

Tenth Sunday Ordinary Time - B 2018
Gen. 3.9-15///2 Cor. 4.13-5.1///Mark 3.20-35

- throughout his ministry, Jesus was often accused of many things
- he was once called a glutton because he ate forbidden food on the Sabbath
 - and a wine-toaster because he changed water into wine
- he was charged with being an insurrectionist...which ultimately led to his death on the cross
- he was accused of being a friend of sinners...of interacting with the untouchables...of encouraging the people to go against the teachings of their faith....
 - and in today's gospel reading, Jesus is faced with two more accusations
 - the first comes at the hands of his own family: *"when his relatives heard of this they set out to seize him for they said....he is out of his mind!"*
 - and the second comes from his foes –the scribes: they said, *"he is possessed...that by the prince of demons drives out demons."*
- now the first accusation might be considered somewhat understandable
 - in fact in some instances we could even agree with it
 - Jesus did say some radical things that would lead one to think he was a bit off the wall...things like *"love your enemies....forgive 70 times 7 times....if you have the faith of a mustard seed you could tell this mountain to move and it would...I will rebuild this temple in three days...this is my body and blood and so on"*
 - pretty radical statements...**THAT** certainly might and "in fact did" make the people of his time wonder about his sanity

→the second accusation however, is a bit more intense

→it comes from his enemies....and they charge him with using evil to accomplish good

→they attempt to make the case that Jesus was using evil, in fact they even state....by the prince of evil <the devil> he casts our evil

→to which Jesus responds by saying..... *"that is utter nonsense....how can Satan drive out Satan....a kingdom divided against itself is one that cannot stand....a house that is divided cannot stand and if Satan is divided...he cannot stand....that will be the end of them all."*

→however..... this accusation does give us an insight into human nature

→because quite often.....it is our nature to try to do the very same thing that J. is being accused of

→we often try to use evil to accomplish goodness

→and this happens in all aspects of life.....from the very young to the old

→two small children are playing together on the playground...one strikes the other...the other strikes back...and shortly they are rolling on the ground...beating each other up

→two junior high school girls don't like each other and so they begin their crusade against each other calling each other names...spreading rumors....on social media

→likewise with adults we see this happen as well, especially when we try to break the heart and will others by means of biting and bitter insults

→how often do we find ourselves saying things like

→"I'm not apologizing, let him say something first"

→"I'm not calling her...she started it...she's the one who said this and that....."

→"it will be a cold day in (hell) before I speak to them again...and when I do I am going to give them a piece of my mind"

→even nations and country's engage in similar behavior, when two nations beat their plowshares into swords and send off their young to fight battle after battle....

PAUSE

→no doubt.....there are moments when life implodes on us....weighed down by broken relationships....disheartening disappointments...failing health...career crises of all types...that sometimes leads to even struggle to put one foot in front of the other...

→as someone once said... "life, by definition, wears us down skirmish by skirmish

→and in the midst of all this ---is the age old superstition that somehow evil can be conquered by more evil...and lead to goodness

→yet in today's gospel J. tells us differently

→when two wrongs come together, they never give birth to a right

→when bitterness is countered with bitterness, it only leads to more bitterness

→and.....when hatred is met with hatred, it sows the seeds of continuing hatred.

PAUSE

→the message of Jesus to us today, and in fact his message throughout his life and is that this

KIND OF THINKING AND ACTION IS NOT THE ANSWER

→that is what Jesus meant when he said to turn the other cheek

→and that is what Jesus means today, when he says....how can Satan expel Satan?

PAUSE

→the point of today's gospel, and the message before us is very simple

→we will never reach the right destination by taking the wrong road

→if our aim in life is to accomplish good and to cast out evil....to leave the world a little better than we found it.....then that means we are to live as Jesus lived and taught

→and in simple terms it means turning the other cheek rather than striking back

→it means forgiving one another rather than holding grudges and resentments

→it means using soft words rather than answering with the harsh ones

and it means repaying hurt with kindness

PAUSE

→in simple terms....Jesus' message to you and me today is that....evil cannot be conquered by more evil

→in the history of the world two wrongs has never produced a right

→it just doesn't work...that way.... and....

----maybe.... it's time for you and me to stop trying to make it work

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