

Simple Prayer, Simple Praise:

Sunday, August 16th, 2020

Opening Acclamation:

Almighty God, you have given your only Son to be for us a sacrifice for sin, and also an example of godly life: Give us grace to receive thankfully the fruits of his redeeming work, and to follow daily in the blessed steps of his most holy life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

A reading from the Gospel According to Matthew 15:10-28

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



away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just 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.” But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came

and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

Meditation

What's in your heart? Jesus challenges the pharisees, disciples and people. Listen to me and try to understand that breaking man-made precepts will not keep you from being sinful. Washing your hands before eating will keep the germs away, but it will do nothing for what you harbor in your heart.

We all see the world through a lens that develops from what we personally hear, see, share, learn, and experience in our own communities and cultures. These influences contribute to our belief systems and what we hold onto in our hearts. Both the good and bad, the joy and the despair, the truth and the justifications, will hide together within us if we don't do the hard work of discerning whether the ideas we believe are from God and based on love, justice, and mercy or if they are based on our own earthly wants, desires, and fears. Let them stew too long and they are vomited out as anger, lies, and hate.

When I read the verses about the disciples wanting to get rid of the Canaanite woman so she would stop bothering Jesus, I hear his reply as an opportunity for the disciples, and all of us, to challenge what we believe. What is more important; ministering to those in our own congregations and those with similar beliefs, or showing love and compassion to all human beings?

While the world seems out of control, I challenge all of us to see this time as a blessing. It is an opportunity to do some hard work as Jesus followers. We have an opportunity to look inside our hearts to discern what beliefs strengthen us as disciples in the world and what beliefs cause us to sin. Listen Jesus said. Listen to me and each other and understand.

Deacon Diana Leiker

Prayer:

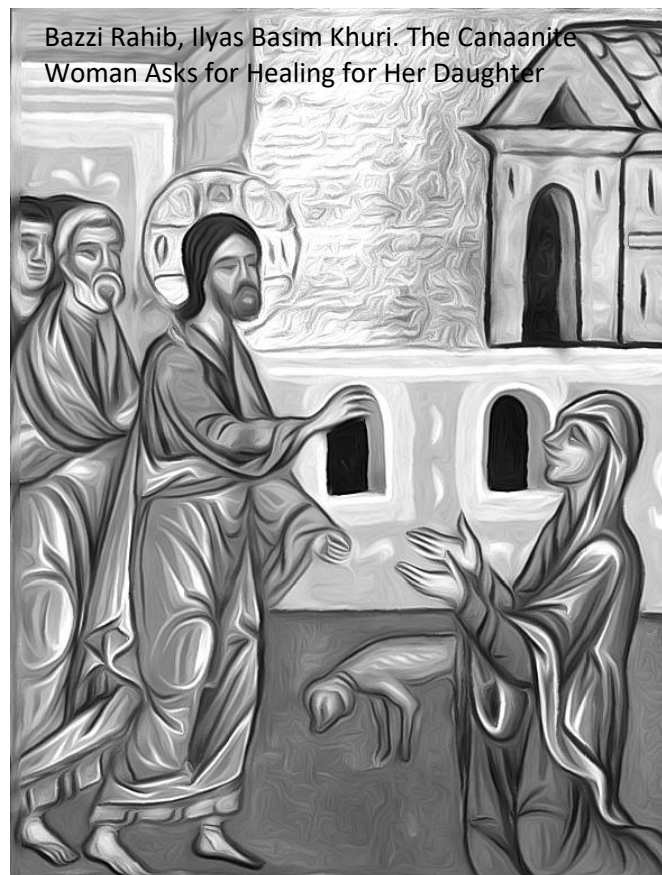
Creator God, you call us to love and serve you with body, mind, and spirit through loving your creation and our sisters and brothers. Open our hearts in compassion and receive these petitions on behalf of the needs of the church and the world.

Thus says the Lord, 'Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed.' *Isaiah 56:*

Take a moment now for silent reflection. Think of the people and things that cause you worry or concern; think of the things for which you are grateful. Raise them up in prayer using the words our Savior Christ taught us:

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by 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, and the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Come Holy Spirit with new fire; when our prayers seem to fail,
when we hear no voice nor any answer, rouse us and light our way.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. *Amen.*



Each Sunday at 10 a.m., Bishop Sean and other leaders from WNY and NWPA will lead worship via the Zoom platform. Anyone can join the service via phone by calling **646-876-9923 use code 127 336 938**. Those wishing to join by instead of video can use this link: <https://zoom.us/j/127336938> If you are asked for a password, use **lakeerie**.

Simple Prayer, Simple Praise is produced for The Episcopal Dioceses of NWPA and WNY.
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Prayers and pictures from Vanderbilt Library July 2020