

Worship Service for June 6th: 2nd Sunday after Pentecost - General Assembly
Sunday

- **Old Testament:** 1 Samuel 8:4-11, 16-20
- **New Testament:** Mark 3:20-35
- **Psalms:** Psalm 138

Announcements:

- Welcome to our worship service! We're glad you are reading. We pray that God's blessings and peace will be with you all now and forever! Amen.

Sermon Title: The Rejected King!

After celebrating Pentecost day and Trinity Sunday, our lectionary brings us back to Jesus and his ministry on earth. Beginning with the Old Testament passage and coming to the New, we see examples of how the Trinity worked in the Scriptures. We are presented with God's relationship with the Israelites, followed by Jesus' relationship with their younger generations.

During their time of slavery in Egypt, the Israelites cried out to God and God delivered them from slavery through Moses and his brother Aaron. From that time onward and for hundreds of years, God ruled the Israelites and led them through different leaders. After the death of Moses and Joshua, they were ruled by judges and the period of judges was not the most ideal in Israel. They stopped being faithful to God and started worshipping other gods causing God to leave them to their own devices. They became prey to the powerful nations that surrounded them.

This led the people to ask for a king. Their request was like a slap on God's face. They were rejecting God and His original vision for them. God had chosen this nation and was ruling them through priests and prophets. They were meant to be a covenant nation, different from the other nations; they were meant to have one real authority over them which was God's law. They opted for monarchy instead of theocracy.

God permitted Samuel to give them a king but also for him to warn them about what it was going to be like. And Samuel told them the following: *"This is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of*

fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. Your male and female servants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use."

I am sure as parents we can identify with God's decision. There must have been times when our child has insisted on having something until we gave it to them even though it wasn't good for them, of course, with a warning. In the same way, God was trying to show this people that He as King is a giver, and all a human king will do is take from them.

In our New Testament passage in Mark 3, God sends His Son Jesus Christ, Yeshua Hamashiach the messiah, the One Anointed to save. Yet the people reject him because he doesn't look like the kings they know. His family said he was out of his mind and even tried to stop him. The teachers of the law said he was possessed by Beelzebul, the prince of demons.

The Jews had not stopped dancing to the music of culture. From when they asked for a king in the Old Testament because they wanted to be like the other nations, to when they rejected Jesus, their actions were inspired by the culture around them. How many times have we as the church or individuals conformed to the culture around us? How many times have we compromised our faith and believe because we want to conform to the culture of the so called 21st century?

The Bible is a unique book and can never become outdated. Romans 12 tells us not to be conformed to the world but to be transformed by the renewal of our minds. Why? Because as Christians we are in the world and not of the world; we are different, we are special, we are a covenanted people. 1 Peter 2:9 tells us that we are *"a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that we may declare the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his wonderful light."* Even if people decide to change or adjust God's laws according to their desires or the modern society, God's laws will always remain the same.

As God's children who have been adopted into sonship, we should always ask the Holy Spirit to help us not to conform to the world. Jesus' siblings thought at the

beginning that Jesus had lost his mind and until Jesus' death did not believe that he was actually the Messiah. After Jesus' resurrection, however, his mother and brothers were among the first Christians in the early church. And his brothers James and Jude wrote the books in the Bible which bear their names.

The fact that people didn't understand Jesus and rejected him including his family, didn't hinder him from going on with his ministry. He refused to conform to the world's culture of who and what a king was supposed to be. He wasn't sent to be king of Israel but to be the King of Kings to all the world and that is what he achieved. He didn't wait for them to understand or figure him out before he obeyed his Father.

As children of God therefore, we should learn to stand firm in our faith even when people don't understand us. We should learn to stand firm even when they reject us thinking that we are losing our minds. Jesus' brothers and mother thought he had lost his mind because he was casting out demons but all that changed after the resurrection.

Remember that those people who reject you thinking you have lost your mind because you are a Christian could one day become Christians too. What would happen if their rejection caused you to abandon your faith? They would gain and you would lose.

My prayer for every one of us today is that in a world where people easily criticize, judge and reject people, may God give us the strength through the help of the Holy Spirit to not to crack under the pressure of the culture around us, but instead to build ourselves up in our most holy faith and to stand firm in Christ. Amen.

Prayer

God of communion and community, we give you thanks for our life together in Christ, and the work of the Spirit that draws us closer to you and to each other. We pray for the life of our denomination as it meets in General Assembly. Send your Spirit to work in and through the commissioners, even while they gather at a distance and engage through virtual technology. Speak through your Spirit to open minds and hearts to your leading. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ sustain us in communion and community, even when we differ over decisions and directions.

God of compassion and concern, thank you for all the ministries and mission Presbyterians undertake together in Canada and in many places throughout the world. Thank you for lessons learned and hope inspired by all the partners we have worked with, over this difficult year and throughout many years and many different cultures. We pray for all who serve in the name of our church and for those who join in ministries supported by Presbyterians Sharing and Presbyterian World Service & Development. Bless the important work undertaken in Jesus' name which looks so different in each location. Open all our hearts to support these ministries with generous giving and ongoing prayer, so that lives will be healed, transformed and strengthened according to your compassionate concern.

God of our hearts and our hopes, we pray for those you have given us to love. Hear us as we place their needs and hopes before you in this silence.

We pray for those who serve our nation as leaders in business, politics, health care and education. Grant them wisdom in this challenging time, so that their choices consider the needs of the most vulnerable whom we name before you in silence.

We pray for all areas in the world where deep divisions run between ethnic groups because of race, religion or past history. Lord, help your people to be your friends and to make friends – your family in Christ.

We pray for our communities where different traditions shape different outlooks on things. Lord, help your people to listen well to each other that we may learn to live together knowing that though different we are your family in Christ.

We pray for our own families where growing up is difficult, where harsh words spoken in anger are not easily taken back, and hurtful or thoughtless actions are endangering relationships. Lord, empower your children to be patient, slow to anger and to become wise in their speaking and acting as your family in Christ.

We pray for those who face uncertainty, unrest and threat from violence day by day. In this moment of silence, we bring before you people in our own community who know upheaval because of the pandemic, and those in places around the world where injustice is unrelenting.

God of grace and goodness, we offer our gifts in gratitude for all we receive from you, in Christ and in creation. We trust you can multiply them in ways we cannot even imagine. Bless the ministries of our congregation and of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in these challenging times. Surprise us by what you accomplish through us as we sow seeds of generosity in the gifts we bring to you.

God of the earth and all its fullness, in this season of planting and growing, of nesting and nurturing, we pray for the environment and all the creatures it supports. Protect species and habitats at risk and awaken us to better stewardship in the garden you have entrusted to us. Hear our prayers for everything and everyone you have created in love as we pray the words Jesus taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

May the peace of God enfold us, the love of God uphold us, the wisdom of God control us. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the sweet fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever. Amen.