

Coop's Scoops: Sunday Readings, Sermon and Prayers June 6th, 2021

Proper 10

“The ruler of this world shall now be cast out; and when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to Myself” (John 12:31, 32)

Readings: 1 Samuel 8: 4-9, 19-22 Psalm 57 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

The Collect:

O God, you have assured the human family of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Deliver us from the death of sin, and raise us to new life in Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



The Holy Gospel:

Then Jesus went home; ²⁰and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. ²¹When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, “He has gone out of his mind.” ²²And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.” ²³And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? ²⁴If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. ²⁶And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. ²⁷But no one can enter a strong man’s house

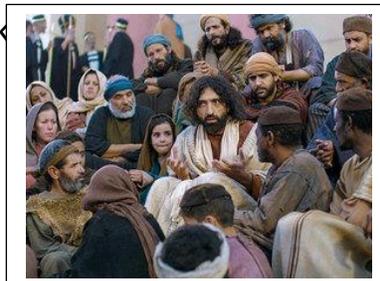
and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

²⁸ “Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; ²⁹ but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin” — ³⁰ for they had said, “He has an unclean spirit.”

³¹ Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers and sisters^[c] are outside, asking for you.” ³³ And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” ³⁴ And looking at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

Sermon: I thought I’d had a busy week, until I re-read (In the verses just preceding our Gospel) about the weekend that Jesus had just endured. On the Sabbath, He’d pretty much broken all the rules: Ate grain from a field which meant He had broken the Law about picking wheat on the Sabbath. He’d gone to synagogue as He should on Sabbath, but then healed a man with a withered hand, again breaking the rules. Right after that so many people started following Him that He had to sit on a boat to teach and then there were unclean spirits that shouted that He was the Son of God. He politely told them to be quiet. It would be just too much for the Leaders of the Faith of Israel to handle.

As we will see, it seems it was too much even for His family to handle. Ever had somebody in your family tell you you’ve crossed the line, gone too far, and lost your mind? Maybe not quite that stark, but do have a sister who’s like a “cactus dressed in a silk shirt? Looks good, but pretty sharp and prickly on the inside” (that great image is from Max Lucado). Or an uncle who constantly embarrasses you by telling old stories you’d rather nobody had ever heard? Or a tar baby brother who still seems able to always get his own way? Families are all unique, often wonderful, and also sometimes quite impossible. Yet they remain family. Jesus’s family was like the story in our Gospel reading begins.



Jesus had gone home after all His hard work, and the crowds followed Him back there and crowded around Him outside.

The Scribes and leaders were quick to take Him on. They accused Him of the notorious sin of sorcery...being used/possessed by the demon of sorcery, one Beelzebub...to accomplish His signs and miracles. And Jesus said 'How could Beelzebub cast himself out? A house divided cannot stand. Demons do not do the works of God . He does. Therefore, He could not be possessed by a demon. A simple saying, obviously and patently true. It might have gone better for Him if He had left off the last phrase " But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered". The strong man referred to was the **whole Rabbinical system** and the Law... Jesus was going to enter into the house of the Strong Manthe place where they had power...and take from them their treasure...which was the obedience, fear, and honour of those whom they ruled. Jesus was going to set people free.....from sin, from fear, from guilt, from lies, from confusion and from coercion...through the message of His Gospel...and that is what the Scribes really, really didn't like about Jesus. That is why they began plotting His demise. People expected new leaders and prophets to act according to "the rules" and serve those already in "power".

In Samuel's time we see the same thing. People insistent on their own way clamoured for the great judge Solomon to appoint a King, even though Solomon told them over and over it would not go well for them if he did. Finally God tells Solomon to let them have a specific King, a young fellow named Saul from the tribe of Benjamin currently out chasing escaped donkeys. Saul was not from Judea. Not wealthy. Not ever a judge. Saul did many good things; nonetheless, the people suffered defeat after defeat, many consequences for disobedience,

and all sorts of peril during Saul's monarchy. It would take another young nobody...a shepherd boy by the name of David to set the monarchy right .

Having spoken His words to the scribes, Jesus is told that His mother and brothers are outside, having heard He had lost His mind, and waiting to cart Him away for help. It must have hurt. It must have hurt bad. But Jesus does not go to them, or argue with them, or call anybody down, or get angry. Instead He draws the family circle wide open. He calls every one who does the Will of God His brothers and sisters and His mother. He generously allows His natural family some time to reflect on God's will for Him, while He creates a brand new family composed of all who believe.

Now what do we take home from all this: Here are some suggestions:

- We take comfort that when our families, whether biological or the church family, hurt us spiritually and emotionally, or ignore us, we are in good company with Jesus. And like Jesus, although we may be sad and confused, we are not to get furiously angry and strike out immediately to wound them back. There is a better way. The way He showed us: remember the "whole" family, depend on trusted others, and allow time for prayer and thought before taking action.
- We can take comfort in knowing that when we do the spiritual wounding, when we are the cause of sorrow, then God allows us time to be restored, to look inward and see why we have acted unkindly or with malice, to repent and to make amends. Just as we would seek accountability from others when we are wounded, so we must be accountable for ourselves. The goal is reconciliation. The goal is that we remain "one". Not by sweeping bad behaviour, lies, tyrannical rants, or harsh judgementalism under the table...God forbid...but rather by bringing it all into the light for examination and forgiveness. There is time to plan a new and better way to live together in peace, whenever (not always) that is possible.
- We can be assured that there are some times when being together physically is NOT a good thing, where forgiveness is to be extended and

received, but also where it is time to live our lives out in different, safer spaces.

- AND most importantly, we can take great joy in how it all worked out for Jesus. We don't actually get to hear what happened as to family relationships immediately after this Gospel, but we do hear who are all waiting together with His disciples in the Upper Room for Pentecost. It's them....the family...His brothers, His mother, and most probably some sisters.¹ Those who once thought Jesus had lost His mind, in the end found their own minds through believing and honouring Him. His brother James becomes the leader of the Church in Jerusalem, other family members become missionaries in the early Church. His entire family all believe: they all praise, they all worship, they all serve this very Jesus, the brother they once sought to have put away. Alleluia for all of that!

Let us go and do likewise! Praise and worship and serve Jesus with full hearts and minds and deeds. Amen.

Prayers

The Lord's Prayer:

Intercessory Prayer:

Gracious God you have called us to pray for the whole human family and the rulers of our world who have the opportunity to bring peace and righteousness for the blessing of all. You have called us to pray for the Church, and for all who govern its offerings, for your honour and glory and for the fulfillment of the Jesus' commission to go into all the world and make disciples who live out His great commandment to love one another as He has loved us.

Hear us as we pray:

We pray for our Primate, Linda, our Metropolitan and Archbishop +Anne, our Archdeacon Kelly+, all of the Priests, Deacons and Lay leaders in our Diocese and Deanery, as well as for all who lead the indigenous churches of Canada in this new time of grief over injustice as we remember the 215 children's graves in Kamloops and all families and survivors of Residential schools .

We pray for our Prime Minister, Premier, our Members of Parliament and our Mayor. We pray for all nations who take counsel together to work for justice, health and education.

- We pray for our brothers and sisters here at St. Thomas, Church. Grant that all in need may be comforted and granted assistance, grant that all who prosper and live in peace will share with open hands and hearts, grant that the sick may be healed according to your love and Will, and that children will be helped to grow in body, mind and spirit in this time of isolation from one another.
- We give thanks that in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ we find our salvation and our wholeness. We give thanks for the Word which teaches us and guides us. We give thanks for all the blessings we enjoy as gifts from your Hand, and give thanks for how we can also be gifts to one another.

Hear our prayers, God of power,
and through the ministry of your Son
free us from the grip of the tomb, that we may desire you as the fullness of life
and proclaim your saving deeds to all the world. Amen.

Confession and Absolution:

**Most merciful Father,
Forgive us our sins against you and against each other,
Strengthen us to overcome our weaknesses, that we may live in love as you
would have us live
For the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.**

Almighty God, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE PEACE OF THE LORD BE WITH US ALL!

Blessing:

**The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you, The Lord look upon you with favour and grant you peace.
Amen!**

ⁱ See Matthew 13: 54-56 re Jesus having sisters as well as four brothers