



Wednesday Prayer

3rd Sunday after Pentecost – Interpretation or Division?

and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, “He has gone out of his mind.” And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.” And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.” And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.” Mark 3:20-26, 31-35

Jesus’ words and actions – drawing crowds, healing the sick and those with “demons”, using his power to provide dignity to those who have been cast aside – this all becomes too threatening, so the scribes pronounce his power as coming from Satan. His family too, are worried and want to “restrain him”. Jesus responds with another parable for them to interpret. If he is in fact Satan, how is he able to cast out himself? He shares how division will make the house, the family, and the community crumble. Jesus’ strength over evil will ultimately defeat Satan’s power. He claims *all* who do God’s will as his siblings and mother.

This week I participated in the 2nd phase of a process my church is engaging in to become a more public church, focused on the neighbor. This phase is called “Interpretation”. We listened to a poem in which a woman was distraught with health issues, and upon seeing a girl “about half her age” come by gallantly in a Wonder Woman costume, the woman felt uplifted as if visited by an angel. One interpretation: If the woman was my age (late 50’s) then maybe the “girl” was close to 30 and may have had a mental illness, strolling around in a Wonder Woman costume. Another interpretation: The first woman was maybe just 18 and the girl was just 8 or 9 years old, having fun playing in her costume. When are our interpretations judgments about another? When do they get in the way of us understanding where another person is coming from? Do we create divisions in our interpretations and labeling rather than creating understanding as siblings in Christ.

Guide our interpretations of your Word and lead us into mercy and love for one another as we seek to understand and know each other as siblings in Christ. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.

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