

SERMON FOR TRINITY SUNDAY 2019

TEXT: JOHN 8:48-51

THEME: HONORING GOD

48 The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" **49** Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. **50** Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. **51** Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

In the name of Jesus:

Soren Kierkegaard, the great Danish theologian of another century tells a story of a prince who wanted to find a maiden suitable to be his queen. One day while running an errand in the local village for his father he passed through a poor section. As he glanced out the windows of the carriage his eyes fell upon a beautiful peasant maiden. During the ensuing days he often passed by the young lady and soon fell in love. But he had a problem. How would he seek her hand?

He could order her to marry him. But even a prince wants his bride to marry him freely and voluntarily and not through coercion. He could put on his most splendid uniform and drive up to her front door in a carriage drawn by six horses. But if he did this he would never be certain that the maiden loved him or was simply overwhelmed with all of the splendor. As you might have guessed, the prince came up with

another solution. He would give up his kingly robe. He moved, into the village, entering not with a crown but in the garb of a peasant. He lived among the people, shared their interests and concerns, and talked their language. In time the maiden grew to love him for who he was and because he had first loved her.

What a wonderful story of God's love. God so loved the world that He sent Jesus into the world to be God's Son in human flesh. But the world did not receive Jesus and His love. Jesus delighted in people, He lived to love others, but the response that He received from many was either the cold shoulder or outright hatred.

Just note the reactions of the people in our text for today, those who lived in Jerusalem, Israel, and Judea during the life and ministry of Jesus. Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the Son of God. And the reaction of those who heard this news was nothing out of the ordinary. For example, when Jesus returned to His hometown of Nazareth, the Bible says that Jesus could not perform a miracle in His hometown. Why? The reason was that the vast majority in Nazareth dismissed Jesus and His claims to be the Messiah, the Son of God. Just listen to what Mark writes: He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the

synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. ...” (Mark 6). Those in His own hometown, including His family members, took offense at Jesus! Save for His mother, Mary, Jesus and His message were rejected by those closest to Him. It wasn’t only until after the resurrection that His brother, James, believed in Jesus and His claims to be the Son of God. His other brother, Jude, also believed in Him, but at this time in His life and ministry, the majority rejected Jesus, for they said: “we know this guy, he isn’t anything special. He is the carpenter’s son, and the son of Mary; we lived with him and he with us.” Jesus didn’t walk around with a halo around His head, He looked like a normal person, and because He didn’t look like what others might think of the Son of God would look like, Jesus and His message was dismissed.

In our text, we see the Jews and religious leaders of that day reject Jesus as well. They said of Jesus: “The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” Now this isn’t the first time Jesus was accused of being demon possessed! In fact,

the scribes considered Jesus to be on Satan's side! The Bible records: " And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebub," and "by the prince of demons he casts out the demons." But Jesus dismissed their outlandish claims, asking if He was on Satan's side, how can He do the works of God? How can Satan cast out Satan? He can't. Therefore Jesus isn't filled with a demon.

It is amazing, though, to think of how the name of Jesus has become a stumbling block for many in our world today. The work of Jesus, the message of Jesus, the mission of Jesus is all about saving sinners! But look how some react to a prayer using the name of Jesus! I remember when I had the opportunity to have pray a prayer in the House of Representatives in our nation's capitol some fifteen years ago. Some of you may remember huddling around a television to see me pray the prayer on C SPAN. I had worked on this prayer and had submitted it to the Chaplain of the House about a month before I was to deliver it. About a minute before I was to pray, I was taken aside by a member of the House and asked to remove the phrase, "in the name of Jesus." You see, I prayed in the name of Jesus and this Congressman wanted me to remove the name of Jesus in the prayer. I thought better of it, and prayed the prayer as I had composed it. Many today still don't want to

pray in the name of Jesus, because they think that the name of Jesus might offend others.

You would like to think that Christians wouldn't be embarrassed by the name of Jesus, but Christians are embarrassed and it shows in how they live. Look at your own life, how many times have you changed your behavior, or used words that you know the Lord would not approve of, so that you can fit in with the others? When someone shares some gossip, you are all ears, even though God condemns it in the 7th commandment. When you share in telling a dirty joke when you know God calls you to live a clean life in word and deed? Or when you have the opportunity to share your faith but keep silent for fear of something thinking that you are some type of religious kook?

God calls you to confess your sins to Him today, for He is faithful and just and will forgive you all of your sins. Why can God do this, and why will God do this? All because God loves you! As the writer of Proverbs says: God delights in you! And that is why God sent Jesus, His Son, to be your Savior.

The people in Jesus' day were incredulous that Jesus would even be considered as being equal to God. But Jesus told the truth by answering His critics in our text for today by saying: " "Truly, truly, I say

to you, before Abraham was, I am.” Jesus is the eternal Son of the Living God. Before Abraham existed, before the world was created, Jesus existed. Jesus is the eternal Son of God who was present at the beginning of creation. John writes of Jesus: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. **4** In him was life, and the life was the light of men. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” And “**10** He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. **11** He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. **12** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, **13** who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. **14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

The eternal Word became flesh. Angels sang at His birth proclaiming: “Glory to God on the highest and peace to His people on earth, for to you is born in the city of David a Savior, He is Christ the Lord.” At Jesus’ Baptism and when He was transfigured on the mount

the heavens opened and God the Father proclaimed: "This is My Son, listen to Him." The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus as a dove to anoint Him as God's chosen one.

God the Father sent His Son Jesus to earth to do His work of seeking and saving the lost. Jesus kept on task, doing what was necessary for your salvation. He kept God's Law perfectly then offered Himself up on the cross to as the sufficient payment for all sins. He never made the issue about Himself. Jesus simply states that He was sent by God to do the will of God. Jesus doesn't sensationalize His life or work. He testifies to the truth: "My will is to do the will of Him who sent Me." This is why Jesus says that God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Jesus will not perish but have life in Him name. Jesus proclaimed that His purpose in His life and ministry was to do the will of His Heavenly Father who sent Him into the world to save sinners.

Salvation is yours today, as a free gift. For you have been saved by grace through faith in Christ, it is not of your own doing; it is a Gift of God. The Holy Spirit has given you this Gift in the waters of your Baptism, washing away your sins and bestowing faith in Jesus in your heart and life. You have become a new person in Jesus. The Holy Spirit

is your Helper, of whom Jesus promised the when the Holy Spirit comes; He will come proceeding from the Father and the Son. The work of the Spirit is to show you your sins so that you will repent and turn to Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the One who witnesses to you and to the world that the only hope for salvation is trusting in Jesus. He does so by means of the Word of God. Where that Word is proclaimed, the Spirit doesn't point to Himself, He points you to Jesus. The Father points you to Jesus, and the Spirit points you to Jesus, because there is no other name under heaven whereby a sinner can be saved except by believing in Jesus.

The Good News is this: God has made you His child in Jesus Christ. God the Father has created you. God sent His only Son, Jesus, to save you in His suffering, death, and resurrection. And the Holy Spirit has given to you faith in Jesus so that you might believe in Jesus and live as His child. God has done it all! And He takes delight in you as His child! Through faith in Jesus, we honor God by trusting in Christ and telling others about Him. And in Christ, God honors us, for through faith in Jesus we know that goodness and mercy will follow all the days of our lives, and we will live in the Lord's house forever!

Amen

