

Pentecost 19 9/30/18
 Mark 9:38-50 21B

JOHN SAID TO HIM, “TEACHER, WE SAW SOMEONE CASTING OUT DEMONS IN YOUR NAME, AND WE TRIED TO STOP HIM, BECAUSE HE WAS NOT FOLLOWING US. BUT JESUS SAID, “DO NOT STOP HIM, FOR NO ONE WHO DOES A MIGHTY WORK IN MY NAME WILL BE ABLE SOON AFTERWARD TO SPEAK EVIL OF ME.”

P. 322 {LSB}: What is the 9th Commandment?

What does this mean?

What is the 10th Commandment?

What does this mean?

Contentment. That’s what God is teaching us in these two Commandments. We are to have a holy heart, content with the life and talents and abilities and opportunities God has given us. Why do we need to learn God’s gift of contentment? Because jealousy is a green-eyed monster. And, boy oh boy, do we see that in John this morning.

Sitting at house in Capernaum, John, the disciple Jesus loved, a member of Jesus’ inner circle, one of the sons of Thunder, turned to Jesus and said, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us (v. 38).” You know why John would say that; why he would be filled with jealousy. Recall your Gospel reading from Mark’s Gospel these past Sundays.

Jesus had sent the twelve and sent them out two by two, “and gave them authority over the unclean spirits”. And the Evangelist tells us “they cast out many demons” (Mk 6:7,13). Jesus and the disciples travel to Caesarea Philippi, where Peter confesses Him to be the Christ and He foretells His death and resurrection for the first time. Peter and James and John accompany Him to the high mountain where He is transfigured before them. No doubt John’s moaning and complaining about Mr. Someone’s

casting out demons is fueled by John's and the Eleven's failure on that very day Jesus was transfigured. The father of a demon-possessed son brought his son to the disciples and begged them to cast the demon out. It was a nasty situation. John and the Eleven had the authority, they had the power from Jesus, and they were not able to cast that demon out of the boy. But this Mr. Someone, who was certainly a Christian, or he would not be able to cast our demons in Jesus' name, this guy is casting demons out of people morning, noon, and night

And, John is not content. He is filled with jealousy. Who does this guy think he is? He is not one of the twelve. He was not sent out 2x2 by Jesus, with authority over demons. He was not one of the inner circle who saw Jesus transfigured on the mount. He was not there sitting with Jesus in the house in Capernaum. But, John was. And John is. And, he – who had just witnessed our Lord's transfiguration on the mount – could not cast the demon from that boy. And more than that, Jesus would not stroke his ego by telling him he was His favorite, the greatest of the twelve.

Are you beginning to see why John is so upset, so bent out of joint over this guy? This guy is doing that John couldn't quite do and John is jealous. Do you understand? I think you can, because you've been there, done that.

I. Jealousy is a green-eyed monster for John, and it is for us, too. The wife God has given you is kind of boring, but that woman in the magazine, on that website, she would make you feel good about yourself, and you covet. Jealousy! You want a new boat, but you have to spend your money on medicine, and then your neighbor goes and buys the Queen Mary. Jealousy! Your neighbor's kid got to start on the sport's team, and your kid got picked up by the police, so you had to pick them up at the police

station! Jealousy! Your neighbor has more money, drives a newer, fancier pickup, even hits the golf ball farther than you do. Jealousy!

Jealousy rises up within us and we find ourselves saying to Jesus what John said to Jesus, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to stop him because he wasn’t following us”. Jealousy is a green-eyed monster, My Friends. It is breaking the 9th and the 10th Commandments. And, it is not God-pleasing.

II. But, the Good News of the Gospel is that Jesus’ love is the complete opposite of our sinful jealousy. Jesus’ love knows no bounds. It’s not limited to just us and our happy band who always agrees with us. He says so Himself, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (JN 3:16). Paul proclaims this great news, “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all” (1 Tim 2:5-6). On Calvary’s cross, that love was poured out for the entire world. The Father gave His Son, and His Son, Jesus Christ, gave Himself as a ransom for all people, from sin, death, and from the power of the devil. He purchased and won you back from sin, even the sin of jealousy, by His dying and rising for you. The Christian faith means that whoever believes Jesus died and rose from them receives the same blessings – the forgiveness of sins, everlasting life, and eternal life.

Our lesson before us this morning raises a most interesting question for us: Did John ever come to a point in his life when he was able to look at Mr. Someone as he was casting out those demons and say, “I rejoice and am glad Jesus is working through that person”? We don’t know. The text does not tell us. But perhaps the reason why the text does not tell us is because that question is being answered in the heart of everyone who

hears the story of John and Mr. Someone. Well, you've heard the story? What do you say?

III. The Bible says that we not only weep with those who weep, we rejoice with those who rejoice. We can do that in our Christian life because God, who began His good work in you in the new birth of your baptism, continues to do His work in you through the Means of Grace. You have died to sin, including the sin of jealousy. That means living in Christ, there is no jealousy in any of your thoughts, your words, your deeds. And, in Christ, being Christ to your neighbor, you rejoice and are glad in the blessings, the talents, the abilities, the gifts that God gives to your neighbor and the works that God does through your neighbor.

What Jesus means when He says, "Do not stop him, for no one who does a might work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me" is this: His love knows no bounds. And when His children do a good work in Jesus' name that serves their neighbor, when they do not blaspheme Jesus, when their thoughts, words, and deeds are in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, that it is time not to be jealous of your brother or sister in Christ. That is a time to rejoice and be glad that they are doing a good work for Jesus.