

Order of Worship for June 19

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: “*Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds*” – Hymn #465

Confession and Forgiveness p. 203

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm:

P: Be to me a rock of refuge, to which I may continually come;

C: You have given the command to save me, for You are my rock and my fortress.

P: You who have made me see many troubles and calamities will revive me again;

C: from the depths of the earth You will bring me up again.

P: You will increase my greatness

C: and comfort me again.

P: I will also praise You with the harp for Your faithfulness, O my God;

C: I will sing praises to You with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel.

P: My lips will shout for joy, when I sing praises to You;

C: my soul also, which You have redeemed.

P: And my tongue will talk of Your righteous help all the day long,

C: for they have been put to shame and disappointed who sought to do me hurt.

**ALL: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.**

P: Be to me a rock of refuge, to which I may continually come;

C: You have given the command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress.

Kyrie (Lord, Have Mercy) p. 204

Hymn of Praise (*Glory to God in the Highest*) p. 204

P: The Lord be with you,

C: and also with you.

Prayer of the Day:

P: Let us pray; O God, You have prepared for those who love You such good things as surpass our understanding. Cast out all sins and evil desires from us, and pour into our hearts Your Holy Spirit to guide us into all blessedness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

The Old Testament Lesson - Isaiah 65:1-9

R: God says “I revealed Myself to those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. To a nation that did not call on My name, I said, ‘Here am I, here am I.’ All day long I have held out My hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations - a people who continually provoke Me to my very face, offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on altars of brick; who sit among the graves and spend their nights keeping secret vigil; who eat the flesh of pigs, and whose pots hold broth of impure meat; who say, ‘Keep away; don’t come near me, for I am too sacred for you!’ Such people are smoke in My nostrils, a fire that keeps burning all day. “See, it stands written before Me: I will not keep silent but will pay back in full; I will pay it back into their laps - both your sins and the sins of your ancestors,” says the LORD. “Because they burned sacrifices on the mountains and defied Me on the hills, I will measure into their laps the full payment for their former deeds.” This is what the LORD says: “As when juice is still found in a cluster of grapes and people say, ‘Don’t destroy it, there is still a blessing in it,’ so will I do in behalf of My servants; I will not destroy them all. I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, and from Judah those who will possess my mountains; my chosen people will inherit them, and there will My servants live.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

The Epistle Lesson - Galatians 3:23-4:7

R: Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world. But when the set time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are His sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are His child, God has made you also an heir.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Alleluia and Verse- p. 205

The Holy Gospel - Luke 8:26-39

P: The Holy Gospel According to St. Luke, the 8th chapter:

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

P: Jesus and the disciples sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee. When Jesus stepped ashore, He was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at His feet, shouting at the top of his voice, “What do You want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, don’t torture me!” For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places. Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him. And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss. A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and He gave them permission. When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus’ feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So He got into the boat and left. The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with Him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, “Return home and tell how much God has done for you.” So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

Nicene Creed: (inside back cover of hymnal)

Sermon Hymn: *“Away from Us!” the Demon Cried* – **Hymn #541**

Sermon: *“Going to the Outcasts”* – **Luke 8:26-39**

One of the most common critiques of the church is that it doesn’t look like the people Jesus spent time with. Throughout his ministry, Jesus didn’t spend much time with those who looked like nice respectable members of society. Instead, he spent time with the outcasts. He dined with tax collectors and sinners. He went to the sick and the injured, the blind and the lame. He went to the people who no one else would go to.

Today we heard the story of Jesus crossing the Sea of Galilee to heal the Gerasene demoniac. No one would normally have crossed all of the barriers that Jesus did in that story; the Sea of Galilee, the cultural barriers of a Jew entering a Gentile region, leaving civilization to travel into the wilderness, to the graveyard, but that’s what Jesus did. He went to those who were outcasts and brought them back into the fold.

Let’s just take a look at all that Jesus does here. First, he crossed the Sea of Galilee and calmed a storm. The disciples are amazed that Jesus can control the wind and the waves.

Crossing the Sea of Galilee means that Jesus and his disciples are not in Galilee anymore. They’re not in the place they should be. Jesus has crossed geographic, ethnic, and religious

boundaries. This is not where a good Jewish rabbi would want to be. It's a place that is outside of normal experience.

Once they land, they get the kind of greeting that should make them want to get back on the boat and turn around immediately. They meet a man possessed by demons, who has been naked for years, homeless for years, and an outcast for years. Others had tried to bind him and chain him so he wouldn't be a danger to himself or others, but his supernatural strength kept that from working. He was driven out into the desert, out into the wilderness, out into the places far from others. He's out in the graveyard, among the tombs, with others who are dead and gone, seemingly far from God. Jesus has gone to an unclean land to meet a man possessed by unclean spirits in an unclean place.

Yet instead of running away, Jesus goes to him. Even when told the man is occupied by a legion of demons, a number that could be as high as 6000, Jesus doesn't back down. He came to find this man and set him free. And that's what he does. He drives the demons out, and restores the man to himself.

Jesus doesn't just drive the demons out of the man. Instead, he sends them into a herd of pigs. Which shows us a couple of things. First, the pigs are a sign that this is not in a good clean Jewish place, either. Pigs were unclean, and aside from this story, the only other time pigs are mentioned in the Gospels is when the prodigal son is so far down on his luck that he's reduced to caring for pigs and wanting to eat their food. Second, what happens after Jesus lets the demons go into the herd of pigs shows that the demons are truly gone. They have left, and can never return. Jesus came to this outcast and cast out demons and changed his life forever.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus meets with outcasts, but doesn't leave them the way they were. He changes them. Zacchaeus promises to stop using his tax collecting business to cheat and steal, and pays back what was owed. Jesus tells the woman accused of adultery that he doesn't condemn her, but that she should go and sin no more. And the man who was possessed by a legion of demons, naked and wild, was now calmly sitting at the feet of Jesus.

The man freed from the demons remains an outcast, in a sense. Even though he's been freed, he's been changed; it's hard for his neighbors to see him as he's been changed. Their reaction isn't one full of joy and celebration. They instead are afraid, and send Jesus away.

The man is left in his own community. He could go reinvent himself as a disciple, somewhere new. But they wouldn't know his story. They wouldn't know who he had been. They'd only see the "after" picture, without the "before." You can see why he would like to go. It's just as easy to see why Jesus would tell him to stay. While his community was reacting in fear now, they needed some time for the initial shock to dissipate.

Once outcasts encounter Jesus, their lives are never the same. The paralytic whose friends lower him through the roof takes up his mat and walks away, off to a full life now that he can walk. The lepers that Jesus cleanses are able to return to their families and their villages and resume a normal life. Even the Samaritan woman at the well seems to be able to be a part of the village again, no longer an outcast who has to go to the well when no one else is around. They then share the good news of how their lives have been changed by Jesus.

The witness of someone from inside a community is much more powerful than the witness of someone from outside. The witness of how Jesus had crossed barriers, ended separations, gone to the outcasts and brought them back, had the power to change lives.

The greatest barrier that Jesus crossed was the barrier between God and humanity. As God, Jesus is all-powerful, all knowing, present everywhere, immortal. If we tried to measure up to God, be like God on our own, we'd only end up looking like failures and feeling like outcasts. But as Paul wrote to the Philippians, Jesus "emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Jesus crossed the barrier between God and humanity to come and teach us about a God we could never understand or know on our own. He became weak, limited to one place at a time, mortal. Then Jesus crossed the barrier between life and death to defeat death once and for all.

One of the most overlooked passages in the creed that we say almost every Sunday is that Jesus descended into hell. One of my theology professors in college, after studying Martin Luther, said that it meant that there is nowhere we can go where Jesus is not Lord too. "It means this," said Luther, "that there is no place I might ever go, no depth to which I might sink, but that even there, he is Lord for me."

Jesus is Lord. Jesus showed he is Lord of the wind and waves when the disciples were in the boat when the storm came up. Jesus showed he is Lord when he drove the demons out. And Jesus showed he is Lord when he went to the cross to defeat the devil and the demons once and for all. He went to defeat the powers that try to make us outcasts, and separate us from God.

Because of that, because we know Jesus is Lord, because we know Jesus is more powerful than anything we face, we don't need to be afraid. The separation from God caused by sin has been ended. There is nowhere we can go that is too far from God. There is nothing we can do that will keep us too far from God. We are no longer outcasts. Instead, we have been made a part of God's family. What a wonderful promise to proclaim and share!

Prayer of the Church

P: Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

Sharing Our Ministry

Offering & Voluntary

Service of the Sacrament

Preface: p. 208

P: It is truly good, right, and proper that we should in all times and in all places give thanks to You, almighty God, heavenly Father, for in Your Son Christ Jesus You have reached out to all even the castoffs like that demon possessed man and to each one of us to restore us to You. For this we give thanks! Therefore with angels and all the army of heaven we praise and make great Your holy name evermore praising You and singing . . .

Sanctus (*Holy, Holy, Holy*) p. 208

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P: Blessed are You, O Lord God, king of the universe for no matter how outcast we have made ourselves, You still reach out to us through Your Son, Christ Jesus. Send Your Holy Spirit into our hearts that we respond each day to His call to follow Him. Bless us as we come forward to receive His true body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins. Hear us as we pray the prayer He taught us . . .

Lord's Prayer and Words of our Lord, and Peace of the Lord p. 209

Agnus Dei (*Lamb of God*) p. 210

Distribution Hymns:

"Rise to Arms" – **Hymn #668**

"Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord" – **Hymn #637**

Song After Communion: Nunc Dimittis (*Song of Simeon*) p. 211

Prayer After Communion

P: Almighty God, You show the light of Your truth to those in darkness, to lead them into the way of righteousness. Give strength to all who are joined in the family of Your Church, so that they will resolutely reject what erodes their faith and firmly follow what faith requires, through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Benedicamus and Blessing: p.212

Closing Hymn: *"Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness"* – **Hymn #849**

Postlude: