



Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost Sunday, September 9th, 2018

No One is 'Demon-Free': Jesus Exposed!



“Woman: Think and let Think” – Hyatt Moore

In June and early July, we read a number of texts from the Gospel of Mark, that spoke of the “demons”. For Mark’s Gospel, this is a central theme in helping to explain the dark realities of the world, of which we are victims, and of which we are a part: directly and indirectly. For Mark, the demons refer not just to storms and disease – products of the natural order of things – but also social structures and human attitudes that exploit and destroy, that crush and discriminate.

Today, after having spent time on John’s Gospel and also stewardship and Father’s Day, we return to Mark and will spend time with him, unpacking his world-view and his God-view. Today, the Gospel reading is wonderful and disturbing in the same breath. This is so because Jesus appears to share the same faith-based racism, not to mention sexism of his Jewish peers. The fact that this reading survived at all – the temptation would have been for the Church to quietly exclude it from Mark’s Gospel altogether – speaks well of the early Christian Church’s honesty and integrity. Nevertheless, their honesty has left us with a reading which is both worrying but also magnificent. Let us un-pick the Gospel reading today, celebrating its depth as it speaks to us and exposes us.

GATHERING

Announcements

Welcome

In the name of God,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

The Lord be with you

And with you

**Hymn: O for a thousand tongues to sing (TiS 210, Lydia 218,
Charles Wesley)**

Introduction to the Theme

Community Prayer: And He Took Offense at Her

This prayer arises from the Gospel reading for today: Jesus' healing of the Syrophenician or Canaanite woman. The fact that this woman is an outsider is clear. But this is a disturbing story in that Jesus' response to heal her reflects a reluctance: a reluctance based in his own Hebrew grounded, religiously-founded 'racism'. For the Hebrew the Canaanite was no more than a dog: the ultimate insult given that in the Middle-East dogs that do not work are the lowest, dirty form of life. There is a popular saying, "Angels do not enter into a house wherein there is a dog".

What was in your head when you rejected this Canaanite woman?

What were you thinking, when you likened her to a dog?

Did you for a moment allow your own natural attitudes reveal themselves?

Was this a case of your insular Hebrew culture in which you were raised, getting ahead of your new way of thinking and acting?

Or was it that this woman, this Canaanite, taught you something about life, about you, about God?

Was it that she taught you that Canaanite women actually matter?

Was it her cheeky, courageous insistence that converted you to see that she was more than just a dog?

Our Confession and Reconciliation

Let us be still and listen to the voice of God

Silence

That we claim to follow Jesus Christ,
but our world-view and values fail to conform to a life that lives
generously and graciously

That we claim to follow Jesus Christ,
but our relationships are limited to those who are just like us: who look
like us, who live like us, who think like us.

That we claim to follow Jesus Christ,
but through the years it has become a habit,
more than a real catalyst for change

***O God, forgive us
shake us to our foundations – just as occurred to Jesus –
Help us to move beyond our securities based in injustice
Amen***

The Peace

Peace be with you;
and also with you

The young people leave for SMG

LET'S HEAR THE WORD

Some Anecdotal Thoughts About Power, Demons and the Gospel

For Jesus the demons were as much expressions of social structures
as they were of natural disease and reversal. But in turn, the

relationship between discriminatory social structures and internalized individual attitudes were circular: each feeding off the other.

Peter Brown, *The Body and Society*

What sort of God do we believe in? Is it the God of nature who becomes an apologist for what is? Or is it the God of the Exodus, who challenges the status quo, especially when it is unjust? This latter God is the *goel*, the advocate, the defender, whom Job seeks in his defence and who John's Gospel champions through the idea of the Holy Spirit, the *paraclete*.

Dorothee Soelle, *Suffering*

Readings

Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23 (Good News Translation) Beth Facer

Here we find a number of aphorisms: short statements that reflect general truths. All of them, refer to the way we see society, others and ourselves; all of them underscore a particular Biblical insight that wealth usually if not always, is gained illegitimately, at the expense of others. The reading also suggests that wealth clouds good judgment, encouraging people to exploit their advantage simply because they can. The final lines of our reading are sobering, since God himself is the one who will defend those who are cheated and exploited. The setting is one of the law court, the judgment, and God is the "goel" (Job 19:25ff), the defender for whom Job had wished in his defence. This God is not the fatalist God who people scoff at, because they know that they can do anything they like and God will remain inactive, but the active God who intercedes to advocate for the powerless.

22 If you have to choose between a good reputation and great wealth, choose a good reputation.

² The rich and the poor have this in common: the LORD made them both.

⁸ If you plant the seeds of injustice, disaster will spring up, and your oppression of others will end.

⁹ Be generous and share your food with the poor. You will be blessed for it.

²² Don't take advantage of the poor just because you can; don't take advantage of those who stand helpless in court. ²³ The LORD will argue their case for them and threaten the life of anyone who threatens theirs.

Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Mark 7:24-37 (Good News Translation)

Richard Facer

Today's passage contains two anecdotes. 7:24-30 and 7:31-37. The first is quite extraordinary. Both are about Gentiles. The story in 7:24-30 is shocking because it portrays Jesus mouthing prejudice: 'Let the children first be fed; for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs' (7:27). The tendency within Church history has been to try to cast Jesus in the best light possible. Here, to its credit, the Church left this story in the canon, aware that it may present problems. Some try to 'save' Jesus by suggesting it is all a bit 'tongue in cheek'. Matthew tries to explain the episode by suggesting that Jesus was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Even so, dogs are still dogs. The image is demeaning and disturbing. Whether in the story or in reality, the good news is that Jesus thought again, refusing to remain bound by religious racism. A woman from the coastal regions of Palestine persuaded him. What an extraordinary woman! How much this says about women and their inclusion!

²⁴ Then Jesus left and went away to the territory near the city of Tyre. He went into a house and did not want anyone to know he was there, but he could not stay hidden. ²⁵ A woman, whose daughter had an evil spirit in her, heard about Jesus and came to him at once and fell at his feet. ²⁶ The woman was a Gentile, born in the region of Phoenicia in Syria. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷ But Jesus answered, "Let us first feed the children. It isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

²⁸ "Sir," she answered, "even the dogs under the table eat the children's leftovers!"

²⁹ So Jesus said to her, "Because of that answer, go back home, where you will find that the demon has gone out of your daughter!"

³⁰ She went home and found her child lying on the bed; the demon had indeed gone out of her.

³¹ Jesus then left the neighbourhood of Tyre and went on through Sidon to Lake Galilee, going by way of the territory of the Ten Towns. ³² Some people brought him a man who was deaf and could hardly speak, and they begged Jesus to place his hands on him. ³³ So Jesus took him off alone, away from the crowd, put his fingers in the man's ears, spat, and touched the man's tongue. ³⁴ Then Jesus looked up to heaven, gave a deep groan, and said to the man, "*Ephphatha*," which means, "Open up!"

³⁵ At once the man was able to hear, his speech impediment was removed, and he began to talk without any trouble. ³⁶ Then Jesus ordered the people not to speak of it to anyone; but the more he ordered them not to, the more they told it. ³⁷ And all who heard were completely amazed. “How well he does everything!” they exclaimed. “He even causes the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak!”

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you Lord Christ

Hymn: Sing a New Song (Dan Schutte)

*Sing a new song unto the Lord;
 Let your song be sung from mountains high
 Sing a new song unto the Lord
 Singing alleluia*

Yahweh's people dance for joy
 O come before the Lord
 And play for him on glad tambourines
 And let your trumpet sound

*Sing a new song unto the Lord;
 Let your song be sung from mountains high
 Sing a new song unto the Lord
 Singing alleluia*

Rise, O children, from your sleep;
 Your Saviour now has come
 He has turned your sorrow to joy
 And filled your soul with song

*Sing a new song unto the Lord;
 Let your song be sung from mountains high
 Sing a new song unto the Lord
 Singing alleluia*

Glad my soul for I have seen
 The glory of the Lord
 The trumpet sounds; the dead shall be raised
 I know my Saviour lives

*Sing a new song unto the Lord;
 Let your song be sung from mountains high
 Sing a new song unto the Lord
 Singing alleluia*

Some Thoughts

Let's Give

Doxology

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
 praise him, all creatures here below,
 praise him above, ye heavenly host,
 praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.***

Prayer of Dedication

Prayers of the People

Jeremy Kim

The one who prays ends each petition with the words, "***help us to see***", and the congregational response, "***to live the kingdom***".

Lord's Prayer

Let us say the Lord's Prayer

***Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.***

***Forgive us our sins,
 as we forgive those who sin against us.***

***Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.***

***For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.***

하늘에 계신 우리 아버지여
이름이 거룩히 여김을 받으시오며
나라이 임하옵시며
뜻이 하늘에서 이룬 것 같이
땅에서도 이루어지이다.
오늘날 우리에게 일용할 양식을 주옵시고
우리가 우리에게
죄 지은 자를 사하여 준 것 같이
우리 죄를 사하여 주옵시고
우리를 시험에 들게 하지 마옵시고
다만 악에서 구하옵소서
대개 나라와 권세와 영광이
아버지께 영원히 있사옵나이다. 아멘

Closing Hymn: The Lord is my shepherd (TiS 659, My Shepherd, Brian Boniwell)

Blessing and Sending Out
Christ is life!

Let us live
Walking with Jesus
With him, free of our demons

Our service has ended

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

In the name of Christ

Going Out: You shall go out with joy (TiS 755, Steffi Geiser Rubin)

Musical Postlude

Pianist:

Rosemary Osborne



