

Morning Worship with Tini Horning
5th September 2021
The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost /
The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity



Personal preparation before the service begins.

Please take time to remember where you are,
 and why you are here.
 Give thanks and become still
 in the presence of God

Prelude

Call to worship

There are always more than enough reasons to worship God in God's Holiness. Looking around, both near and far from us we feel the effects of God's mercy upon us, which calls us to worship. The air that we breathe freely, our hope to live full lives again despite the global situation, our family members and friends, our shelter and food, all these and other motives compel us to worship.

Let us begin our service by welcoming the Lord in our midst by singing a Kyrie from Taizé:

Kyrie, Kyrie eleison.
Kyrie, Kyrie eleison.

Christe, Christe eleison.
Christe, Christe eleison.

Kyrie, Kyrie eleison.
Kyrie, Kyrie eleison.

Words and music: Jacques Berthier
 © Ateliers et Presses de Taizé

Merciful Lord
Praise Your Holy Name.

You created the universe out of love
Praise Your Holy Name.

We live only by Your grace and love
Praise Your Holy Name.

In Your image and likeness,
 You created us to form relationships with others.
Praise Your Holy Name.

With thankful hearts, we worship You
Praise Your Holy Name for evermore.

Let us pray with words from Psalm 125

(Refrain) Glorious things are spoken of you,
 Zion, city of our God.

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, ♦
which cannot be moved, but stands fast for ever.

As the hills stand about Jerusalem, ♦
**so the Lord stands round about his people,
 from this time forth for evermore.**

The sceptre of wickedness shall not hold sway
 over the land allotted to the righteous, ♦
lest the righteous turn their hands to evil.

Do good, O Lord, to those who are good, ♦
and to those who are true of heart.

Those who turn aside to crooked ways
 the Lord shall take away with the evildoers; ♦
but let there be peace upon Israel.

(Refrain) Glorious things are spoken of you,
 Zion, city of our God.

God of power,
 you are strong to save
 and you never fail those who trust in you;

keep us under your protection
and spread abroad your reign of peace
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Song: SoF 412, vv. 1, 5
O for a thousand tongues to sing

1. O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
my great Redeemer's praise!
The glories of my God and King,
(men) the triumphs of His grace,
 (women) the triumphs of His grace,
(men) the triumphs of His grace,
 (women) the triumphs of His grace,
(all) the triumphs of His grace!

5. He speaks and, listening to His voice,
new life the dead receive,
new life the dead receive;
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
(men) the humble poor believe,
 (women) the humble poor believe,
(men) the humble poor believe,
 (women) the humble poor believe,
(all) the humble poor believe.

Words: Charles Wesley
Music: Thomas Jarman
Public Domain

**The Collect for today,
the Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Almighty God,
whose only Son has opened for us

a new and living way into your presence:
give us pure hearts and steadfast wills
to worship you in spirit and in truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

**The reading is taken from the Epistle of
James 2:1-10, 11-13, 14-17**

Let us prepare ourselves for the word of God
Our hearts and our minds are open

My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. For the one who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The reading is taken from Mark 7:24-37

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

Glory to you, O Lord

Jesus set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter." So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him

to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, “He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Homily

Review: Last week we dove into James. As Daphne shared, the book of James, most likely written by Jesus’ brother, is one of the most controversial books in the Bible. Luther questioned whether it belong to the canon because it contained words that could appear to contradict other parts of the Bible, especially Paul’s letters. You could say that it is one of the first “How to Book for Christians” with all of its practical advice. (Side note: It feels a little ironic and fitting that I would end up with today’s text after my last sermon that focused on JUST BELIEVING and, out of believing being moved to doing things for Jesus. Keep that in mind. It will come up in a minute.)

The passage in James from last week talked about, amongst other things, the power of our words and that we should be slow to speak and quick to listen. The Gospel text supported these statements in Jesus’ saying that it was rather that what came out of our mouths and hearts that made us clean or unclean.

Today we pick up where we left off last week in both books. The homily is structured around 5 key statements from the three Bible passages that we can “chew through” as we so nicely say in German or

ponder in our hearts and minds. In unpacking them, we will jump around a bit between the texts but hopefully it will end up all making sense. So here we go:

The statements are:

1. Do not show favoritism. James 2:1
2. Yes, Lord. But even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. Mark 7:28
3. Faith without works is dead. James 2:17
4. Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. Psalm 125:1
5. Be opened. Mark 7:34

“Do not show favoritism.” James 2:1

I will not stay here too long because I think this is a principle that we have heard often. Clearly it is something easier said than done, right? We like to see everyone treated fairly and often sense aggressive feelings or have an upset stomach coming on when we see someone who is constantly favored over others, especially when there is no obvious reason or to the detriment of others. How much more intense these feelings can be when we ourselves or those dear to us are negatively affected by the favoritism of others?

Upon first glance of our Gospel text, one could question whether Jesus showed favoritism in the Gospel text. Provocative, I know. In this text we see Him perform two healings in very different ways. In the first one He might seem hesitant or defiant. With the deaf/mute man, however, Jesus' reaction could seem more immediate and hands on. He gave him a private audience, put His fingers in His ears and touched his tongue.

Was Jesus giving the deaf/mute man and the people who brought him preferential treatment? I am going to leave this open for a moment and hope we can answer it with the next statement.

“Yes, Lord. But even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” Mark 7:28

Ok this statement, is NOT one we have heard often and, in comparison with the first one is quite confusing. The only things we know about the person who said it is that she who was Greek and born in Syria Pheonicia. In other words, she was NOT Jewish and she was on a mission. Her daughter needed help and she was desperate.

This woman must have heard Jesus and I would go out on a limb to say that she had experienced firsthand the miraculous works of Jesus. Maybe she had even sat in on some of His teaching. Perhaps she had seen the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 because she used the illustration of crumbs? Regardless of where and to what extent she had experienced Jesus, the Scripture says that **“as soon as she heard” she came and fell at His feet and begged Jesus** to heal her daughter.

This woman might be one of my favorite characters in the Bible. I know, we shouldn’t have favorites. I did just say this. But wow! What humility, boldness, courage, and faith! A woman who was so compelled by the love for her child and so convinced of Jesus’ ability to help her that she barged into a house full of Jews. She was a woman in male-led and dominated culture and she was not part of the Jewish culture an faith. She didn’t let that stop her. She was determined. She didn’t ask for permission to approach Jesus. She was not concerned with what others thought or how she came across to those gathered in the house when she fell at his feet. She had a one-track mind and was convinced that Jesus was able to heal her daughter.

Jesus’ response to this bold and courageous woman is perplexing. He says, (v. 27) **“First let the children eat all they want,...for it is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”** Who is He talking about as children and dogs? I can’t say for sure, but Jesus was more than likely in a house full of Jews, His followers. It was an exclusive or private party. The Gospel says that He wanted to keep His presence in

Tyre secret. He might have planned to exclusively teach and train the Jews, those who were already followers of Him, before heading out to perform miracles amongst the masses of those who did yet not know/follow Him. These Jews are the “children” He mentions, those whose needs He says first need to be satisfied. The “dogs” then are probably the non-Jews, the Gentiles, amongst them being the woman and her child. Jesus was not explicitly saying that He wouldn’t free the child from the demon, but He was saying that the Jews’ nourishment, be it either spiritual or physical hunger, came first.

Once again, I am amazed by the woman and her persistence. She will not take NO or not yet for an answer and is bold enough to push back with our second statement. **“Yes, Lord. But even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.”** This statement is powerful...and not just because she was challenging Jesus. First of all, it contains a profession of the woman’s faith. She calls Jesus, Lord, using the Greek word, *kyrios kúpioç* a title given only to God, which claims Jesus to be the Messiah, the Savior. In that one word she makes clear her acknowledgement of Jesus as much more than just another miracle worker, namely the Son of God! Secondly, the woman calls Jesus’ attention to the fact that even the dogs receive a portion, however small, of the bread. In this case, she’s talking about the bread of Life, Jesus and His healing power.

Jesus rewards this powerful pushback by saying, (v.29) “For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter.” It worked! She was healed! I imagine the woman speeding off, nearly tripping over her robes, running home, yet again with a one-track mind, determined to get home to her daughter as quickly as possible and filled with incredible joy and relief as she arrives home to see her daughter returned back to her old self, free of the demon.

Why did Jesus give the woman pushback? I wonder if it was not favoritism toward the Jews that was behind his

actions, but more His desire to bring the woman to profess her faith in Him as LORD (kyrios) and, in so doing, to be a witness to those around her.

The second healing had a similar but slightly less dramatic start. Here we know that a group of people brought the deaf/mute to Jesus. Just as the woman did, they beg Jesus to place His hands on the man and heal him. The placing on of hands is a less explicit way of the people recognizing that Jesus was Lord. They knew that Jesus possessed the uniquely healing power of God because He was God himself. This time maybe Jesus was again acted upon seeing the people's faith.

Faith...this word brings me to our next and probably most controversial statement.

“Faith without works is dead.” James 2:17

I bet this is one statement that has caused many theological arguments and causes me often to scratch my head. In my last homily I quoted Ephesians 2,8+9 that say, “For it is through faith, and not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast.” Last time I talked about how Jesus didn't require us to DO anything, but just to BELIEVE. And now we hear that without works, faith is dead. Isn't that totally contradictory?

Honestly you could spend hours talking about the meaning of this (and maybe you can start over coffee or lunch with your family). I think that the statement is not contradictory but complimentary to that said in Ephesians. It all depends on how you understand what James is saying. Which comes first- faith or works, or are they both necessary. What if one flows out of the other?

What if it our faith is surrounded by works/action or if it is a continual cycle or even a cause-and-effect relationship? First, we experience the actions or work of Jesus in our life--whether it is in hearing the stories of the Bible, seeing first-hand God work in your life, or a prayer answered, or something totally different. This experience causes us to believe what we have heard-

that God is love, that He wants to have a relationship with us and that for Him nothing is impossible. This experience and newfound belief then moves us to action. We want others to know about and experience the same thing. In this way, our actions, or works, if you will, are driven by our faith which is founded in an experience of God's love.

Our Gospel text illustrates this cycle. The woman, one of my heroes in the faith, experienced Jesus which caused her to believe in Him as Lord. This faith moved her to action, to seek help from Jesus. After the deaf/mute man was healed, Jesus commanded the people not to tell anyone BUT they people were so moved by the experience. Verse 37 says that **“people were so overwhelmed with amazement.”** I imagine the whole area abuzz with people chattering about what they had seen. They were so amazed that they couldn't contain their joy. Their belief in Jesus and their experience with Him caused them to tell others about Him. I imagine news of Jesus spreading like wildfire NOT because people thought they HAD to tell of Jesus as some sort of proof that their faith was alive and real. The sharing, their action, was an effect/result of their faith!

I bet each one of us has experienced the love of God and His healing and miraculous touch in our lives in remarkable and unique ways. I would love to take time to hear about it from each one of you. If you are like me, these experiences strengthen by belief in the God I read about in the Bible as real, all-powerful, almighty, and so much more. It makes Him real. This belief, strengthened by experiencing Jesus, then moves me to want others to experience it too, which in turn can result in a myriad of actions – passing on God's love in word and deed- maybe in practical help, in a kind word, or in offering to pray with or for others.

Faith is the motor that drives me into action and not the other way around. Without experiencing God and believing that He is with us, our ability to do good works and serve others is limited. Eventually we will run out of

gas. Remember Jesus' words in John, that apart from Him we can do nothing, but when we believe in Him, we will do even greater things than He had done. What an incredible driving force...and one that is powered by faith and not my own works!

This brings me to the next statement, taken from Psalm 125, which we prayed at together at the beginning of the service:

“Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever.”

One of my Bible reference books says that Mount Zion symbolizes a mountain supported by or made up of God's promises. I don't know about you, but that sounds attractive to me. I'd love to be unshaken, steady, grounded and supported by God's promises. This world feels so shaky, so unstable. You don't know where to look and what to hold on to.

Notice that this verse again has no mention of works. It does mention trusting in the Lord, which can also mean having faith, believing the promises we read about in the Bible. He is the one who gives us safety and assurance, not our own abilities or actions. This trust is powerful. It can make us feel invincible, move us to be bold and courageous just like the woman in Mark.

I don't know about you, but I don't always feel invincible, safe, assured, or compelled to share about Jesus. What do we do then?

Let's look at the last statement:

“Be opened.” (Mark 7:34)

These words were spoken by Jesus as He healed the mute man- commanding His ears to be opened and his tongue to be loosed so that he could speak. These two words, depending on how you say/interpret them can either be a prayer and/or a call to action for each one of us.

Maybe you are sitting here and thinking, I have yet to experience Jesus in my life or He seems so far away

from me. If so, I invite you to pray for Jesus to open your eyes and ears to see and hear who He is and how He is working in your life.

Maybe you, like me, are suffering from a small or large case of spiritual amnesia. You know that Jesus is there, you believe He can do marvelous things, but you seem to forget who He is and what He has done in your life. Again, you can pray to be opened, for your mind to remember who He is and how you have experienced Him. Ask Him to remind you of His promises so that you may be strengthened in and through Him.

Another challenge or invitation for this week is to pray this prayer each day, asking God to open your ears, mind, and heart to experience Him and His incredible love for you. Imagine what it would be like if each one of us in this room would be so overwhelmed by God's working in our daily lives that we were compelled like the people in our Gospel reading to tell others about Him!

And...lastly, I can't forget the first statement I mentioned. We shouldn't show favoritism to those around you. And...I asked if Jesus showed favoritism in the Gospel. While I think we can agree that He didn't, I would wager to say that He does have a favorite and, as cheesy as it sounds, it is each one of us individually. YOU are His favorite...and so am I! Hard to imagine, but true!

Zephaniah 3:17 says, "The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with His love, he will rejoice over you with singing." He takes delight in you. He loves you and rejoices over each one of us.

Let us all be open to experiencing more and more of this love and see where it leads us!

Song: SoF 412, vv. 6, 7 O for a thousand tongues

6. Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb,
 your loosened tongues employ,
 your loosened tongues employ;
 ye blind, behold your Saviour come;
 (men) and leap, ye lame, for joy,
 (women) and leap, ye lame, for joy,
 (men) and leap, ye lame, for joy,
 (women) and leap, ye lame, for joy,
 (all) and leap, ye lame, for joy!

7. My gracious Master and my God,
 assist me to proclaim,
 assist me to proclaim;
 to spread through all the earth abroad
 (men) the honours of Thy name,
 (women) the honours of Thy name,
 (men) the honours of Thy name,
 (women) the honours of Thy name,
 (all) the honours of Thy name.

Words: Charles Wesley
 Music: Thomas Jarman
 Public Domain

Intercessions (by Helen Rose)

Response:

O Lord, hear my pray'r,
 O Lord, hear my pray'r:
 when I call answer me.
 O Lord, hear my pray'r,
 O Lord, hear my pray'r:
 come and listen to me.

Words and music: Jacques Berthier
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Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

In the language of our hearts, let us pray as our Saviour taught us

A sign of peace

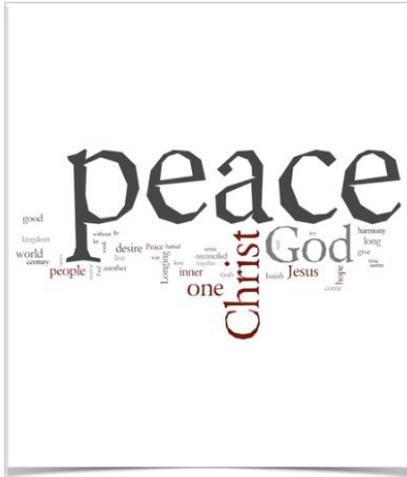
God is love
 And those who live in love live in God
 And God lives in them.
 We meet in the name of Christ and share his peace.

Song: ACF 132, vv. 1, 3, 4 Will you come and follow me

1. Will you come and follow me
 if I but call your name?
 Will you go where you don't know,
 and never be the same?
 Will you let my love be shown,
 will you let my name be known,
 will you let my life be grown in you,
 and you in me?

4. Will you love the 'you' you hide
 if I but call your name?
 Will you quell the fear inside,
 and never be the same?
 Will you use the faith you've found
 to reshape the world around
 through my sight and touch and sound in you,
 and you in me?

5. Lord, your summons echoes true
 when you but call my name.
 Let me turn and follow you,
 and never be the same.
 In your company I'll go
 where your love and footsteps show,
 thus I'll move and live and grow in you,
 and you in me.



CCLI Song # 4791063
Words and music: John L. Bell, Graham Maule
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The Blessing

May the Father from whom every family
in earth and heaven receives its name
strengthen us with his Spirit in our inner being,
so that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith;
and the blessing of God almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
come upon us and remain with us always.
Amen.

The Conclusion

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life.
Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Announcements
(see below)

Postlude

Look forward to our next service

with Iris Gertschar

12th September 2021

The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

11:30 hrs, Zoom link see website
and in person in the church 😊



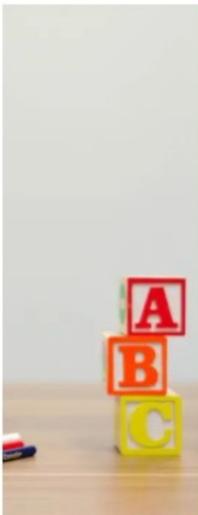
BACK TO SCHOOL

Prayer for teachers and students

Sunday, 12th September

During the ACF Sunday service

We as a church community would like to send our students and teachers out into the new academic year with a blessing. Please come along on the last Sunday of the school holidays and to be part of this. (And if you would like to, bring your school bag along!)



Evening Prayer on Wednesdays

Wednesday,
8th September 2021
9pm (for 20-30min)

(Please use the usual
Sunday service link.)



JOINT EVENING SERVICE

with the Old Catholic congregation
Sunday, 26th September

We are pleased to announce that the ACF and our friends at the Old Catholic congregation are planning a joint service!

It will most probably be held in the evening, replacing our morning worship that day.

Save the date!

More information is to follow.

**ACF CALENDAR 2022**

Work on the ACF Calendar 2022 has begun! If you are part of the ACF and would like to contribute your drawings and paintings, please get in touch by the end of September.

Thank you to all the ACF artists that make our calendar what it is!

