

August 16 Worship
Reader- Ray Godin

Announcements/Joys

Time Of Quiet Meditation- *“Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.”* Ephesians 6:18

Opening Scripture- Psalm 133(page 539)

Opening Chorus- 9- All People That On Earth Do Dwell(vs 1,2)

Responsive Call To Worship-

Leader:Come and worship, all you who love and serve the Lord.

People: Outsiders and insiders, old-timers and new-comers, the young, old and the in-between.

Leader: Come as you are, for this is God’s house.

People: A house of prayer for all people, and God welcomes each one who comes.

Hymn of Praise- 333- Now Thank We All Our God

Unison Prayer/Lord's Prayer- Ever-loving and Faithful God, you are utterly to be trusted! God’s mercy and love does not discriminate between the rich and the poor, the powerful or the humble, but instead, God pours blessings and grace upon all people who respond to God’s gracious and generous acts of love and compassion. We Pray as Jesus taught, saying... *Lord's Prayer...*

“Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

Gloria Patri- Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. World without end.
Amen, Amen.

Old Testament Scripture- Isaiah 56:6-8(page 636)

Special Music-

Gospel Scripture- Matthew 15:21-28(page 849-850)

Children's Time/Echo Prayer/Passing of the Peace

Hymn- 337- Blest Be The Tie That Binds

New Testament Scripture- Romans 11:29-32(page 986)

Message

“Keep Trying!”

As much as we may hope that those who we associate with have the same ideas about faith as we do, it is highly improbable that a small number of them do. Unless we limit ourselves to relationships with other church members, we more than likely have many people in our lives who either have a different outlook on faith or claim no faith at all. As Christians, are we supposed to avoid contact with those who have different opinions about faith? Are we meant to try and convert their thinking to what we believe? Is it even important for us to evangelize our beliefs to those who we think need Jesus? How would we feel if someone we knew began to preach to us about how we should believe?

Sharing our faith can be a touchy subject for some people. We live in a society where our beliefs are considered private and even sacred to each individual. If we only associate with those who think the same as we do, we will be lonely indeed. Even in a church such as ours, there may be many different thoughts on many topics. This is OK since we like to think of ourselves as intelligent, thoughtful people. Even though we all read from the same Bible, each of us may interpret in varied ways. So how are we supposed to know if we are in common belief with each other? We pray, we listen, to each other and the Holy Spirit, we try to understand by reading scripture over and over again and we discuss, without conflict, those things we are having trouble understanding. Then we go back and start over until we receive understanding.

The gospel reading this morning shows a side of Jesus that we do not often see. A Canaanite woman asked for help to deliver her daughter from a demon. The relationship of the Canaanites to the Hebrews was troubled at best. The Canaanites had been conquered by Israel and were considered to be pagan and enemies of the Jews. Even so, it was not like Jesus to ignore pleas for help from anyone. He said that He had been sent to care for people of Israel and the disciples wanted her gone. The woman was not willing to go away and got down on her knees in front of Jesus begging for His help. What He tells her seems a bit harsh; “It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.” Using the word dogs would have been

considered a demeaning insult in those days. What Jesus was telling her was that His mission was supposed to be to care for His own people, not for other cultures.

This is not how we envision Jesus. He is meant to care for all people, not just for those of Israel. In my opinion, Jesus had found a teaching moment for His disciples. What the woman said next carried the message to the 12 who wanted her gone. She said; “Yes Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.” The teaching was that even those who were from what was considered a lower culture, could find faith in Christ. The woman, even though she was of a different culture, still accepted Jesus as master. The disciples were being taught that Jesus was not just the Son of God to the Hebrews, He was the Son of God to the world.

The power of the woman's insistence that Jesus help her daughter was in the persistence of her request. She had faith that He could help and was not going to take no for an answer. Can we say that we have the same perseverance? Is our faith that strong? When we go to God for help, do we give up when the answer does not come right away? How many times do we ask, or how long are we expected to wait for Him to answer us? Waiting on God is not only difficult; sometimes it seems impossible. We want things to happen in our own timing, according to our plans. But God doesn't operate on our schedules, and expecting that He will sets one up for disappointment.

I believe that there are more lessons that Jesus was teaching in this gospel reading. It seems to me that He was telling His disciples to not judge a book by its cover. The woman was probably dressed in a way that marked her as a Canaanite and the disciples definitely had a preset judgment towards her ethnicity. Jesus was *their* Lord, *their* Messiah. His coming had been foretold for the Jewish people and no one else. They didn't remember the part where Jesus was sent for the entire world. Let the others find their own Savior. This one belongs to us. Aren't we kind of like them at times? We tend to make judgments based on someone's nationality or race, thinking that they must believe differently because of how they dress or speak.

There is a piece of scripture that I use whenever I find myself judging someone else's faith; Romans 14:1-12- “As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Master is able to make him stand. One man esteems one day as better than another, while another man esteems all days alike. Let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind. He who

observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. He also who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; while he who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." So each of us shall give account of himself to God."

Just remember that what we believe to be true, whatever our faith tells us, May be a bit different, even among ourselves. None of us has the perfect answer, only God does. We are meant to do the best we can with what we know and believe. The scriptures contain the truth, but we need to accept that we do not all interpret the same. The main thing is that we try to find the answers and discover the truth, and then try again and again. Study, pray and keep on searching. Someday, God will show us what is true. Praise be to God. Amen.

Prayers of the People- Merciful God, In love You created us, and in love You sustain us, day after day. So it is with confidence that we bring our prayers to You, knowing that You will hear and respond. We pray for those who are estranged from spouse or family, friends or neighbors; who find it difficult to forgive past wrongs done to them; We pray for those who for years have carried feelings of guilt or regret for something they did or something they neglected to do; who find it difficult to ask for forgiveness or forgive themselves; For those who find themselves far away from You, struggling to overcome their doubts or disillusionment, and who wonder how to find their way back; For those watching someone they love try to cope with serious illness or injury, and who long for Your miraculous intervention; For the many others in our world who are suffering this day, from grief, or loneliness, hunger, poverty, violence or illness; Sustain all those who look to You in hope. And strengthen us, Your people, so that we may be a light to all those who find themselves in darkness. Lord, hear our prayer. In the name of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

Closing Hymn- 671- In Christ There Is No East Or West

Benediction- This is what the Lord says: Be just and fair to all. Do what is right and good, for I am coming soon to redeem you, and to reveal My righteousness to all. So go to love and serve the Lord and one another. And may the blessing of God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you and among you all. Amen.