

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Text: Mark 9:21-23

Sermon Title: "Always With Us"

Sermon Hymn: "Be Still, My Soul" LSB 752

Prayer: May our faith always remain in Him that He is always with us.

Sermon Outline:

- I. Real people with real needs come to Jesus.
- II. "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you?"
- III. "All things are possible for one who believes."

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from our Heavenly Father, and from His Son, Jesus Christ, who shed His blood for each of you. Amen.

We just sang "Be Still, My Soul." I want to read to you the words of verse one. You are welcome to open up your hymnal and follow along. Again, it is hymn number 752.

Be still, my soul; the Lord is on your side; Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain; Leave to your God to order and provide; In every change He faithful will remain. Be still, my soul; your best, your heavenly Friend. Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Friends, we do have our cross of grief and pain. In life we face a whole lot of changes. Some changes we expect. Other changes we do not and they leave us scratching our heads, our hearts aching, and thinking, "this is not what I had planned in life."

Friends, we have a whole lot of needs in life. We get hungry and thirsty. We get hurt physically and emotionally. The people we love, well...those things happens to them it pains us just as much as if it were happening to us.

What I'm getting at is that we are real people, real people with real needs. As much as we cannot deny we are real people, we cannot deny we have real needs. We just confessed this in singing "Be Still, My Soul." Yet, we also confessed the Lord's steadfast love and care for us. He does order our lives and provide. Our Lord does remain faithful when all around us changes. He is our best, our Heavenly Friend, and He leads us to a joyful end indeed. Real people with real needs, yet, our Lord remains with us, faithfully and lovingly.

I want to ask all of you a question. With all the needs, the worries, frustrations, disappointments, and setbacks we have in life, what would you do if Jesus were sitting right next to you (tonight) this morning? What if He were there right next to you with His face turned toward you and giving you all of His attention? Right there in real flesh and blood, with real eyes and ears focused upon you? If such a thing were true for me I would hope that I would be prepared for such an opportunity by having a list of questions and requests. Jesus being right beside you would you feel better and safer?

When I read over our Gospel reading for this Sunday numerous times, something stuck out more and more. Something I can relate to, and I'm sure many of you can too. There is a man in this account who has a son, a son who from his childhood had a spirit that made him mute, seized his son, threw him down, made him foam at the mouth, grind his teeth, and his body rigid.

I will say it is easy to read and hear this Gospel account and overlook the obvious pain this father had over his son's condition. How heartbreaking it had to be for this father to see his son go through this. I know for myself, and I've thought about this often, if my son were in pain I'd want to take the pain upon myself in order to get it away from him. I'm sure so many of you can relate.

Reading this account I think to myself, if I were this father, would I feel better, feel relieved, that Jesus was right there? Because I know Jesus could take away from my son the spirit that made him suffer, and to have Jesus right there, right there, oh, I would feel so much better. But, what exactly does this kind of thinking mean anyway? That there are times when Jesus isn't here with me and those I love?

Going back to this Gospel account, Jesus inquired of what was going on. The scribes were arguing with the crowd there. The disciples were there in the midst of it all. Jesus came around and asked what was going on. A man in the crowd answered Jesus, *“Teacher, I brought my son to you, he has a spirit that makes him mute. And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.”*

And, hear now Jesus' response: *“O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?”* (Pause) What? Was this very tactful of Jesus? Here you

have a father who brings his suffering son to Jesus and this is how Jesus responds? *“O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you?”* I have to ask myself, if I were this father, would I simply ignore Jesus’ comment about a faithless generation and press on because I heard Jesus say *“Bring him to me.”*

They brought the boy to Jesus and Jesus got to witness the spirit seize and control him. Eventually the father says to Jesus, *“if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”* Jesus responds again, *“If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.”*

There is no question friends, Jesus loved this man. Jesus loved this boy suffering from the spirit that had control of him. As well, Jesus loved all those there that day. He recognized them as real people with real needs. In no way was Jesus condemning them for bringing this boy to Him. Nor was He annoyed that they did. Jesus desires that we bring all our needs, our grief and pain to Him because He cares for us.

But, why this comment by Jesus, *“O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?”* What’s Jesus getting at here?

To answer these questions let’s consider this, what can Jesus not do with His Holy Word? Could it be that Jesus was making a point that it did not make a difference at all if He was right there within arms reach of them or not? Where could we ever be in this world, in this universe, and the Lord not here our cries?

Jesus saw the crowd coming and He *“rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, ‘You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.’”* Yes, that is how Jesus cured this boy- he rebuked the spirit, He said to it, He commanded it. And, Jesus being God Himself, this spirit had no choice but to leave this boy.

Let’s ask ourselves the question again, would any one of us be better off if Jesus were sitting right beside us within arms reach, in a way in which we can look at Him, touch Him, and hear Him?

Jesus spoke to His disciples, Matthew 24:35- *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”* Yes, there came a day, no long after His Resurrection, when Jesus ascended into Heaven. Why couldn’t Jesus stick around here on earth? Certainly we could have found Him a nice place to live. That way we’d know where to find Him anytime we’d

need Him. But, hear again Jesus' word of promise to His disciples, "*Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.*"

Friends, the one important, better yet, the comforting promise we have from the Lord is this- where His Word is there He is also. The Lord and His Word cannot and never will be separated. It is how the Lord begins, finishes, and completes all that He has ever set out to do. He speaks and it is done. He spoke and the heavens, the earth, and all therein was created. He spoke to the spirit that controlled that boy in our Gospel reading and it left Him. And, what the Lord speaks is always, always to our eternal benefit. And, what He has spoken will not pass away, will not leave us, it is always with us. And, if His Word is always with us, so is He!

There would have been no difference for those disciples, for the father of that boy, if Jesus was there the way He was or not. What mattered, and this is the comfort Jesus gave them, He was always with them, even if they were not able to touch Him or see Him.

Remember me saying earlier, that if my son were in pain I'd want to take the pain upon myself in order to get it away from him. Yes, how painful it was for that father to see his own son go through what he went through. How painful it had to be for our Heavenly Father to know His own Son, Jesus Christ, was suffering the way He did when He mocked, falsely accused, whipped and flogged beyond any kind of recognition, and left to die, nailed to a nasty, rugged cross. To know what His own Son was going through, and still have no choice but to forsake Him and leave Him,...yes, I say no choice, for our Heavenly Father knew it had to happen to save those He loved, each and everyone of us.

What tremendous, unexplainable, immeasurable love. To allow His own Son, to will for His own Son to go through that in order to save those who rejected Him, disobeyed Him, and declared themselves His enemies.

That is why Jesus became flesh and walked the earth in the first place, because of that tremendous, unexplainable, immeasurable love us, because our Heavenly Father recognized us all as real people with a real, big, huge, eternal need! And, when that need was met in full, He ascended into Heaven leaving with us something just as valuable as Jesus Himself, His Holy Word, declaring our sins paid for, declaring us to be His children and heirs of life-everlasting in the paradise of Heaven.

That is what it takes friends, His Word. What our Lord has spoken is certainly, without a doubt, absolutely true- we are forgiven, we are going to Heaven. And, the Word, Jesus Christ, is with us, and remains with us- that's His Promise!

Yes, Jesus said to that father, "*All things are possible for one who believes.*" Yes, all things are possible simply because nothing, nothing is impossible with Jesus Christ. And, having the faith, the trust, the Holy Spirit has instilled fully in our hearts, this is such a reality in our lives that our hearts overflow with joy assured the same Lord who never held back from meeting our greatest need, never turns away from hearing all other needs.

Yes, friends, we trust, we believe the Lord that what He says is true. And, what He says, can and will never perish, but remains with us to this day.

It's amazing friends, we never knew what our greatest need of forgiveness and salvation was until our Lord God promised to us that it was taken care of. He fulfilled that need before we even had the awareness that we had that need. What a comfort to us, that we also knows all our others needs before we do, and still provides in a way that is eternal best for each of us.

His Word friends, that is how He is with us. He is the Word, and He remains with us faithfully, fully, and never partially. Amen.