

ORDINARY TIME – 2nd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

RECOLLECTING OURSELVES FOR WORSHIP

Music (please use this time for quiet and reflection)

Gong [followed by silence]

Call to Worship

Hymn – 455 (verses 1 & 6)

Opening Prayer

OUR HUMANNESS AND GOD'S GRACE

Call to Confession

Unison Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, sometimes I feel insecure. I know this because I get defensive when someone expresses disapproval or disagreement with me, and then I implode. I get very uncomfortable when this awareness intrudes, so much so that I reject it by focusing on something else. I believe you do not hold against me this need I have to flee from this feeling. I believe this because you bring the experience of insecurity back again, and in the process teach me about myself. As the experience of feeling insecure becomes more real to me I find I occasionally remain open to it, and in these times I become more accepting of myself as an insecure person. I become sympathetic toward the ways I cope with the experience. There are other times when I feel insecure and then belittle myself for feeling that way; I pressure myself to overcome it and grow up. When this happens I get caught in feeling insecure, accusing myself of being childish. These are two different ways of responding to feeling insecure. Help me pay attention to the difference when a choice between the two is possible for me.

Personal Prayer of Confession in Silence

Assurance of Pardon

LISTENING FOR THE WORD OF GOD

Story for the Children

Scripture – Mark 3:20-35

Prompting

Silence and Reflection

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Hymn – 360 (verses 1, 3, 5)

Announcements

Minute for Mission

Our Gifts and Offerings

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ all creatures here below;  
Praise Holy Spirit, Comforter;  
One God, Triune, whom we adore. Amen.

The Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us in the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.

GOING OUT – to serve, to journey, to live the word

Hymn – 539

Charge and Benediction

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

TODAY	10:00	Worship
	11:00	Coffee and Fellowship
	11:20	Conversation
	12:00	Lunch Bunch

Lectionary Readings for June 14, 2015

1 Samuel 15:34—16:13; Psalm 20;

2 Corinthians 5:6-10 (11-13) 14-17; Mark 4:26-34.

F.Y.I.

In the coffee room are copies of an article: *Imaging God: Jesus and God*. It is chapter four of *The God We Never Knew*, by Marcus Borg. The article is offered as part of an ongoing conversation around the question: Was Jesus God? There are also four copies of the book, all of which are for sale for \$14.50. Checks should be made out to Faith Presbyterian Church. Mark the Memo: Book.

Ushers: Jim Plein and Richard Egan.

Faith Presbyterian Church, 190 Arlen Dr., Rohnert Park CA 94928

Church Office: 707-795-6620

Our web site is <[www.faithpresbyterianrp.org](http://www.faithpresbyterianrp.org)>

Elders: Marolyn Bode, Jim Plein, Karen Kessel.

Deacons: Richard Egan, Mary Jane Beccaria, Wanjiru Muthamia.

Clerk of Session: Marolyn Bode.

[H] 585-8350

Pastor: Jim Robie

[C] 291-8489

**We are a community that gathers in an attitude of reverence directed toward God.**

**Reverence is a feeling of deep respect and devotion, of profound awe, of admiration and esteem and honor, of gratitude.**

**This feeling arises from the experience of knowing that it is not possible to be separate from the welcoming and embracing presence of God, who is with us in anything and everything that life brings us, always accepting how we feel and what we think, always working to help us inhabit what is true for us, always helping us fashion the most fully human response possible for us as concerns what our life contains.**

**If you are able to enter this worship experience in a reverential manner, you are encouraged to immerse yourself in the experience.**

**If you are not able to do so, you are encouraged to consider that being truthful to your experience is a way of showing reverence to God who invites you to explore the value of the way you feel in your life and about your life. You are also invited to ponder with us our conceptions about God, looking for more adequate ways to understand God and how God personally companions and supports us in all things.**

**Welcome!**

## Ordinary Time – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

(Mark 3:20-35)

The Church Year describes the actions God takes to bring us the fullest human life possible for us. Said differently, it describes the work done by God to take material in our unconscious and raise it into our consciousness, so that what has not been in our awareness enters our awareness and remains there where it can be explored and used. There is an assumption operating here, which stated inversely is that human life is not about the perfecting and honing of only certain attributes of our life which we and others value. Human life is about the discovery and integrating of whatever is true of us, so that more of who we actually are is appropriated over time and is used in helping us live. This includes what we like about ourselves and what we dislike, what we find useful and what we think of as useless: the fullness of our particular human life.

Christianity defines God in terms of this work. The Trinity describes God as a reality that interacts with us in three different and related ways, each doing one part of the work described above, and all together bringing us the experience of the fullness of our human life. One aspect of God (Father/Mother) parents us in the sense of supporting, encouraging, guiding, correcting, companioning and enjoying us as we live. The experience of this comes to us as thoughts, feelings, perceptions and insights which assist us in moving through our life. A second aspect of God (Son/Christ) inhabits our life with us and presents to our awareness different facets of our life which were discouraged and lost or were never developed as we grew up. These also come to us as feelings and thoughts, insights and perceptions, which are not necessarily wanted and which intrude into our awareness. These are then removed by us from our awareness, and then are returned to our awareness by Christ. By this repetitive process we become familiar with something that is true of us as well as the reasons it should not be true. The third aspect of God (Holy Spirit) helps us remember what we have learned from the second aspect of God, and then helps us explore and use it in our living. Eventually, what we did not know about ourselves becomes part

of our understanding and definition of the person we are. Our life becomes fuller.

The work of the second and third aspects of God always seems insane, especially at the beginning when Christ is introducing us to something we have learned should not be true of us. If we take the description in the text literally, it would be fairly accurate to our experience: as Christ introduces us to aspects of our life that we think should not be part of us, it will seem as though he is “casting out demons,” that is “ejecting” from the place where it has been residing what seems to us to be “a spirit of a bad nature” [demon]. The Greek is more colorful when it says of Christ “He has Beelzebul.” Beelzebul is a name referring to a “dung god,” so the Greek is saying either that Christ is full of “crap,” or that what Christ does is “crap.” Even if we do not say this, it will be close to what we think when faced with aspects of our life we should not be feeling and thinking. Borrowing a word from the text, our thinking and feeling in this way is us “blaspheming” Christ. The word translated as “blaspheme” is a Greek word meaning “vilify,” vilify meaning to “To make vicious and defamatory statements about....” We vilify Christ, especially in the beginning; our attitude toward what Christ does is hostile and disparaging.

The word translated as “Satan” is a Greek word meaning “the accuser.” The aspects of our life which Christ introduces to us will evoke our critical side, and we will feel criticized when they are in our awareness. In the truest sense we will be and feel accused of missing the mark. It is easy to link Christ and our internal accusatory presence, and to mistakenly believe these two are the same. An objection to this idea is raised in the text in the form of a question: How can our internal accusatory presence bring anything to awareness if all it does is be accusatory? An internal accusatory environment divides us, it does not unify us, and in such an environment anything hidden from awareness will stay hidden. If we think of the unconscious as a “strong man” and we want to take something out of the unconscious, it will be necessary to “bind” it [“tie it up” in the text], which internally is done by bonding with it. This is accomplished by adopting a receptive and open attitude toward the content of the unconscious, as

compared to an accusatory and judgmental attitude. I am not certain we can plunder [take by force] the content of the unconscious, but a receptive attitude toward its content certainly grants an easier access to its content.

Blaspheming Christ, that is making “vicious and defamatory statements about” Christ and the work Christ does, is a large part of how the work of bringing us the fullness of our life is accomplished. We need to learn about the ways we are against the thoughts and feelings brought to us by Christ. Any judgment against us for the hostile way we act toward Christ and the work he does, any judgment for the way we think and feel about Christ and the work he does, is “forgiven” [sent forth] since our hostility is what needs to become known to us. The way we experience “forgiveness” is as our own accusatory voice diminishing as we become more familiar with the thoughts and feelings we actually have, and as we become better acquainted with the reasons we should not be having them.

It is a different story when it comes to blaspheming the third aspect of God, the Holy Spirit. According to the text: “...whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin...” The Greek is different and more helpful. The word translated as “forgiveness” in this verse is the Greek word meaning “freedom,” and the text says: a person who vilifies [makes vicious and defamatory statements about] the Holy Spirit will never get hold of freedom, but is vulnerable to being ensnared in a condition of perpetual judgment, that is in a mind that is constantly evaluating and judging. The Holy Spirit is the aspect of God that helps us remember what Christ has shown us, and then assists us in thinking it through and making it part of who we are. If we bad-mouth this activity, if we value it negatively, we will remain in the state of mind where we continue to moralize on what Christ has shown us; there will be no freedom from this moralizing, no freedom from this evaluating state of mind where we are constantly deciding whether something is good or bad, right or wrong. When we are ensnared in this state of mind we can never integrate the feelings and

thoughts Christ has brought us, so we will not make peace with them, and we will not discover their value to us.

The people who choose to cooperate with this way God discloses and unpacks the unconscious, and who practice it in the way they relate to themselves and others, are members of the family of God.

[Jim Robie, 6-3-15, Cycle B, John 3:20-35]