

Worship Service for August 16th: 11th Sunday After Pentecost

Scripture Readings:

- Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8
- New Testament Reading: Matthew 15:21-28
- Psalms: 67

Announcements:

- Welcome to our worship service! We're glad you are reading or watching. May God's blessings and peace be with you all now and forever! Amen.
- This particular announcement is a little old but I will make it anyway because I was not around to do it when it happened. We have a new member in St. George's Presbyterian church. This little princess was born on the 27th of July, 2020 and she is called Charlotte Elizabeth, sister to Williams, George and Isabel, daughter of Sam and Margaret Cripps and granddaughter of Marybeth and David Sutherland. You are welcome sweet pie and we pray God's blessings and glory upon your life.

ST. David's News!

- Reminder of A SPECIAL INVITATION: As a result of the Mission Awareness Sunday initiative as outlined in the Presbyterian Message, St. David's is inviting ALL members-children, youth and adults to draw/paint a picture, write a poem, story, or song, scrapbook page, any medium, to show a way in which you "rejoice in service". What do you do in church, at home, at school or playtime that shows that you love God, and/or expresses your joy in serving Him! Please give your submission to Karri Ann or Marjorie. All submissions will be displayed in church, and then compiled into a book that will represent our congregation in 2020!
- Congratulations to...
- Eddie and Barb Noel, from Pictou, on their 50th Wedding Anniversary, on Sat. August 8, 2020! They are the parents of Chuck Noel, his wife Karri-Ann and son Wyatt of Toney River.
- Mike and Nancy Hollis from Mt. Thom, on their 50th Wedding Anniversary on Sat, August 15, 2020! They are the parents of Phillip Hollis, his wife Becky and grandchildren, Robert, Kaylee and Luke, of Caribou River.

Sermon: Dare To Believe!

This is one passage in the Bible which always seems cringe-worthy to its readers because a lot of people mistake Jesus' interaction with the woman as brutal. Why would the Saviour and Messiah address a distraught woman as a dog? Some commentators go as far as relating this to Jesus' human nature and the fact that he had adopted the culture of his people and was reacting according to that culture.

It is important for us to remember who Jesus was and how intentional he was in all what he did. He knew the minds of the Pharisees and responded to their questions without them asking. He ate with tax collectors and other sinners and the Pharisees hated him for that. He interacted with a Samaritan woman. The Canaanite woman's case was not any different. All he wanted was the woman's faith to be exposed and for his disciples and audiences to know how far his compassion could go. If he wasn't interested in healing the woman, he would have sent her away as the disciples suggested and nothing that she said would have helped.

Before this incident, in Matthew 15 he had accused the Pharisees of breaking God's Word in honour of their traditions. And that they taught human precepts as doctrine. God's Word said to love our neighbors as ourselves, the Jewish tradition said to have nothing to do with the Canaanites. Jesus was using this incident to say that under the circumstances of the Jewish culture I should not attend to you, but because I came to save mankind, I will.

In Matthew 14, Peter's faith had failed him when he attempted to move on water and Jesus called him a man of little faith. This story was another lesson of faith and God's Word as opposed to human doctrines and traditions. Instead of chasing the woman as his disciples suggested, Jesus engaged her in a conversation.

She came and knelt before Jesus, and said "Lord, help me." What was happening here? A Canaanite woman, an idol worshipper, had turned her back on her idols because she recognized that they couldn't help her, couldn't care less that she was called a dog and worshipped the Messiah, calling him Lord. Jesus recognized her faith but wanted to make sure she knew what she was doing and decided to remind her that the food at the table was for the children and not for dogs. What was Jesus saying here?

Jesus had come for the whole world, but his first mission was for the Jews and he was telling the woman that the food (the gospel) was first for the Jews who were the children. But for anyone who has a dog, we know that they will pick up the crumbs that fall while the children are eating from the floor. And that was the woman's reply. "Lord, I don't need to wait for the children to be all fed, because I am desperately hungry and came to collect the crumbs that have already fallen on the floor."

Jesus was mesmerized by the woman's faith and declared "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly. Jesus was all about faith and that is what he was teaching his disciples. Romans 4:3 says "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Verse 23-25 says, "*it was reckoned to him,*" *were written not for his sake alone,*²⁴ *but for ours also.*" This was not written for Abraham's sake alone, neither for the sake of Jesus' disciples only, but also for our sake. How is our faith in God? Do we come wondering or believing? We have to build up our faith in God or else we will become frustrated in the altar of prayer. When we pray let us remember that we are praying to the God who makes impossibilities to be possible; the God who never fails.

We might be wondering how to build up our faith. The Bible tells us that faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God. How often do we read the Word of God? How often do we pray? Like the widow who faced the unjust judge persistently, the Canaanite woman also persisted, and her faith gained her righteousness which helped her to obtain the miracle she needed. I cannot stress enough how important reading the Word and praying is important for the church. The results that we desire to see are not impossible, however we need to come together and pray – members and leaders alike. We need to pray without ceasing and pray in faith and we will see changes in our church and community that would come from divine intervention alone.

Do you have faith? Keep it up. Do you lack faith? Start building up your faith today. It is possible. An idol worshipper heard about the things Jesus did and believed and received a miracle for her daughter. Do you not believe in Jesus and think God does not exist? That is not a problem. Come to him today! Go on your knees and ask him to reveal himself to you. Ask him to forgive your sins and accept him into your life as your personal Lord and Saviour. Believe that you have been saved. It is that simple.

What the world needs in the midst of a pandemic is a praying and faith church. What our community needs is a praying church. What everyone needs right now is a church who truly believes and stands in faith on the altar of prayer calling on to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Let us come together as a church these last five months of the year and join our faith together and pray like our lives depended on it; because it does. Let us all stand in faith in our prayer altars in the name of Jesus and watch God do great and mighty miracles, signs and wonders in our midst. Let us pray with a faith that refuses to be put off. In the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer

Living Christ, so many different people reached out to you in times of desperation with so many different needs. Yet you had compassion for them all. Lord Jesus, we know both struggle and joy in our lives, too. This day we set before you our many different hopes and concerns. Fill us with your compassion as we pray in faith.

For all that we are and all that we do, all we wish we could do and all we long for. We pray for everything we work for in our church and community, and everything we hope for in the face of so much change. For the choices we face in our country and community, in our homes and workplaces, and for all the responsibilities we bear in our different roles. We pray Lord, for the troubles that weary us, the situations that puzzle us and the uncertainty that surrounds us. We remember before you each situation that worries us and each person we care about. We pray for all who are sick, that they may find healing; for all who are without homes, that they may find shelter; and for all, God's love and peace.

Living Christ, you are the Source of peace and new possibility for us all.

Help us trust in your grace for today and tomorrow. Fill us with the strength and hope we need to walk with you, united in your love. For it is as your loyal followers we dare to pray the words you taught us:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

May the grace of Christ attend us, the love of God surround us, and the Holy Spirit inspire us and comfort us and all whom we meet this day, and always. Amen.