



ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost

August 16, 2020
Anglican Parish of Raymond Terrace
www.stjohnsraymondterrace.org

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Pray:

May I speak to you in the name of GOD – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen



Our story of Joseph continues with his meeting up with his brothers. Although Joseph's brothers had wanted to get rid of him, GOD used even their evil actions to fulfil His ultimate plan. He sent Joseph ahead to preserve their lives, save Egypt and prepare the way for the beginning of the nation of Israel. GOD is sovereign. His plans are not dictated to by human actions. When others intend evil toward us, remember that they are only GOD's tools. As Joseph said to his brothers, "You intended to harm me; but GOD intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

^Psalm 133 is a psalm of David – and David stated that unity is pleasant and precious. Unfortunately, unity does

not abound in the church as it should. People disagree and cause division over unimportant issues. Some delight in causing tension by discrediting others. Unity is important because:

1. It makes the church a positive example to the world and helps draw others to us
2. It helps us co-operate as a body of believers as GOD meant us to – giving a foretaste of heaven and
3. It renews and revitalises ministry because there is less tension to sap our energy.

It may not be so much disunity at the moment that saps our energy but of living under the cloud of the COVID-19 pandemic. Living in unity does not mean that we will agree on everything – there will be many opinions just as there are many notes in a musical chord. But we must agree on our purpose in life – to work together for GOD. Our outward expression of unity will reflect our inward unity of purpose.

The precious, fragrant oil was used by Moses to anoint Aaron as the first high priest of Israel, and to dedicate all the priests to GOD's service. Brotherly unity, like the anointing oil, shows that we are dedicated to serving GOD wholeheartedly.

Paul was appointed as a missionary to the Gentiles. He reminded his Jewish brothers of this fact, hoping that they too would want to be saved. The Jews had been rejected, and thus the Gentiles were being offered salvation too. But when a Jew comes to CHRIST, there is great rejoicing – as if a dead person has come back to life.

Speaking to Gentile Christians, Paul warns them not to feel superior; because GOD rejected some Jews. ^Abraham's faith is like the root of a productive tree, and the Jewish people are the tree's natural branches. Because of faithlessness, the Jews were the broken branches. Gentile believers have been grafted into the tree like a wild olive shoot. Both Jews and Gentiles share

the tree's nourishment based on their faith in GOD – neither can rest on heritage or culture for salvation.

“Continuing in his kindness” refers to steadfast perseverance in faith. Steadfastness is a proof of the reality of faith and a by-product of salvation – not a means to it.

Some say the phrase “and so all Israel will be saved” means that the majority of the Jews in the final generation before CHRIST’s return will turn to CHRIST for salvation. Others say that Paul is using the term “ISRAEL” for the “*spiritual*” nation of Israel made up of everyone – Jew and Gentile – who has received salvation through faith in CHRIST. Thus, ALL ISRAEL – or all believers – will receive GOD’s promised gift of salvation. Still others say that ALL ISRAEL means Israel as a whole will have a role in CHRIST’s kingdom. Their identity as a people won’t be discarded. GOD chose the nation of Israel, and He has never rejected it. He also chose the church, through JESUS CHRIST, and He will

never reject it either. This does not mean, of course, that all Jews or all church members will be saved. It is possible to belong to a nation or to an organisation without ever responding in faith. But just because some people have rejected CHRIST does not mean that GOD stops working with either Israel or the church. He continues to offer salvation freely to all.

Paul then goes on to show us how the Jews and the Gentiles benefit each other. Whenever GOD shows mercy to one group, the other shares in the blessing. ^In GOD's original plan, the Jews would be the source of GOD's blessing to the Gentiles. When the Jews rejected this mission, GOD blessed the Gentiles anyway through the Jewish Messiah. He still maintained His love for the Jews because of His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – [the patriarchs](#). The privileges and invitation of GOD given to Israel will never be withdrawn. But someday the faithful Jews will share in GOD's mercy.

GOD's plans will not be thwarted – He will have mercy on them all.

The final 4 verses is a doxology – a prayer of praise to GOD for the wisdom of His plan. Although GOD's method and means are beyond our comprehension, GOD Himself is not arbitrary. He governs the universe and our lives in perfect wisdom, justice, and love.

The implication of the questions is that no one has fully understood the mind of the LORD. No one has been His counsellor. And GOD owes nothing to any one of us. Isaiah and Jeremiah asked similar questions to show that we are unable to give advice to GOD or criticise His ways. GOD alone is the possessor of absolute power and absolute wisdom. In the final analysis, all of us are absolutely dependent upon GOD. He is the source of all things, including ourselves. He is the power that sustains the world that we live in – and GOD works out all things to bring glory to Himself. The all-powerful GOD deserves our praise.

In our Gospel passage from Matthew, JESUS was referring to the Jewish regulations concerning food and drink. The statement could be paraphrased as “You aren’t made unclean by eating non-kosher food! It is what you say and think that makes you unclean. This statement offended the Pharisees who were genuinely concerned about what people ate and drank.

JESUS told His disciples to leave the Pharisees alone because the Pharisees were blind to GOD’s truth. Anyone who listened to their teaching would risk spiritual blindness as well. Not all religious leaders clearly see GOD’s truth. We need to make sure our spiritual eyesight is good – teaching and learning and following the principles of the Holy Scriptures.

Later on, in chapter 15 and Acts chapter 10, Peter would face the issue of clean and unclean food. Then he would learn that nothing should be a barrier to proclaiming the gospel to the Gentiles.

It is hard work to keep our outward appearance attractive – but what is in our hearts is even more important. The way we are deep down – where others can't see – matters much to GOD. What are we like inside? When we commit ourselves to GOD, He makes us different on the inside. He will continue this process of transformation in us only if we ask. GOD wants us to seek healthy thoughts and motives, not just healthy food, and exercise.

Puzzled by JESUS' silence, the disciples ask Him to get rid of the woman because she was bothering them with her nagging persistence. They showed no compassion for her or sensitivity to her needs. It is possible to become so occupied with spiritual matters that we miss the real needs around us. This is especially likely if we are prejudiced against needy people or if they cause us inconvenience. Instead of being bothered, we need to be aware of the opportunities that surround us. We need to be open to the beauty of GOD's message for ALL

people, and make an effort NOT to shut out those who are different from us.

JESUS' words in verse 24 – ²⁴(JESUS) answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' Do not contradict the truth that GOD's message is for all people. After all, when JESUS said these words, He was in Gentile territory on a mission to the Gentile people. He ministered to the Gentiles on many other occasions also. JESUS was simply telling the woman that Jews were to have the first opportunity to accept Him as Messiah because GOD wanted them to present the message of salvation to the rest of the world. JESUS certainly WAS NOT rejecting the woman – He may have been testing her faith – OR – He may have wanted to use the situation as another opportunity to teach that faith is available to all people.

DOG was a term the Jews commonly applied to Gentiles because the Jews considered these pagan people no more likely than dogs to receive GOD's blessing. JESUS

was not degrading the woman by using this term – He was reflecting the Jew’s attitude so as to contrast it with His own. The woman did not argue. Instead, using JESUS’ choice of words, she agreed to be considered a dog as long as she could receive GOD’s blessing for her daughter. Ironically, many Jews would LOSE GOD’s blessing and salvation because they rejected JESUS – and many Gentiles would FIND salvation because they recognised and accepted Him.



Our passage from Genesis shows that GOD can turn any situation around and use it for His good purpose.

Our psalm teaches us that unity is a good thing.

Paul teaches us that Abraham’s faith is like the root of a productive tree, and the Jewish people are the tree’s natural branches. Because of their faithlessness, the Jews were the broken branches. Gentile believers have been grafted into the tree like a wild olive shoot. Both Jews and Gentiles share the tree’s nourishment based

on their faith in or their relationship with, GOD – neither can rest on heritage or culture for salvation. GOD’s wisdom is greater than our understanding.

^In our Gospel passage, JESUS explains that even though He was sent first to the Jewish people, He was sent by GOD to minister to all people. We need to recognise and accept JESUS to receive his blessing and salvation.

So, GOD loves everyone – Jews and Gentiles. We are accepted by GOD if we choose to follow His law, repent, and turn to receive His love – with humility and faith. That is our challenge.



May we pray:

Your mercy, O GOD, never fails to raise us up and to heal our brokenness. Grant to us the faith of the Canaanite woman that we might turn to you in our need and never forget the compassion of Your Son JESUS CHRIST –

who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one GOD for ever and ever. Amen

Life Application Study Bible

GOD's Word 2020

Daily Prayer 2020