

Coffee to Go | Proper 18 Year B

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

jesus, coexist, divine presence, healing, divine, enter, liturgical calendar, faith, region, liturgical seasons

SPEAKERS

Blake Smith, Karin Peter

Karin Peter 00:20

Karen, welcome to coffee to go where we center ourselves in the scriptures, seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter, here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. So where are we with Jesus this week, in Week 18, or proper 18, as it's called in the liturgical calendar. Well, we are in Mark's gospel, where, apparently, I hate to say this, but Jesus is sneaking around and hiding out from his followers. It's it, that's basically what happens here. So let's, let's find out why.

Blake Smith 01:08

Alright, well, this is the gospel of Mark, the seventh chapter, and we are reading from the 24th through the 37th verse today. From there, he set out and went away to the region of Tyre he entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice. But a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile of SyroPhoenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter, and 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. But she answered him, Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. Then he said to her for saying that you may go, the demon has left your daughter. And when she went home, she found the child lying on the bed and the demon gone. Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went by way of Sidon toward the Sea of Galilee in the region of Decapolis. They brought him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took us, took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. He then looking up to heaven, sighed and said to him, efata, that is be opened, and his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. 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, saying he has done everything well. He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak. So first of all, I wanted to say we begin with from there, he set out. And it's important for me to note that he was in Israelite territory, and he's leaving that and he's moving into Gentile territory. So he went across the border. He he crossed the border, right? And so with that in mind, we come back to the story that we've we've talked about before, but it has a different twist here in Mark, let me just say first of all that what we like to do with this passage is find a way to justify why Jesus responded the way he did. And I'm just going to say that it's not important to justify this if we believe that Jesus is both fully human and fully divine, then that is all the rationale that we need for this

right? Because it tells us that he's fatigued. He's trying to get away. He wants to be left alone. He wants to hide away. And we get fatigued and we want to hide away, and we want to

Karin Peter 04:24

he was so fatigued, like he crossed the border into another territory so that people wouldn't follow him,

Blake Smith 04:29

right? So he's thinking, I'll go where nobody knows me. But the reality is, there was no place that he could go to get away. And this Syrophenician woman hears that he is there and she comes, and he's not nice, yeah, Jesus is is, quite honestly, a little snarky to the woman, and he, begrudgingly, I think, begrudgingly, heals a girl. I mean, you know. Hear, Oh, your child is healed. Go and be blessed. It is alright, because you said that you can go, yeah, just get out of here, right? So it doesn't get nicer in this version of the passage, and then it's when we take this in context of the whole past, this interaction with the Syrophenician woman, in context with the rest of the passage, there is a real inequity that's about to just show its face here, and that is that he treats this non Jewish woman differently than he treats the deaf man that he's going to encounter soon after. And we have to decide what we're going to do with this. I mean, here we have, first of all, a Gentile woman who's coming to Jesus. So she is a woman of no standing. Some commentators say she might have even been an unwed mother, whether that's divorced or widowed or whatever, which is even lower standing, and she has the audacity not only to speak to Jesus, but to speak to him with some authority and force. She's very assertive, and her response is assertive, so she's not going to take no for an answer. And so here is a person who has no voice in society, who is taking the opportunity to be a very important voice, to speak against power in a situation where it's not helpful, where the power is not helpful, and it's contrasted by a man who does have a voice in society, but in this passage, is deaf and mute. Yeah, cannot speak, and Jesus has no problem, no question, healing this gentleman. And so, you know, we kind of pass over this sometimes. I think when we read this passage, it's okay, that was two of Jesus healings, but there's a significant thing going on here. There's really more to this passage. The woman here becomes the teacher. She turns Jesus insult into a door for her to enter and to take that moment, that teachable moment. She's not deterred by his unpleasantness. She's not going to be overlooked, which has happened for ages to persons, to women. She persevered, and she spoke assertively, as I mentioned, when the man couldn't speak at all. So we return to that fully human, fully divine understanding of Christ. And here we see the fully human behaviors coexisting with divine presence and ultimately healing. And then it kind of gives us a glimpse into a way of understanding Jesus that might be different. Where we try, we we give, we give authority to the Divinity side of Jesus, and so there and which requires us to have to rationalize when he doesn't do, like tossing the tables in the temple, when he doesn't do what we think the divine ought to do, we come up with all of these reasons, rather than allowing Christ to also live in that fully human aspect of who he is. And so we ask. We need to ask ourselves, what does that tell us about how we see Jesus? So some questions for consideration this week might be, am I proactive and assertive in my faith, or do I not speak at all? What healing do I need to be more aligned in my life with Divine Presence? I think this idea of being assertive in our faith or not speak at all. Many of us have the privilege of having a voice and choose not to speak. So I'm not passing any judgment here. I'm just saying that we ought to consider, are we proactive and assertive in our faith, or do we choose to be on the sideline, or, as we've said in a previous episode, just an observer on the outside. Another question

would be, when have I out of fatigue or bias, dismissed or judged someone and found them lacking, only to discover later just how wrong I was.

Karin Peter 09:44

I have to wonder if, if we carry this little story a little bit further, if Jesus, at any point had a moment of self reflection about how how rude he had been. Um. Uh, how judgmental, if you will, or dismissive. And act on that I've kind of dismissed somebody in in my mind, and because I didn't think I wanted to really get to know them, only to discover later that that was a really interesting or lovely person, and it was my own fatigue or bias or attitude that kept me from really entering into a healthy relationship with that individual.

Blake Smith 10:33

Yeah, I just had an incident last night. It wasn't, wasn't about fatigue or bias. I was actually responding to a text. I had arrived at the food pantry where I was volunteering last night, and a woman approached me and introduced herself and said she was a new volunteer. And I just kind of said, Okay, go through that door. You need to talk to so and so, and they'll help you out. And I thought later I finished my text, I, you know, and then I thought, how rude was that I didn't say, welcome, glad to see you. I'm Blake. Here's, let's, you know, whatever it was. Just kind of like, Okay, go. So I went back to her, and I apologized, and I said, I'm sorry I was really rude. And I just want to introduce myself and say, you know, glad, glad that you're here so but yeah, I don't know. I don't know if Jesus had that moment or not. I'd like to think so me please, right? So the final question that we might ask is, how do my best intentions and my many flaws coexist in me, the the more divine moments and the less divine moments Absolutely. So we might extend that to say, How does my faith and my doubt coexist in me, and how does my compassion for others and my self centeredness coexist in me. So how do those dichotomies work themselves out in our lives?

Karin Peter 12:06

So I'm looking at our outline here, and I said that I wanted to think of something with spit. And I think, Oh, that would be great to think of a practice we could do this week with spit. But then I decided that was probably not okay. So instead, we do, we do live in this dichotomy where our best intentions and our flaws coexist. So this week, it's very simple, let's, let's give weight to our best intentions. Let's give attention to our desire, our best desired outcome in every interaction that we have with people. Let's try really hard to live in our best intentions rather than in our flaws. This week,

Blake Smith 12:56

alright, well, our blessing comes from one of our favorites, and that's meta Herrick Carlson, and this is entitled for good enough. There is always more to do. Success and striving have no out of office reply, regret and pressure irritate Sabbath's gentle call like a nervous twitch when I am weary of the world's demands, skeptical of distress, I listen for the mortality of my calling. At first I don't hear anything but my neurotic inner monolog. It takes a while to dial that down, and then it's just my ragged breath and the thump of my heartbeat, I almost fall asleep beneath the rhythm, but then it hollers ringing like a dinner bell calling me home. I run sweaty and hungry for the first and last judgment on my life. Good, very good enough God's own. The truth breaks in. It fills and blesses me with a seat at the table and holy permission to simply be my breath slows and I smile when I get just enough air between me and the

world to remember who I am. Thank you everybody for joining us here at coffee to go. We invite you to join us next time, for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. You