

Sermon 7th Week after Pentecost

CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST !!!!

Bear one another's burdens . . . We who are strong must bear the infirmities of the weak; just as Christ has bore our infirmities. This is a beautiful turn of phrase in Greek. Paul deliberately alludes to Isaiah.

Brothers and Sisters: Most of us are strong in some areas, not so strong in other areas. This is what comes from our experience, our toil, our facing adversity. We each face, and are strengthened in one area and become mature, and yet we are still children in other areas. We should not reproach ourselves for this. We see this in Peter who in one moment confesses Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and then at the very next moment tells Jesus that He cannot go and suffer death, and must be rebuked for this. We can be strong for others, but we also need others to be strong for us. Paul lays this upon us as an obligation we have to each other. Just as Christ bore our reproach, so we also must bear each other, pray for each other, be present and listen to each other, love each other. In Galatians, Paul tells us to "bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."

So we must bear with the weakness of others and build them up and strengthen them rather than blame them for their weakness, for in other areas they are the strong and we are the weak. For we are one body; the weakness of others is our weakness — the strength of others is our strength.

For God has received us and listens and loves and is present to us even in our weaknesses, failings, and prejudices, and has born our infirmity upon Himself, and seeks our healing.

In the Gospel, Jesus heals. He has just raised the daughter of the Synagogue leader. Now He privately heals the blind, and the dumb/deaf. There are three levels of this that cause the pharisees anguish: He heals; the people follow Him; His healing fulfills prophesy. The blind men cannot see, but find out enough to know that Jesus is coming by. It is interesting how they address Jesus. Usually only the demonic address Jesus as "Son of David". Of them, Jesus asks if they have faith. Note, that they did not see and then believe; they had faith and then saw. And Jesus does not heal them when they first cry out to Him. He waits until He has come to His own home after the crowds are gone to heal them.

The dumb one cannot hold this sort of conversation. Jesus casts out the demon who has imprisoned this one's tongue. The word for "dumb" in Greek is interchangeable with "deaf". And the one formerly possessed by the demon now gives glory to God.

And the people exclaim: There has never been seen this way in Israel. In putting Jesus before all, the prophets, even before Moses. The pharisees bristled.

This fulfills the prophesy of Isaiah (35). "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like an hart and the tongue of the stuttrer shall speak plainly."

Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees . . . Comfort one another . . . Behold our God will come . . . and save us.

This is what Jesus points to when He gives His one sentence sermon in the synagogue. This is what Jesus points to when the disciples of John the Baptist question Him.

And what of us? Where are we strong that we need to give aid to others? Where are we weak that we need to ask for help? Where are we like the people to whom Isaiah was charged to speak: See; and in seeing perceive not: Hear, and in hearing understand not.? Where are we spiritually blind and deaf?

The Kingdom of God is come upon us. We just spent the last hour in the banquet feast of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is here for our healing and the healing of our stronger and weaker brethren.

To the King be glory honour and worship, now and ever and unto ages of ages.
Amen

ΟΣΕ ΜΑΝΤΙΟΣ Η ΠΟΥΛΛΗ ΑΥΤΗ ΚΑΙ ΔΟΧΜΑΙ-Η

