

### **3rd Sunday after Pentecost**

Sunday, June 9, 2024

#### **Introduction to the day**

A house divided against itself cannot stand. Jesus makes this observation in light of charges that he is possessed. He is possessed, not by a demon, but by the Holy Spirit. We who have received the Holy Spirit through baptism have been joined to Christ's death and resurrection and knit together in the body of Christ. Those with whom we sing and pray this day are Jesus' family. With them we go forth in peace to do the will of God.

#### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

O God, the strength of those who hope in you: Be present and hear our prayers; and, because in the weakness of our mortal nature we can do nothing good without you, give us the help of your grace, so that in keeping your commandments we may please you in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

#### **FIRST LESSON: 1 Samuel 8:4-11 [12-15] 16-20 [11:14-15]**

A reading from 1 Samuel.

*God has settled the Israelites in the promised land and has appointed judges to govern them. But they want to be like the nations around them. By asking Samuel for a human king, they reject the kingship of God and open themselves to oppression at the hands of the human king.*

#### **Psalm 138**

Your love endures forever; do not abandon the work of your hands. (Ps. 138:9)

#### **SECOND LESSON: 2 Corinthians 4:13—5:1**

A reading from 2 Corinthians.

*Life in the present is transitory and cannot compare with the eternal home God has prepared for us. So we do not despair no matter what life might bring because we know that as God raised Jesus from the dead, God promises to bring us into eternal life.*

#### **GOSPEL: Mark 3:20-35**

*In response to charges that he is possessed, Jesus wonders aloud how anyone who is demon-possessed can cast out demons. Those who do the will of God are possessed by the Holy Spirit, siblings of Christ.*

#### **GOSPEL MESSAGE**

##### **No Room for Compromise**

Some things seem more trouble than they're worth. People who fish with monofilament line may find that when it kinks, and tangles it isn't worth the effort to pull apart the knots. Likewise for knitters whose balls of yarn unravel into a snarl on the floor. Or when packages of puff pastry can be had from the grocer's freezer case, a baker may well find making it from scratch more bother than benefit and opt for ready-made. Those banking on Jesus' admonition to forgive seventy times seven may find it impossible to make peace with his uncompromising warning that "whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness." Like a foreign-language crossword puzzle, it might seem unsolvable.

Some might find relief in joining the people gathered around Jesus' home who concluded that it would be best to ignore him: "He has gone out of his mind." Others, like his family, stay on the edge of conflict and attempt to restrain him—"Hush, you're making a scene." Tensions are high, not only out among the

crowds, not merely *close* to home, but in the *center* of home, the very heart of community and family. The air sizzles with discord. It must have been like the many broken bonds and hollowed-out relationships familiar to us today, at a time roiling with division. Pursuing hope and finding healing might seem not worth the effort.

To that temptation Jesus delivers a scorching, confounding warning: by ascribing his actions to the evil one, rejecting good as though it were demonic, judging the spirit of God's love to be wicked—all of this is to choose *against* forgiveness and mercy. Without recognizing the urgency of love behind Jesus' warning, we may think his words a contradiction to Jesus' commitment to forgiveness. In fact, he uncompromisingly claims that the way of forgiveness belongs to the kingdom of God. Period!

## **THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

We come before the triune God to pray for our communities, ourselves, and our world.

You reawaken our hearts to your mercy. We give you thanks for renewers of the church in every age. Enliven the creativity and persistence of all seeking to transform the church into a closer vision of your beloved community. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Your presence is revealed in the shade of trees, the growth of seeds into flowers, and in the blessing of plants granting food in their right season. Heal lands scarred by deforestation, pollution, or infestation. Teach us to cultivate the earth with respect and reverence. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Our nations and communities are divided, O God. Teach us again to listen with curiosity and mercy, even in disagreement. Grant us the humility to acknowledge our hardness of heart and make us bold in modeling cooperation for the sake of the common good. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Hear the prayers of all who cry out to you from the depths of fear, despair, or hopelessness (*especially* Sandra Gagnon, Karen Weigold, Keith Weckwerth, Shirley Glickman, Marilyn Schneider, Denita Wolfgram, Stephanie Yourth, Christopher Yourth, Linda Boland, Glenda Panke, Debbie Thom, Donna L Hoffman, Walter Hobden, Harold Yourth and those in long term care facilities and senior residences. In this moment of silence we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts those who need your healing touch. With haste, rescue victims of trafficking, exploitation, and abuse, and bless organizations and individuals who work on their behalf. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Grant wisdom and clarity to all who are in seasons of discernment and transition: high school graduates preparing for first jobs or new educational journeys, those who are shifting careers, and those who are navigating changes in their relationships. Accompany them with your peace. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Praise to you for our ancestors in faith who believed, spoke, and lived in you. Give us confidence that as Jesus was raised, so we too will be raised, with all the saints, into your everlasting presence. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Receive our prayers, O God, and come quickly to our aid, through the power of the Spirit and the love of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

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

**Amen**

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

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