



## Pentecost 5 Message

### “Mr. Wabish”

Scriptural References: Mark 5: 21-43

Good Mornings Saints. It is wonderful to be with you again this morning here at the All Saint's Sanctuary. I would like to welcome you again on behalf of Mona and myself, our Worship and Music Teams and all those who work so hard to bring us together in a good way. And I want to thank you...those here in the Sanctuary with us and those in our virtual Facebook family for joining us in worship again today. Your diversity and spiritual energy are the fuel that fires this Community of Faith and we appreciate all you are and all you do.

Saints, I would like to focus on this morning on our Gospel from Mark. As we have learned, Mark's Gospel was the first to be written down in about the year 66 CE and it is the transition Gospel that takes us from the early days of our Christian, oral tradition and storytelling to a more permanent written set of sacred stories.

Today's Gospel themes are wonderful: respect, healing and humility. And so, let's begin today's message simply entitled, “Mr. Wabish.”

In the small town which I grew up in, we had exactly what we needed and nothing more. We had exactly one of everything. One grocery store – Bennet's Market. One gas station – Grave's Esso. One hardware store – Daub's Hardware. One pharmacy – Wheeler's Drugs. One shoe store – Fosbenners's Shoes. One doctor's office – The office of Wilbur D. Anders MD. Even a 5 and 10 Cent Store – Silver's 5&10. One mortuary – Longenecker's Funeral Home. One traffic light and one café...The Star. But come to think of it, the only thing we had in excess were churches. Those we had a bunch of: Catholic, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Baptist, Mennonite, Quakers...lots and lots of churches. Funny, not a bit of commercial competition there, but plenty of spiritual competition for the hearts and minds of

the townspeople. Oh right, and one school K-8. And the custodian of that school, the person that today's message is all about...Mr. Myron Wabish.

Mr. Wabish lived quietly in a small, simple home next to the school that came as part of his compensation package, \$40 per week plus his "custodian's quarters." Mr. Wabish lived and worked quietly, sweeping up, waxing the school's floor to a mirror shine, washing windows, doing all the things that a school custodian does. But Mr. Wabish was special. He had a unique and amazing skill. He was the "fixer" of all things broken. To Mr. Wabish there was no piece or thing or machine that was not worthy of repair, salvage, reclamation or healing. Being restored to its original purpose often better than the original condition from which it started. Each project undertaken was treated as if it was the only one or thing having his undivided attention. But the truth was that at any given time Mr. Wabish had literally hundreds and hundreds of works in progress. Some close to completion, some partially complete and some as he would say, "waiting for inspiration." Out of his \$40/week salary, Mr. Wabish rented a ramshackle garage in the neighborhood which housed his tools, his bench and menagerie of projects. Sometimes people would bring things to Mr. Wabish when all other repair options had been tried and found lacking. But most times, Mr. Wabish's clients or patients would be retrieved from the curb on trash day. That is the other "one thing" we had in our town. One trash truck and Wednesday was always trash day. And so, on almost any early Wednesday morning, well before his custodian shift at the school started, Mr. Wabish would drive his old panel truck around town, loading up broken and discarded things for his project pile. Nothing escaped his healing eye. Quietly, he would load what needed to be loaded and then moved on.

We used to love hanging out at Mr. Wabish's garage, there was always a lot to see, not much to hear because Mr. Wabish was always pretty quiet, but always a lot to learn. To us kids, there didn't seem to be much rhyme or reason to how, when or what Mr. Wabish selected to work on. He always said that the "broken thing" always "told him" when it was ready to be repaired. And that he just stood by and waited. And he said when that time came, he started, and things usually went pretty smooth. But if he just picked up something and started to work on it, it never seemed to go right. "Patience and Presence" he always said, "Patience and Presence." Just wait and you will know. We really didn't understand exactly what he was talking about at the time. We were just grade school kids. But today, makes perfect sense...Healing is a decision, a choice the one to be healed conveys to the

healer...I am ready, I am tired of being broken, I am open...heal me, Healer.  
Patience and Presence.

So, Mr. Wabish would wait, until the bike or mixer or chair or toy was ready and then he did his magic. Scavenging parts, making parts, inventing solutions...whatever it took, Mr. Wabish would fix the broken thing. Some took minutes, some hours, some weeks, years or a lifetime.

Once healed, once mended, once repaired the broken thing would be quietly returned to its owner. Silently left on the front porch or step. Shiny, working, whole, better. Each discarded, broken thing returned to their original home to again be of use, to again have purpose, dignity and health. Mr. Wabish never signed his work, never left a note, never charged a penny. Sometimes a day, a week or a year after the broken thing had been discarded, it would quietly and anonymously reappear in exactly the right place.

It was years later when an old school friend called to let me know that Mr. Wabish had died. There was no family of record and there was hardly anything to speak of in the "custodian's quarters" as all of the furniture, dishes, appliances belonged to the school. When the lock was cut by the police chief...oh right...only one police officer too! Chief Edward Veit. When the lock was cut on Mr. Wabish's garage the only three things left were his toolbox, all neatly organized with his name on it, Myron Wabish; his tool bench and a small brass plaque attached to it, "Presence and Patience." No project left incomplete or broken. Nothing left unrepaired or unreturned. No piles of projects. Just some tools, a name and a lesson.

Sometimes I think that maybe Mr. Wabish was Jesus, or and Angel or for sure a Saint of some kind, because what Mr. Wabish modeled, demonstrated and lived is the Jesus Way message. At some point all of us break. At some point all of us are broken. We may be discarded, and cast to the curb, defined as useless, worthless, not even worth keeping around. We can no longer fulfill our purpose...as the Psalmist writes, "useless as a broken pot sherd." Like the woman in in today's Gospel, we have hemorrhaged life and blood for 12 years, society defines us as unclean and unwanted.

And then our healer arrives one Wednesday before the trash man comes. Gently puts us in his panel truck and lovingly, and respectfully escorts us to his garage. Because he can see our wholeness through the brokenness. He can see the purpose in us restored, lubricated by his kindness, and healing and repairing touch, "Presence and Patience." And then one day we are ready. And then one day we,

the healed are returned, quietly and humbly by the Healer... from the garage, back to our home, back to our porch; to our front step...to begin again.

And Jesus took us by the hand and said to us “Talitha, cum.” Little ones get up! For we have been shown and have learned the pathway that has been opened for us from brokenness to health, from fear to trust, from the curbside to home. We have been retrieved, restored and returned.

Thank you, Mr. Wabish...Thank you Jesus.