

Second Sunday after Pentecost  
06-06-2021  
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

1 Samuel 8: 4-20;           The People want a king  
11.14-15                 Samuel anoints Saul

Psalm 138                   Praise God over all else

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1   The one who raised Jesus will raise us to eternity

Mark 3: 20-35             Jesus and Beelzebul  
True Family of Jesus are whoever does God's will

### Introduction

Today, in our Church calendar, we begin what is commonly known as the season after Pentecost, or, of Ordinary Time. As we are in year 'B' in our three year cycle of readings, we will mostly be looking at Marks Gospel account, of the life of Jesus.

We know the life of Jesus is of course anything but ordinary, and in our reflection today, I would like to focus on the two main aspects from our gospel reading.

Firstly, how Jesus was rejected by many. (Mark 3:20-30)

And secondly, what it means not to reject Jesus, and be part of God's family. (Mark 3:31-35)

### The rejection of Jesus (Mark 3:20-30)

Firstly, we see how Jesus is rejected by many in the first ten verses of our Gospel reading today.

Even though people were flocking to Jesus, to hear him speak, to witness the miracles, many were not so sure and doubted who he might be. Today we hear how even Jesus' family were coming to get him, and try and settle him down from all that he was doing:-

<sup>21</sup> When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, 'He has gone out of his mind.'

Then we hear about the scribes from Jerusalem:-

<sup>22</sup> And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, 'He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.'

The scribes didn't even seem to be curious about the good works that Jesus was doing. It's pretty clear they were upset by his popularity, and they had chosen to reject him in spite of the good things that he was doing. Their claim was that Jesus was of the devil (Beelzebul was another name for the devil) and because he was from the devil, he had power over the forces of the devil.

Jesus points out the absurdity of their position, and explains it to them by telling them some parables.

And then we have a passage of scripture that people often get concerned about:-

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

I would like to bring some explanation to these verses. Last week I said that God never stops loving us. We might walk away from God, but God never walks away from us. This is very important. In these three verses we hear that sin can and will be forgiven, if we repent, but not blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. What does Jesus mean by this? Scholars have concluded that Jesus is not talking about just saying the wrong thing about God, but rather totally rejecting God, by attributing the good works of God to the devil. So what Jesus is talking about here is not just a slip up or thinking bad thoughts about God, but rather a deliberate and ongoing rejection of God. If we have accepted Jesus as the way to God, and are seeking to follow Jesus then this should not be a problem for us.

Ironically, it was the scribes who had rejected God by rejecting Jesus and claiming he was of the devil.

The challenge before us today, as we hear these stories about the rejection of Jesus, is how are we in tune with living the way Jesus wants us to be living, in our lives. This is not an easy challenge. We need to make sure that we are not rejecting God in any way.

It is easy, for the things around us in life, to crowd God out. In the first reading from the first Book of Samuel today we hear how the Israelites wanted a King. They just wanted to be like all the other nations around them. The other

nations had kings. It was a way of ensuring order, it was a way of having leadership, however it was against the will of God.

Samuel gives them a warning from God that it may seem attractive, but it will not be good for them, in the long run. But they were unperturbed, and God allowed them to have what they wanted, and they suffered the consequences.

A great challenge in our lives, is that sometimes we may reject God, by putting good things before God, and what God is calling us to do. An example may be our families, or our jobs. These are very good and important things, which we need to pay attention too, but if we make them more important than God, then we end up rejecting God.

We need to really be in tune with God, to discern what God is calling us into, in our lives. So, to not reject God, we need to be in tune with God. Being in tune with God is something that we need to continually work on throughout our lives. Through reading scripture, through prayer, through quiet time with God, through talking with other Christians, we will be enabled to discern what God is really calling us to do.

### Part of God's Family

This brings us to the second part of our Gospel reading, being part of God's family. In the reading today we hear these words:-

<sup>33</sup> And he replied, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' <sup>34</sup> And looking at those who sat around him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers!  
<sup>35</sup> Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.'

These words probably hurt Jesus' family. They were of course his own flesh and blood, his own biological family. But, I'm sure Jesus was not trying to offend his biological family. Rather, Jesus was trying to point out that he was from God, and to be a part of God's family, you needed to be doing God's will.

Jesus was pointing out that to be part of God's family was not dependent on which particular family you are born into but rather, whether you were in tune with God.

Baptism is the sacrament we use to show we want to be a part of God's family, but it is not an end in itself, it is just the beginning of an ongoing relationship which needs to be lived out. That is why we also have the Sacrament of Holy Communion so that we can be continually strengthened as followers of Jesus.

So, being part of God's family is about firstly accepting Jesus, and secondly about following Jesus. Accepting and following is not an either/or choice, but rather a both/and decision.

We can't say, "I've accepted Jesus, so all is good and I'll live my life the way I want to." And, in just the same way, we can't say, "I'm doing good, so it doesn't matter what I think about God."

I once heard it said of a clergyperson, that they were so heavenly minded, that they were of no earthly use.

We need to accept Jesus to become a Christian, and we need to follow Jesus to remain a Christian.

"Accepting" and "Following" Jesus goes hand in hand, and when we know we are trying to live this way I believe it is the best feeling we can ever have.

Our reading from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians today put's it like this:-

<sup>16</sup> So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, <sup>18</sup> because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal. <sup>1</sup> For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

God is preparing us, as part of his family, for something better than we can even begin to imagine.

## Conclusion

Today we have been warned about the dangers and challenges of how we might either intentionally or maybe just inadvertently reject Jesus, and risk being cut off from God's family. But we have also heard of the wonderful blessing that it is to be a part of God's family.

As we go out from our worship today, I trust and pray that you will be encouraged to continue to take up your role as a part of God's family, knowing the joy and the peace that this brings. Amen.