

Sermon for the 7th Sunday after Pentecost (B), Proper 11, 23vii2006, 08:30, 10:00  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saint James the Apostle / Brogue, Pennsylvania  
Holy Eucharist / Ante-Communion Liturgy, LBW Setting 2  
Jeremiah 23:1-6, Psalm 23, Ephesians 2:11-22, Mark 6:30-34,53-56

J. J. !

Grace to you and peace from Him Who is and Who was  
and Who is to come! ✠ Amen.

And wherever He went,  
into cities or villages or farms,  
they laid the sick in the marketplaces,  
and begged Him that they might touch  
even the fringe of His cloak;  
and all who touched it were healed.

-- Mark 6:56

The eyes of the whole world have been focused on a certain border this week. Borders change over history. In Jesus' day, the ethnic and religious border between Jews and Gentiles ran right through the Sea of Galilee. In Capernaum, home town to Peter, James and John, Jesus had been in His own Jewish homeland. In Gennesaret, on the other side of that great inland sea, it would have been like crossing from Israel into Lebanon today, only

without the tanks and rockets. Whether in Capernaum or in Gennesaret, whether in the Jewish world—a world that made sense to Jesus and His Disciples—or in the strange Greek and Armenian and Arab world of that 'Galilee of the Gentiles' on the far side of the sea, Jesus was recognized. Even there, the power of God to heal, to forgive, to make whole, the love of God with a human touch, the Word of God with a human voice, was recognized and people, responded by faith in their thousands.

If today's Gospel does not move you to tears of joy, then I cannot think what would. The scene it describes moves us so, especially when we consider where it takes place and what is happening there as we speak.

LORD JESUS CHRIST, SON OF DAVID, SON OF MARY, SON OF THE LIVING GOD, COME TO

THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND OF YOUR BIRTH!  
CALM THEIR FEARS AND HATREDS, PASS  
AMONG THEM TODAY AS YOU DID THEN,  
ALLOWING THEM TO TOUCH THE HEM OF  
YOUR GARMENT. LISTEN TO THEM AND TALK  
TO THEM. LET THEM BRING TO YOU THEIR  
TORN BODIES AND THEIR BROKEN HEARTS, AND  
LET THEIR WARRING CEASE! One cannot help but  
cry out to Him Who moved across boundaries others might  
not or would not cross, among all the descendants of  
Abraham and all the children of Eve.

Today's Gospel is an interesting text, looked at  
from another point of view. What neither Cæsar nor  
Herod could accomplish was done by Jesus, simply by  
getting in a boat and sailing in it from the Jewish side to  
the Gentile side of the Sea of Galilee. He united all of the

people, *all* of them, neither by force nor by fear but by truth and by love. Weren't Herod Antipas and Pontius Pilate on that first Good Friday when, Saint John tells us, they became friends and congratulated each other on putting *that* threat out of the way.

But their plans to continue dominating the world in the same old way were spoiled three days later. The love of God, the truth of God's Kingdom of mercy and the power of God in Jesus Christ to heal what is broken, to traverse closed borders, to make of enemies friends, refuses to be killed. Instead, that love and that truth rose and rises from the death of our stupid hatreds, rises both to shame us and to claim us as brothers and sisters.

What borders are *we* afraid to cross! Thanks be to God, none of us I know of has loved ones trapped

behind the closed borders of a war zone. But are there those whom *we* keep behind the frontiers of our hearts and minds, refusing to allow those who have harmed our persons or our pride even to approach the crossing point into our lives, happily safe from their words and deeds? And what do they think of *us* on their side of the border? Wherever we look upon others, *any* others, as best not thought of, we are closer to the Arab-Israeli conflict than we might wish to admit.

O LORD JESUS CHRIST, COME AND DISARM OUR HEARTS AND MINDS AND OUR BITTER TONGUES WITH YOUR WISDOM AND WIT THAT LOOKS INTO THE HEARTS OF ALL. COME AND SPEAK TO US THROUGH YOUR EVERLASTING WORD, REMEMBERED, TAUGHT AND SUNG IN YOUR HOLY CHURCH. CHRIST

IMMANUEL, GOD-WITH-US, COME WITH YOUR HEALING AMONG US AND THEM, THAT WE ALL MAY BE ONE WITH YOU AND THE FATHER AND YOUR ALL-HOLY SPIRIT! ✠ Amen.



Now to Him Who love us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, and has made of us a kingdom, priests to Our God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. ✠ Amen.

**S. D. G. !**