a lot of followers. Now that she became a Christian, the producer of the show is not allowing her to talk about her faith in Jesus. She refused to do this, and she lost a lot of business income.

2. Take up the cross. (Mark 8:34 ESV)

Jesus said this before his crucifixion. Yet, the context was understood. In the Roman empire each person who would be crucified, would carry the cross which he would be crucified (actually, the horizontal beam of the cross). As they made their way to the place of execution, they were tortured, wiped, spited, rejected. Jesus is asking, “Are you willing to endure such a shame for my name’s sake?”

Which means the cost of being disciple is to be ready even to giving your life for Jesus.

3. Follow me: Jesus (Mark 8:34 ESV)

What does to follow means in today’s vocabulary?

In social media, the number of people following you: watch your pictures, get instant updates about what you eat, what you wear, where you go, and how you feel? And you are proud when more and more people follow you...

What does it mean to follow Jesus? Does it mean to walk behind him and marvel saying “wow” about his life and teaching? Or it is to follow his example.

What is the will of Jesus, and how we can follow His way, his will.

“You Might Gain the world yet lose your soul”

³⁵For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. ³⁶For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? ³⁷For what can a man give in return for his soul? (Mark 8:35-37 ESV)

To save a soul, one will do everything because that is a priority. Life is precious.

We do everything to “fill up our barns” and enlarge our bank accounts, but forget the most important to take care of our soul. For me it means to surrender to Jesus, and it means to give up from worldly priorities. In losing one’s life for Jesus’ sake is gain... a principle tough to follow...

4. Be bold for Jesus and not ashamed.

For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” (Mark 8:38 ESV)

Do your “neighbors” know you are a Christian? We will be accountable one day to our God if we denied Him. How often we deny Jesus by being silent when they are mocking our Lord? Or we twist the truth when we know the truth? Or why shall I open my mouth? They will laugh at me...

The former student I mentioned earlier said to me that soon after she became a Christian, her friends started inviting her to their own churches. She is puzzled. She said to me, “Why are they inviting me now?! How come they were my friends and were so silent about their faith this whole time?!”

To end:

“The Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

We are talking about second coming of Jesus when he will come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. It is not the Bethlehem birth; it is the triumphal coming in glory.

Declaring who Jesus is good. But following our Lord Jesus Christ is costly.

My prayer is that we experience the ultimate miracle which is God opening the eyes of our heart so that self-centered heart can come to not just to the King, but to the King’s way.

To God be the Glory

1. David E. Garland, The NIV Application Commentary, 323

2. David E Garland, P 323

3. R.C. Sproul, He Taught Them as One Who Had Authority Mark, P 180

4. Matera, The Kingship of Jesus, P 145, from the NIV Application Commentary P 324

5. NIV 327

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIRTH

Elias Enrique Chacon

Born on: June 11, 2022

Parents: Courtney & Enrique
Chacon

Grandparents:

David & Shawn Kalemkarian
Gorge & Julia Chacon

Aunts & Uncles:

Brittany & Eric Verkerk
Cameron & Kelsey
Kalemkarian

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BAPTISM

Jensen Richard Lance Blanks

Parents: Jason & Jill Blanks

God Parents:

Jeff & Kara Blanks

Grandparents:

George & Rose Marie
Samuelian
Gerald & Beverly Blanks

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WEDDING

John Paul Garry &

Emily Rose Amboyan Brown

June 4, 2022

Parents: Dr. and Mrs.
John & Carol Garry

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WITH SYMPATHY

*We are deeply saddened by
the passing of:*

Henry Eurgubian

July 14, 2022

Wife: Mary Eurgubian

Son: Stephen Eurgubian

Daughter:

Elizabeth Eurgubian

*Well done, good and
faithful servant.*

You have been faithful over a little;

I will set you over much.

Enter into the joy of your master.

(Matthew 25:21)

MODERATOR'S REPORT

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28, NIV)

Many of the boards and committees of the church, including the Church Council, will take the month of July to rest and prepare for an exciting coming year ahead. That does not mean, though, that the church is taking a vacation this month. Immediately after the worship service, the congregation will meet to act on a recommendation of the Board of Trustees and Church Council to repair the roof of the Goorabian Family Life Center and to install a solar electric system on the repaired roof. I hope as many active members as possible can attend this meeting to help bring about these beneficial improvements to our facilities.

Also, among other groups, some members of the Baby Boomers group got to witness the truth of Romans 8:28, quoted above, when we went hiking in Kings Canyon National Park. The radiator of one of the two vehicles we used to drive to the trailhead burst immediately after we reached the trailhead. With no cell service there, we hiked part way up our intended trail until we got cellular reception. Unfortunately, that reception ended just before we could tell the dispatcher the vehicle's location.

This forced us to go back down, after completing perhaps a quarter of our intended route, and head to Grant Gove Village where we had cell service. Although the dispatcher initially said that a tow truck would arrive in approximately one hour, we ended up waiting more like four hours, but we were able to eat, talk and rather thoroughly enjoy much deeper fellowship during that delay. After all, we planned this hike to build fellowship within the group.

Also, as we contemplated what could have happened, we came to realize that the radiator failure (the car had about 250,000 miles of use) could have been much worse. It didn't happen while the car was running on a mountain road, or at freeway speeds, or on the way to work. The breakdown came at one of the safest and least inconvenient times and places. We all came to realize how much God showed us His power, blessing and protection. And He gave us all this from a blown radiator!

I hope all of you can enjoy this season, and feel God's presence and blessing the rest of this summer and church year.

— By Moderator John Eleazarian

DEACON'S CORNER

The former and newly elected Board of Deacons met in a joint meeting on June 21, 2022, to enable a smooth transfer of duties. Outgoing Chair Darlene Mickaels thanked the outgoing board for their service and welcomed the new board members and Chair Paula Ganimian. She provided the new board with a description of Deacon duties and responsibilities.

As the Deacons embark on the new church year, they will continue their partnership with the pastors for the flourishing of the church and its mission, and care for the physical and spiritual needs of the congregation.

This church year, the Deacons will serve as greeters every Sunday, prepare and assist in communion, visitation, meal deliveries, and pray with and for the congregation. They will accompany the pastor to provide in-home communion and visitation; make phone calls and send cards/notes to parishioners who are ill or grieving or

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AEUNA Held Its 26th General Assembly In Philadelphia

On June 23-26 the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA) held its 26th General Assembly in Philadelphia. The AEUNA is a fellowship of churches in the United States, Canada, and South America, united by a common history and tradition dating back to the founding of the first Armenian Evangelical church in 1846 in Constantinople, Turkey.

This Biennial Convention was hosted by Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church of Havertown, Pennsylvania.

In addition to the delegates of the over 30 AEUNA churches, the affiliate organizations the AMAA and the Stephen Philibosian Foundation were present. The total number of attendees

was 200. It was very heart-warming to see a good number of young people among us who were there for the activities of the Armenian Evangelical Youth Fellowship (AEYF).

The Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church was represented by Badveli Nerses and Tiffany Tufenkjian.

The theme of the convention was "Bold Love", which the main speaker Rev. Ron Tovmassian beautifully presented in his messages.

Even though there are many small churches in the Union, a person sitting next to me said, "When I come here, I feel stronger." There is a lot of meaning behind that. We are stronger when we are together.

There were business meetings, testimonies, seminars and excursions.

On Sunday morning everyone worshiped at the Armenian Martyrs' church in Havertown. During the service the new Board of Directors was installed in addition to our new Minister to the Union Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian.

Special thanks to the praise band members who came from the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal.

Finally, we want to express our deepest appreciation to the organizing committee of the host church for doing such an amazing job in planning, welcoming, hosting, and attending to every need in great detail.

— By Sevan Balabanian

Deacon's Corner

Continued from page 4

celebrating a special occasion. During Lent, they will assist the pastor in preparing the Maundy Thursday service and meal; and they will assist in baptism and acceptance of new members.

Additionally, the Deacons will continue to support all activities of the church that serve our congregation, community and the needy. One such activity was the "Lord, What Do You Want Me To Do" Women's Breakfast in support of the "Lebanon Project", which provides food for needy senior citizens.

Hosted by the PACC Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Study, the event



was attended by the deaconesses for a total of over 90 women in attendance. The speaker was Rev. Dr. Retired US Army Chaplain, Lucy Der Garabedian, who shared the experiences of her 20 years of service in US Army. She honored all the women who have family members in the military and awarded them lapel pins. Rev. Lucy currently serves in Lebanon. She presented the dire situation in the country, especially

for the elderly. Through the generosity of the women, \$3,500 was donated to buy food for our elderly brothers and sisters in Lebanon.

Anyone desiring prayer, a phone call, a visit by the pastor(s), home communion, or pastoral counseling, please contact Deacons Chair Paula Ganimian or the church office (559) 229-2915.

— By Deacon Roseann Emerzian Saliba

PILGRIM'S FAMILY AT WORK AND IN FELLOWSHIP

CELEBRATION OF GRADUATES



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NEW CHURCH OFFICERS INSTALLED



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MEMORIAL DAY PICNIC



Thank you to the PACC Kef Band for the music during the picnic.

CHRISTIAN TUFENKJIAN'S MISSION TRIP TO ARMENIA

The AMAA medical team serving in Vanadzor and Stepenavan.



FUN & FELLOWSHIP:



TGIF Men's Bible Study Shaver Lake Retreat



Baby Boomers Dinner at the Salibas



Baby Boomers Trip to Kings Canyon National Park



College Students Dinner and Fun at the Balabanians

YOUTH MISSION TRIP



TENNESSEE

On behalf of the Student Ministries program, we want to thank you for your prayers, encouragement, and financial support which allows the students of PACC to go and serve others in the name of Jesus.

This year we were in Sneedville, TN working with the ministry Run4Water. Sneedville is located in the Appalachian mountains and is a beautiful part of the country. However, it is located in Hancock county, which is one of the poorest part of the country. Run4Water provides 500 gallon water tanks, and clean drinking water for people who don't have access to clean water from the city's municipal water source. We connected with Run4Water through Pari Heronimus, and her husband Caleb. They along with Tiffany Tufenkjian were there to greet us when we arrived at the local volunteer fire department (located at the corner of Jail and New Jail Street). Caleb, Pari and Tiffany presented us with a numerous goals for the week, including cleaning numerous water tanks, which required that we first pumped out the remaining water before climbing inside and cleaning with a mild bleach solution. In addition, many of the homes were in need of repair – we were asked to remove and rebuild a porch, as well as a wheelchair ramp for two elderly ladies.

The Lord has graced us with having Sedrak Israyelyan join us again this summer – he knows how to build and rebuild things, but he also is able to teach and encourage

the students to learn these skills. Ms. Sally (our contact in Sneedville) told me that they seldom have men come on these projects, and that it was even more rare to have a man with skills. This year, Lisa Eleazarian also chaperoned this motley crew of youngens, and served as the “presence” of stability through the many ups and downs of a trip filled with lots of hard work. Everyone wanted to ride with Lisa in the fun-jeep and be part of the tomfoolery. We were very thankful to God when Lisa accepted the request to chaperone this trip.

All of the students worked very hard in less than ideal conditions – the weather was unusually hot, hotter than normal even for that area, and combined with the very high humidity and altitude – the kids had to adapt to really strenuous conditions. They are to be commended for their perseverance and strength.

It must be said that we are fortunate to be able to serve, it stretches our faith, and our prayer is that people are touched by the love of Christ. As you send us, you are serving alongside of us -- thank you for your support and prayers.

May the Lord Jesus be glorified.
– Badveli Kevin Kasper





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SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

In-person 10:30 am

Online at 10:30 am

On our website: pilgrimchurch.com

PACC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
VBS: 6:00pm-8:30pm						
7 10:30am Worship/ Communion	8 8:00-3:00pm FUSD, Social Hall	9 8:00-3:00pm FUSD, Social Hall	10 8:00-4:00pm FUSD, Social Hall 5:00pm Men's Forum Evangel Home, Back to School 7:30pm College Bible Study	11 8:00-4:00pm FUSD, Social Hall, Overflow, Fireside Room 7:00pm Young Adult Bible Study	12 8:00-3:00pm FUSD, Social Hall 6:00pm Jr. High Bible Study	13
14 10:30am Worship	15	16	17 7:30pm College Bible Study	18 7:00pm Young Adult Bible Study	19 6:00pm Jr. High Bible Study	20 4H Club, Social Hall
21 10:30am Worship	22 Pilgrim's Progress Articles Due	23	24 7:30pm College Bible Study	25 7:00pm Young Adult Bible Study	26 6:00pm Jr. High Bible Study	27 Trip to Camp Arev
28 10:30am Worship	29	30	31 7:30pm College Bible Study			