

Ephraim Moravian Church - Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

August 16th, 2020 at 10.00 a.m.

Pastor.....Dawn E. Volpe
Music Director..... Colin Welford
Lay Reader.....Sherry Moore
Guest Musicians..... Betty Lewis, Paul Zafer & Cyndy Stiehl



“Adagio” from Suite for Two Violins & Piano M. Moszkowski

Welcome and Announcements

“Oh be Glad, Ye Daughters” J. Dencke (Moravian)

Watchword for the Week: Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you. – Psalm 67:5

Scripture Lesson: Isaiah 56: 1 - 8

Hymn #555 (v. 1 – 3) “Come Now, Almighty King”

Prayers of the Church/Lord’s Prayer

Scripture Lessons: Matthew 15: 21 - 28

Reflection

Sermon

“Ich wollt’, meine Lieb’ ergösse sich” F. Mendelssohn

Benediction

“Allegro” from the Double Violin Concerto..... J.S. Bach

Hymn: “Come Now, Almighty King”

Come now, almighty King, help us your name to sing
Help us to praise. Father all glorious, ever victorious
Come and reign over us, Ancient of Days.

Come now, Incarnate Word, our just and mighty Lord
Our prayer attend. Come and your people bless
And give your word success, Spirit of Holiness, on us descend.

Come, Holy comforter, your sacred witness bear
In this glad hour. Your grace to us impart
And rule in every heart, never from us depart, Spirit of Power.

Reflection: Shattering Boundaries

If one “keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps their hands from doing any evil,” a place in the temple awaits. A pedigree is not a requirement. All have a place at God’s table. Jesus and the disciples were north of Galilee. A Canaanite approaches, asking merciful healing for her child. Jesus seems to ignore the Gentile’s plea, but she does not give up. The gospels of both Matthew and Mark record a verbal exchange, embedded with cultural references that can be confusing to the modern ear.

For starters, the Canaanites were a past arch-enemy of the Israelites. Importantly, Jesus’ disciples witness the encounter. The disciples are stand-ins for you and me. Imagine being there and seeing a person who does not follow Jewish law, rules you hold so dear. She is bothering your Messiah, the man sent to save your people. Her cries are relentless. “Lord, help me!” Bug off, you think, and tell Jesus to silence her by telling her to get lost. Instead Jesus ignores you, and addresses the woman.

Some Bible scholars think Jesus used the encounter to reveal the scope of his earthly mission, that the lost sheep he mentions include every kind of breed, from Appenninicas to Zwarbles in the language of a real shepherd.

In other words, Jesus' outward disregard for the Canaanite's distress and the little girl's troubles was really a set-up. In his conversation with the Canaanite, Jesus instructs his followers to welcome and serve the disenfranchised, the unclean, the "other."

These Bible scholars think the story of the Canaanite Woman shows how Jesus shattered cultural boundaries, and that he calls us to do the same. Faith in salvation is not bound by ethnicity and can exist at the same time in groups with different world views. There are no Canaanites among us, but there are who people look and sound different from us. They are no less worthy in the sight of God.

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