**Sunday August 16th 2020** WORSHIP AT HOME: **Matthew 15.(10-20),21-28**

Welcome to our act of Worship

Call to worship

‘I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him.’ *2 Timothy 1v12b*

A Prayer of Approach

Merciful God,
we come knowing our faith is small,
knowing that we do not deserve your love,
but rejoicing that you give us so much more
than crumbs from under your table.
For you delight in giving us your whole self
and invite us to join you in your ministry of care and service,
reaching out to those in need,
and drawing others into your kingdom.
**Amen.**

HYMN: Ye holy angels bright...

HP20, MP783, RS125, STF69

(Some of the hymn books widely used in the Wiltshire United Area)

*Prayers of Praise*

*“Take what He gives and praise Him still,*

*Through good or ill, who ever lives!”*

*(Ye Holy Angels bright, verse 3b)*

Most merciful God,

Though we are members of a sinful race,

we worship and praise you

for your loving kindness;

in our darkness you are the one true light,

in our sin you are our only hope,

in our weakness you alone give us strength.

Accept our praises and continue your blessings to us, we pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord **Amen.**

*Prayer of Confession*

Forgive us, challenging and gracious God,
when we are quick to judge and slow to change our minds;
when we are quick to speak up for ourselves
but slow to speak out for others;
when we confine you to churches
and don’t meet you in our communities;
when we give only crumbs of our time,
our attention and our resources.
Forgive us, heal us, and use us to your glory.
**Amen.**

HYMN Son of God, if thy free grace…

HP720, MP-, RS- , STF336

Ministry of the Word of God

Lectionary Bible readings

Isaiah 56.1,6-8; Psalm 67; Romans 11.1-2a,29-32; **GOSPEL** **Matthew 15.(10-20),21-28** with special focus on:verse **10 ‘Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, ‘Listen and understand…”…’**

This is the Gospel of Christ.

**Praise to Christ our Lord.**

Reflection

“Confusion is a word we have invented for an order which is not understood.” Henry Miller the American writer and artist.  I’m confused by today’s Lectionary Reading. Many have tried to explain it away, but that does not remain true to the text. This is a deeply, deeply uncomfortable passage and we need to sit with the discomfort if we are to learn from it.

So, this morning is going to be a challenge! Please keep with me as we reflect.

Where can we begin? Someone wrote an article on this passage entitled ***The Gospel is Going to the Dogs*** – that is actually helpful because many Jews in the cultural setting called non-Jews “dogs”. Jesus’ ministry was almost exclusively located in the Holy Land, however today he is outside of that region, so for all our apparent confusion, we see emerging the beginning of the widening of the Gospel into the non-Jewish world.

It is worth reflecting on the cultural context! In Genesis there is a passage where post flood Noah becomes angry and curses Canaan ‘Cursed be Canaan; lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers.’ (Genesis 9v25) Many times in the Old Testament the Canaanites are seen in the negative! The woman is a Canaanite. Those with Jesus that day would have been shocked to the core at what He said a few verses before to the Pharisees, but they would not have blinked an eye at what he said to the Canaanite woman.

When you read those two passages together, we find a major contrast: The Pharisees are offended; the Canaanite woman is not offended. The stark contrast is revelatory, for the opposite of offence is faith, but the only way to faith is through the possibility of offence. And in today’s Gospel it is posed in a culturally highly offensive way: pious and law-abiding Pharisees lack faith, whilst a “Gentile dog” has great faith. Recall what Jesus said to John the Baptist’s disciples in Matthew 11:6 because it broods over this narrative as a kind of suspended challenge both to the characters in the text and to readers of the text: **‘Blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.’\***

If we seek to apply this passage to our time and situation then we have to realise that the world today is broken and divided into children and dogs. Some have while many do not. Some are in and others are out. For some life flourishes, others struggle to make it through another day. Children and dogs. We also, if we are brutally honest can realise that at times we can feel like children and at others can feel like dogs. Maybe this passage is primarily not about Jesus, perhaps it is about us, our faith, and our world!

*\*For further analysis see David McCracken’s book, ‘The Scandal of the Gospels’*

A Way into Prayer

Think of someone or a group of people you would not usually pray for: someone or some people that are very different from you. Reflect on their needs. Light a candle and sit quietly. After a few moments, ask yourself whether this prayerful encounter has changed your attitude towards them in some way.

HYMN Dear Lord and Father of mankind

HP673, MP111, RS492, STF433

Our Prayers

Merciful God
and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ:
we pray for those that we and others are tempted
to send away…
**Lord, have mercy.**
We pray for those who have to make do
with crumbs from other people’s tables…
**Lord, have mercy.**
We pray for those judged harshly and unfairly,
those who are discriminated against…
**Lord, have mercy.**
We pray for those with the courage
to stand up and speak for the voiceless,
for those whose lives are endangered by their actions…
**Lord, have mercy.**
We pray for those who feel alone in their situations,
who feel that no one cares enough to speak out for them,
to visit them, to pray for them…
**Lord, have mercy.**
We pray for those we know who are ill especially with Covid, or in trouble
and we bring them now to the feet of Jesus…
**Lord, have mercy.**
Jesus said to the woman,
‘Great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.’ **Amen.**

The Lord’s Prayer

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.**

HYMN O thou who camest from above (Tune Hereford)

HP745, MP525, RS663, STF564

Blessing

Be of good courage. Hold fast that which is good. Render to no one evil for evil. Strengthen the fainthearted. Support the weak. Help the afflicted. Show love to everyone. Love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Rev David Coppard MTh (Wales)

Superintendent @ Wiltshire United Area

Bank Chaplain @ Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton

***Our churches may not all be open,***

***but the Church is alive and active.***

*This is service is offered to any and all, with love and prayers.*

**Matthew 15.(10-20),21-28**

**10 Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, ‘Listen and understand: 11it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.’ 12Then the disciples approached and said to him, ‘Do you know that the Pharisees took offence when they heard what you said?’ 13He answered, ‘Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. 14Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.’ 15But Peter said to him, ‘Explain this parable to us.’ 16Then he said, ‘Are you also still without understanding? 17Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? 18But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. 19For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. 20These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.’**

**21 Jesus 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.**

Mini Bible story with actions

**Please help!**

A woman from another country came to Jesus
*‘Walk’ hands.*
and begged for help.
*Hold out hands.*
The disciples wanted to send her away.
*Point away.*
Jesus said, ‘I have only come for God’s lost sheep.’
*Shake head.*
But she kept on pleading,
*Hold out arms.*
‘Make my daughter better.’
*Clasp hands.*
Jesus said, ‘It wouldn’t be right to give the children’s meal to the dogs!’
*Shake head*.
The woman said, ‘Even the dogs can eat the crumbs on the floor.’
*Find a ‘crumb’.*
Jesus said, ‘Because you believe,
*Touch head and chest.*
your daughter is well.’
*Make the sign of the cross.*

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**Ye holy angels bright,** **T Darwall’s 148**who wait at God's right hand,
or through the realms of light
fly at your Lord's command,
assist our song,
for else the theme
too high doth seem
for mortal tongue.

Ye blessed souls at rest,
who ran this earthly race
and now, from sin released,
behold your Savior's face,
his praises sound,
as in his sight
with sweet delight
ye do abound.

Ye saints, who toil below,
adore your heavenly King,
and onward as ye go
some joyful anthem sing;
take what he gives
and praise him still,
through good or ill,
who ever lives!

My soul, bear thou thy part,
triumph in God above:
and with a well-tuned heart
sing thou the songs of love!
Let all thy days
till life shall end,
whate'er he send,
be filled with praise!

**Son of God, if thy free grace T Gersau**
Again hath raised me up,
Called me still to seek thy face,
And given me back my hope:
Still thy timely help afford,
And all thy loving kindness show:
Keep me, keep me, gracious lord,
And never let me go.

By me, O my Saviour, stand,
In sore temptation's hour!
Save me with thine out-stretched hand,
And shew forth all thy power:
O be mindful of thy word,
Thine all-sufficient grace bestow:
Keep me, keep me, gracious Lord,
And never let me go.

Give me, Lord, a holy fear,
And fix it in my heart,
That I may from evil near
With speedy care depart.
Sin be more than hell abhorred:
Till thou destroy the tyrant foe,
Keep me, keep me, gracious Lord,
And never let me go.

Never let me leave thy breast,
From thee, my Saviour stray;
Thou art my support and rest,
My true and living way;
My exceeding great reward,
In heaven above, and earth below:
Keep me, keep me, gracious Lord,
And never let me go.

**Dear Lord and Father of mankind,** **T Repton**
forgive our foolish ways;
reclothe us in our rightful mind,
in purer lives thy service find,
in deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard
beside the Syrian sea
the gracious calling of the Lord,
let us, like them, without a word
rise up and follow thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee,
O calm of hills above,
where Jesus knelt to share with thee
the silence of eternity,
interpreted by love!

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still, small voice of calm!

**O Thou Who camest from above, T Hereford**
The pure celestial fire to impart,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
On the mean altar of my heart.

There let it for Thy glory burn
With inextinguishable blaze,
And trembling to its source return,
In humble prayer and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
To work and speak and think for Thee;
Still let me guard the holy fire,
And still stir up Thy gift in me.

Ready for all Thy perfect will,
My acts of faith and love repeat,
'Til death Thy endless mercies seal,
And make my sacrifice complete.

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