

Worship Resources

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

- Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23
- Psalm 125
- Isaiah 35:4-7a
- Psalm 146
- James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17
- Mark 7:24-37

Sermon Starter

The lectionary readings for this 15th Sunday after Pentecost listed above each articulate a need and a response for healing. Within each lesson can be found a sickness or malady that represents brokenness in the physical body and metaphorically bearing resemblance to brokenness in the body of Christ. Reconciliation Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) advances Christ's call to unity in the body of believers (John 17:1) expressed as "a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world."

As you read through each lesson, you will find an illustration of our secular pull away from seeing the poor, the afflicted at the city gate, the blind and the deaf. Each lesson also admonishes us to reconsider *who* it is that we confer honor in our communities, worship houses and our personal residences. Yet, the Gospel lesson presents the most troublesome case against the tyranny of caste and class systems in which our anti-oppression work is grounded. A cursory reading of the selected text in Mark 7: 24 -37 describes the poor, indigent and disabled as less than whole members of society and culture. The woman who urgently seeks out Jesus at the unnamed home in Galilee requesting healing for her demon-possessed daughter is depicted as an outsider to the benefits of the community Jesus came to serve.

Mark is the gospel of urgency. For he believed that the darkness of his time was soon to be overcome by the return of Christ and the realization of God's realm on earth. Characteristic of Mark's rhetoric, he employs the use of the Greek 'euthus'

translating in our common language as immediately or straight away. The Syrophenician woman “straight away’ upon hearing Jesus was dining nearby, goes to the home to plead the case for her daughter.

Sermon Starter: “Sir even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” So says the Syrophenician woman to Jesus “immediately” in response to his quip “Let the children eat first for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” Are we to believe that race, nation of origin, zip code or apparel are indicators of who is welcome at the table? Which table do we distinguish as worthy of inclusion and service to all of God’s children: the Lord’s Table in worship and the Lord’s abundance in our industry and communities?