

August 20, 2023

12th Sunday after Pentecost

Introduction to the day

In Isaiah we hear that God's house shall be a house of prayer for all people and that God will gather the outcasts of Israel. The Canaanite woman in today's



gospel is a Gentile, an outsider, who is unflinching in her request that Jesus heal her daughter. As Jesus commends her bold faith, how might our church extend its mission to those on the margins of society? In our gathering around word and meal we receive strength to be signs of comfort, healing, and justice for those in need.

***Please stand as able.**

GATHERING

*** GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

***CONFESSON AND FORGIVENESS**

God's steadfast love is everlasting, and God's faithfulness endures from generation to generation. Trusting in the mercy of God, we acknowledge the sin and brokenness in us and around us. Reconciling God, **we confess that we do not trust your abundance. We place our hope in ourselves and rely on our own efforts. We fail to believe that you provide enough for all. We abuse your good creation for our own benefit. We fear difference and do not welcome others as you have welcomed us. We sin in thought, word, and deed. By your grace, forgive us; through your love, renew us; and in your Spirit, lead us; so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.**

Beloved of God, by the radical abundance of grace and mercy we have peace with God through Christ Jesus. Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope. For hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray... **God of all peoples, your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**
Amen.

*** GATHERING SONG** *Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing*
(ELW #886) (VV 1,3, 5)

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

A reading from Isaiah.

The prophet calls upon Israel to do justice in view of God's imminent intervention to save. Righteousness and obedience define who belongs to the Israelite community—not race, nationality, or any other category.

¹Thus says the LORD: Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed. ⁶And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it, and hold fast my covenant— ⁷these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. ⁸Thus says the Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather others to them besides those already gathered.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 67

Let all the peoples praise you, O God. (Ps. 67:3)

¹May God be merciful to us and bless us; may the light of God's face shine upon us.

²**Let your way be known upon earth, your saving health among all nations.**

³Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

⁴**Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide all the nations on earth.**

⁵Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

⁶**The earth has brought forth its increase; God, our own God, has blessed us.**

⁷May God give us blessing, and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe.

SECOND READING: Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

A reading from Romans.

God has not rejected Israel. Rather, the call and gifts of God are irrevocable so that, while all have been disobedient, God has mercy upon all.

[Paul writes:] ¹I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ^{2a}God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. ²⁹For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. ³²For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

GOSPEL: Matthew 15:[10-20] 21-28

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus teaches his disciples that true purity is a matter of the heart rather than outward religious observances. Almost immediately, this teaching is tested when a woman considered to be a religious outsider approaches him for help.


²¹Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²²Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." ²³But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." ²⁴He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." ²⁶He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." ²⁷She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

REFLECTIONS ON READINGS FOR THE DAY AND SERMON

* HYMN OF THE DAY *Go to the World* (ACS #991)



1 Go to the world! Go in - to all the earth.
2 Go to the world! Go in - to ev - 'ry place.
3 Go to the world! Go strug - gle, bless, and pray;
4 "Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,

Go preach the cross where Christ re - news life's worth,
Go live the word of God's re - deem - ing grace.
the nights of tears give way to joy - ous day.
for I am with you till the age shall end,

bap - tiz - ing as the sign of our re - birth.
Go seek God's pres - ence in each time and space.
As ser - vant church, you fol - low Christ's own way.
when all the hosts of glo - ry cry, A - men!"

Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

***APOSTLES CREED**

I believe in God, the Father
almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's
only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy
Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was
buried;
he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand
of the Father,
and he will come to judge the
living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Confident that God receives our joys and concerns, let us offer our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of creation.

O God, your Spirit gathers the church. Shepherd those who are newly baptized and newly ordained in the proclamation of the gospel, breathe life into ecumenical and inter-religious endeavors, and support missionaries throughout the globe.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You call leaders to practice generosity. Inspire all in authority to protect people in harm's way, deliver those in bondage, support fair elections, provide care for military personnel and veterans, and show mercy to those for whom they have responsibility.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

O God, you journey with us in all of life's transitions. Guide those preparing for baptism, marriage, and retirement. Guide our church council and committees in their visioning and ministry. Safeguard those who travel.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give you thanks for those who now rest from their labors. Motivate us by their lives of dedication to the gospel, until that day when we join with them in our eternal home.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, in the name of the one who reconciled all creation to himself, Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

***PEACE** ~ The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

***OFFERING SONG** *Create in Me a Clean Heart (ELW #186)*
(Please stand as the offering is brought forward)

***WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

*** LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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 trespasses,**

**as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into
temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen**

SENDING

BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING SONG *Oh, Praise the Gracious Power (ELW #651) (VV. 1, 2, 5)*

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Mon, Aug 21st BLC Book Club
- Tue, Aug 22nd No Stretch and Pray at FLC
- Wed, Aug 23rd 5 PM BLC Alter guild Meeting
7:30 PM Fisher Council
- Thur, Aug 17th 6:30 AM AA at FLC
10-12 BLC Pastors office hours
No Stretch and Pray at FLC
- Sun, Aug 20th 9 AM Worship at Fisher with Pastor Greg Isaacson
11:00 AM Beach Worship with Pastor Gretchen at Maple Lake,
Trinity Point with potluck following



GOSPEL MESSAGE

August 20, 2023

LECTIONARY 20

Holding Jesus Accountable

As disturbing as the report of Jesus' callous-sounding encounter with the unnamed Canaanite woman may be to our ears, all around him, on both sides of their ethnic divide, were people who would have been outraged by any act of generosity or goodwill between a Jew and a Canaanite. So it's no surprise when the disciples urge Jesus to send her away. Animosities toward "those" on the other side of the border, between children of Canaan and children of Israel, were deeply entrenched and easily inflamed. Jesus appears to identify with the ill will.

All eyes and ears attend the scene. The shouting, then kneeling woman is in stubborn company with others whose protesting faith demands more than silence from God, who refuse to be rejected by God, who insist on being heard by God. She is in the company of Jacob, who wrestled with God through the night and demanded a blessing; with Moses pleading for God's mercy upon stiff-necked people; with Job, not settling for a vindictive Creator. She's in tradition with the psalmist's entreaty "My God, . . . why [are you] so far from saving me?" (Psalm 22:1). She is beside Martha railing against Jesus' delay as her brother, Lazarus, lay dying, and beside the blind men shouting to Jesus above defiant crowds at Jericho.

The Canaanite woman is clear about the way of Jesus, so she dares to hold him—Son of David, face of God—accountable. Yes, her aggressive and, surely for many, objectionable faith in the mercy of Jesus against all evidence to the contrary results in her daughter's healing. What's more, her persistent challenge to Jesus becomes an enduring voice to be heard by any who dare claim that God's mercy is limited, God's help is restricted, or God's providence is settled. She raises her voice and takes a knee for the church of Jesus Christ, representing all the voices shouting, "Have mercy on me."