

Sunday, September 5, 2021- Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

First Reading: Isaiah 35:4-7a

At this time the great threat to Israel were the Assyrians, who were not going to destroy the Southern Kingdom, but they were going to defeat and deport the Northern Kingdom.

Isaiah 36: 11 – Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; do not speak to us in the language of Judah within the hearing of the people who are on the wall.

36: 18 – Has any of the gods of the nations saved their land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

37: 14 – Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; then Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord.

35: 1 – The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom.

35: 2 – It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing.

35: 3 – Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.

35: 4 – Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you."

35: 5 – Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

35: 6 – Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.

35: 7 – The burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water.

Psalm: Psalm 146

1 – Hallelujah! Praise the LORD, O my soul!

2 – I will praise the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

3 – Put not your trust in rulers, in mortals in whom there is no help.

4 – When they breathe their last, they return to earth, and in that day their thoughts perish.

5 – Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help, whose hope is in the LORD their God,

6 – who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; who keeps promises forever;

7 – who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.

The LORD sets the captive free.

8 – The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down.

The LORD loves the righteous.

9 – The LORD cares for the stranger; the LORD sustains the orphan and widow,
but frustrates the way of the wicked.

10 – The LORD shall reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!

Second Reading: James 2:1-17

2: 1 – Do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ?

Is there any way in which you show favoritism? If so, what do you need to change?

2: 2-4 – For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand

there," or, "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

2: 5-7 - Has not God chosen the poor to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

2: 10 - Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

2: 14-17 - What good is it if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

How do you show your faith through the good things that you do?

Gospel: Mark 7:24-37

7: 24-30 - Jesus went to the region of Tyre. A woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard about him and came and bowed down at his feet. She was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." She answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." He said to her, "You may go—the demon has left your daughter." So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Here are three explanations that have been given as to why Jesus treated the woman as He did. During the process of the conversation He changed His mind and became more inclusive in His thinking.

He wanted to give the woman a chance to strengthen her faith through exercising it.

Matthew 15: 23 – He did not answer her at all.

He wanted to show the disciples how bad their attitude was.

Matthew 15: 23 – His disciples urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us."

7: 31 - Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis.

7: 32 - They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him.

7: 33 - He took him aside in private, away from the crowd.

He put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue.

7: 34 - Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

7: 35 - Immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly.

7: 36-37 - Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure.