

Pentecost 15, 6/9/2015, Holy Trinity

Mark 7:24-37

Let your imagination take you to another time and place.

The whole congregation have been offered a trip in Dr. Who's Tardis. We can all fit in because it is bigger on the inside than the outside.

We land in the countryside around Tyre and Sidon on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

This part of the experience is not fiction: this is for real: this is part of history

We find Jesus, walking around the countryside, hoping to escape notice.

Every so often he stops in a village or house in some kind of random selection.

In these places word soon gets around and before you know it he is casting out demons, healing the sick and enabling the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.

No wonder Jesus could not escape being noticed.

Also, at this time the sick, the maimed, the disabled were treated as outcasts.

The belief at the time was that sickness of any kind was God's judgement upon the person. Hence they were treated as outcasts from society by society.

Remember, also, that some of the areas to which Jesus went were occupied by Gentile people as is this area around Tyre and Sidon where Jesus met the Greek woman with the demon possessed child.

In this conversation some people see Jesus as being rude when he says "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' But she answered him, 'Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.' Then he said to her, 'For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.'"

In understanding this we look at the culture of the day.

The Jews regarded themselves as the Chosen People of God and the Gentile world as 'dogs' or second rate.

Jesus is saying that he is to feed the Jews first and then the people of the Gentile world.

He is travelling outside his 'comfort zone', outside of the box of Galilee

But for all who came to Jesus for healing, Jews and Gentiles, there is only one thing that is necessary, **to ask**.

There were no "ifs or buts", no conditions applied.

This is a powerful reminder that God's love is showered upon all of us, whether we have earned it or not and let's face it we have all sinned and fallen short of God's will for us.

Yet God still loves us and when we have Good News like this we cannot help ourselves, we need to share God's love with other people.

To return to Jesus' travels.

In this second incident, Jesus moves even further from his Galilean base and in which he echoes the same theme.

He takes the deaf man aside, away from the crowd and performs the requested cure.

Finally, he tells everyone to keep quiet about it but they tell the news far and wide.

Here is the Gospel: the love and power of God is present among us and it cannot be contained even when we do not understand it fully.

Now we take the return trip in the Tardis to the present time and place.

So then, what is in this trip for us?

First, there is God's love and presence within us as individuals and our response to this is our love for God and other people.

Secondly, is an invitation to move outside our boundaries or comfort zone and to open our ears to hear the messages that we are unwilling or unable to hear?

Thirdly, can you see God present and working in your life and are you willing and able to share the good news of your experience of God with others?