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### THE PSALM AND THE CALL TO WORSHIP

Lay Minister: 1 Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul.

**People: 2 I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.**

Lay Minister: 3 Do not put your trust in princes,

**People: in mortal men, who cannot save.**

Lay Minister: 4 When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;

**People: on that very day their plans come to nothing.**

Lay Minister: 5 Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,

**People: whose hope is in the LORD his God, 6 the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them-- the LORD, who remains faithful**

**forever.**

Lay Minister: 7 He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry.

**People: The LORD sets prisoners free,**

Lay Minister: 8 the LORD gives sight to the blind,

**People: the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous.**

Lay Minister: 9 The LORD watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow,

**People: but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.**

Lay Minister: 10 The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations.

**People: Praise the LORD.**

Lay Minister: We gather to worship and praise the Lord who gives sight to the blind, who lifts

up those who are bowed down, who reigns forever.

**People: We begin in the name of God the Father, and in the name of God the Son,**

**and in the name of God the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**THE PRAYER OF THE DAY Lord God, through your power and love you have reached out to the needy and opened the eyes of the blind and unstopped the ears of the deaf. Help us in our faith Lord, that we see how you act and hear what you say and that our faith is shown in our lives and our actions; We pray through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON** Isaiah 35:4-7a (*Our God comes to save. We sing for joy.*)

4 say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you." 5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. 6 Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the

wilderness and streams in the desert. 7 The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs.

**THE EPISTLE LESSON** James 2:1-10, 14-18  
*active.)*

*(True faith is alive and*

1 My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. 2 Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. 3 If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," 4 have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? 5 Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? 6 But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? 7 Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong? 8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. 9 But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. . . .

14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, **faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.** 18 But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

**THE GOSPEL LESSON** Mark 7: (24-30) 31-37 (*Jesus, the promised Messiah to the Jews reaches out in the territory of the Gentile people.*)

24 Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. 25 In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and fell at his feet. 26 The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. 27 "First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." 28 "Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." 29 Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter." 30 She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

31 Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis. 32 There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged him to place his hand on the man. 33 After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. 34 He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means, "Be opened!"). 35 At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

36 Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. 37 People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

**THE SERMON      God Saves, We believe – What does faith look like?    Mark 7**

**Matthew 15:23** Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us."

Matthew 15: 28 Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her **daughter** was healed from that very hour.

INTRO - Maybe you've heard the story about the church in the south. I've not heard that this story is true, but there is a lesson to learn anyway. One Sunday after church had started, the seats were full of people dressed in their Sunday finest, the Pastor was preaching with vigor, a visitor came through the door. The visitor wasn't used to going to church, and he was late. But, since he came he wanted a front row seat. So, in walks this young man, only, he wasn't in a suit, but in blue jeans with holes in his pants. He wasn't in his Sunday finest, but he looked like he could use a shave and a shower. And he didn't sit in the right place, he walked up the center aisle, and sat down right in front, on the floor, not in one of the seats. This man was not acting like the other church members. But, he sat there looking and listening as the pastor talked about Jesus.

I. Today's Gospel lesson tells two stories of healing. But, in addition to healing, these accounts can help us answer the question, "What does Faith Look like?" or "What do Christians look like?"

A. If you asked the religious leaders of the day what it looked like to be a follower of God, they would say you were Jewish. You ate the right foods, associated with the right people, dressed the right way. In fact, the religious leaders didn't seem to think much of the disciples following Jesus, they seemed like uneducated laborers.

B. If you asked the disciples what a follower of God looked like, they would say he was a man, he was Jewish, and he left everything to follow Jesus.

C. If you asked the writer of James, it may seem that a Christian is always a person with their life in order.

D. If you ask people today what a follower of Jesus is like, it probably depends on where you ask.

1. Some would say Christians are mainly American.
2. Some would say that Christians have jobs.
3. Some would say that Christians are family people.
4. Some would say that Christians are primarily older people. How about you? What would you say?

II. The truth is, the Gospel lesson tells two stories of healing. But, it also tells two lessons of Jesus reaching out to unlikely people.

A. First we are told about Jesus healing the daughter of a lady in the Tyre and Sidon region. Let me tell you about this. Jesus worked in Judea, around Jerusalem, and in Galilee, in the north. The Jews of the south didn't even think the people in Galilee were worth God's time. But Tyre and Sidon were outside the area where God's people had lived. These people weren't Jewish and didn't even claim to be. And, this was not just a foreigner, but also woman. And, those who were diseased were considered unclean. There are all sorts reasons that this lady would not be considered a follower of God by the religious leaders. Even Jesus disciples didn't think so. In the Matthew version of this story, the disciples urged Jesus to send her away. But, Jesus heard the persistent pleas of the lady., and in mercy healed her daughter. This surprised many, even his disciples.

B. Second, we are told about the man from the Decapolis. This also was not a region of Jewish people. We are told in another story that these people raised pigs, which were unclean to Jews. Again, this man had a physical problem, making him more unclean to the Jewish people of the day. But Jesus reached out and touched him. Jesus healed him. Jesus told this man not to tell anyone, and he told everyone that Jesus healed him. Is this really what a follower of God looks like?

C. Stereotypes can hurt us. The religious leaders and disciples would not have reached out to these people because they didn't seem, to them, like the kind of people the Messiah would come for. But they were wrong. How often have stereotypes kept us from reaching out to someone with the good news of Jesus.

III. But, the woman with the sick daughter and the deaf and mute man show what faith is like.

A. First, they looked to Jesus, they came to Him, they begged him, they trusted him.

1. The Jews trusted their own wisdom, and righteousness, and heritage. That is not faith, that is self righteousness.

2. The lady in the region of Tyre, and the man in the pig raising area, did not trust themselves, they turned to God, specifically to the promised Messiah, to Jesus the Christ.

3. That is what faith looks like, it turns to Jesus.

B. Secondly, when Jesus helped them, they responded.

1. Today's epistle lesson says that faith without work is dead, or **faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.**

2. You see interesting reactions and actions in these people's lives.

A. The lady reached out to Jesus, and showed her faith in the love for her daughter, and willingness to be ridiculed to help her.

B. The man just HAD to tell others about Jesus healing him.

C. But finally, these people did not fit any stereotypes, other than they trusted Jesus, they turned to Him, and their lives responded in faith.

1. You see, God says in 1 Timothy 2, **God . . . wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.**

2. God also tells us in 2 Peter 3:9 **The Lord . . . is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**

3. There is no one who is not God's kind of person if they will look to Jesus, and respond as God's Word calls us to respond, in love and obedience.

CONCLUSION - The story of the young man in church continues when the head usher for the day, an old man with a cane, saw the young man sit in the middle of the floor in front of the altar. So, he walked to the front, slowly, his cane clicking against the floor. Everyone knew what was going to happen. You don't dress that way in church. You

don't come in late. You don't sit on the floor. Click, Click, the cane sounded as slowly the elderly man approach. People just knew he was going to kick the young man out. Click, Click, Click, the elderly man finally reached the young man, and reached over . . . to hold himself as he sat down and joined the young man. The young man did not fit the stereotypes, but he came to hear about Jesus, and this elderly man was going to support some one who came to listen to Jesus, and follow Jesus.

What does faith look like? It looks like anyone who does not trust themselves, but trust in God, and His love for them in Jesus. We dare not exclude people Jesus includes.