



Worship at Home – 6th June 2021

1st Sunday after Trinity

Prepared by Rev Gareth Erlandson, Curate

Prayer to start

God of truth,
help us to keep your law of love
and to walk in ways of wisdom,
that we may find true life
in Jesus Christ your Son. Amen.

Bible Reading (Mark 3:20-35)

Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.”

And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.”

So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. In fact, no one can enter a strong man’s house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man’s house. Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”

He said this because they were saying, “He has an impure spirit.”

Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.”

“Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked.

Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”

Thought

We might be quite used to Jesus being criticised for all sorts of things by the Jewish leaders and teachers of the law, but in this week’s story he also comes under fire from his own family. It seems both the teachers and Jesus’ relatives are partly motivated by the same thing – worry! Worry about this man – the powerful things he was doing, the things he was saying, and the popularity he was gaining (read chapters 2 and 3 of Mark to get the full story).

But whereas the teachers are likely to be most concerned about the threats Jesus is making to their authority and traditions (he's already had a lot to say about breaking the rules of the sabbath), his family are more probably concerned with his welfare – note how the crowds weren't even giving Jesus and his friends time and space to eat!

3 things we might like to ponder in relation to this week's passage:

1. Are Jesus' family and his disciples making the same claim? We don't talk much about demons in western society today, but we might understand them as "inner demons" – the dark side of human nature that exists within all of us and can lead us down a route of chaos if we don't keep it in check spiritually. Chaos to the point that we don't even have time and space to eat!!
2. Jesus thinks such a claim is outrageous. To question his spirit is to question his integrity. If we think the things he is doing and saying are a sign of derangement, we have completely missed the point of his personhood and ministry. Furthermore, we have failed to understand the compassionate and inclusive nature of God.
3. We might think Jesus' final statement about his family to be rather harsh. But it seems fair to say that he was speaking in the heat of the moment. It is not as if he disowned his family forever at this point – after all, his mother Mary would be present at his death on the cross and his brother, James, would go on to be one of the key leaders of the early Church. But this final statement joyfully reminds us that we can all be members of Christ's family if we strive to be of the same mind and spirit as him - willing to do his will.

This week we are reminded of the need to align both mind and Spirit with Jesus. We can do this through prayer and acceptance of his message. We do this by paying careful attention to Christ's very own Holy Spirit dwelling within us.

Prayers to end

O God, the strength of all those who put their trust in you, mercifully accept our prayers and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without you, grant us the help of your grace, that in the keeping of your commandments we may please you both in will and deed; 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.

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, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Please do get in touch if you want to talk about anything.

Services on 6th June: Communion at Emmanuel 9:30am (book with Jane) and Hope 11am (book with Liz); Morning Worship at St John's 11am (book with Ann).

Rev Helen Dawson is our guest speaker at Emmanuel and St John's!

God bless – Adam (01978 760439) and Gareth (07731 827988)