

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost  
Sermon text: Mark 7:24-37  
Date Preached: September 6, 2009  
Note: Wedding at 10:30 service

Grace to you and peace from God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN.

Throughout the Gospel of Mark we hear quite frequently Jesus saying “Tell no one.” Jesus cures a man from being deaf and the first thing this man hears from Jesus is “Tell no one.” Jesus enables a man to talk for the first time and all this man can do is exactly what Jesus tells him not to do. He tells everyone what Jesus has done.

So I wonder, are we so eager? For some we struggle to share our experience with God. Why? I wonder if in our experiences we don't make the connection to what is happening in our very midst and seeing that as God at work. And today may be a perfect example.

(Connie and Martin, you will remember this day. This is a day that you will certainly tell others about. There is another couple here who will remember this day, but I can't say who because their kids don't want to be in trouble because I pointed it out.)

As a congregation we may remember this day as the Sunday in which we had a wedding take place during the worship service. That seems unusual. It does serve as a helpful reminder that weddings are indeed, worship services. Yes, attention is paid to the couple, but there is another person present who is not to be outshined. As it is with every worship service the focus is on God.

Each time we come together for worship we gather in the presence of God. In Word and Sacrament, Jesus Christ the Son of God shows up. When he showed up at the wedding in Cana as told in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus turned water into wine. That transformation was not the only or even the most significant aspect of the miracle.

What continues to abound and astound is the abundance of God's grace that flows. In the wedding at Cana Christ provided abundant wine, more than was needed. That is what Christ continues to do today.

In the Sacrament of Holy Communion, Christ uses simple gifts of bread and wine to convey to us the depth of God's grace and love for us. There is enough to fill us and more.

That is a story worth sharing. But do we? When people ask us what we did today, will we answer that question by saying, today people came together and Christ showed up to say he loves us? Will Christ in any way be part of how we answer that question?

That is a challenge for us. It is a challenge not only to share with others the presence of Christ in worship, but to help others see the presence of Christ in our lives through what is done.

The lame can walk in many cases with the help of prosthesis. There are many who can hear thanks to the help of hearing aids. The eyes of the blind are made to see a bit more clearly thanks to things like glasses or cataract surgeries. Yes, we are quick to give credit to advances in science. But I would say that in these ways, God is at work, continuing to help the blind to see, the deaf to hear and the lame to walk.

The Holy Spirit leads us from this place to meet the needs of God's children. Such is the flowing of His grace that carries us out enabling us to touch others with God's presence and abundant love. Our joy is to help people see that connection between what we do and what we believe.

God's relationship with us is built with grace. It has to be this way, because we are sinful human beings. Far too often we are the adulterous spouse breaking our marriage vows to God. What we deserve is to be cast aside, judged, convicted and sentenced.

Yet God responds with grace and mercy. In all our relationships, be it between husband and wife, parents and children, Christians and non-Christians, those with whom we agree on various issues and those with whom we disagree, we are called to live this grace and mercy.

So, what shall we say in witness to our experience today. Let's say the truth. Yes, there was a wedding and Christ showed up. Let's be bold enough to say that we came hungry and went away fed. Let's be bold enough to say, I experience God's grace who loves me in spite of my shortcomings, flaws and failings. And let us look beyond one another's faults, to be vehicles through which God's grace flows.

There is a lot to share from this Sunday, just as there is every day we gather for worship. And what we have to share first and foremost is the unconditional love of God. AMEN.