

Coffee to Go | Fifth Sunday of Epiphany

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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SPEAKERS

Blake Smith, Karin Peter

Karin Peter 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the scriptures, seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. So where are we with Jesus this week? This week is the fifth Sunday after the Epiphany. And we are still in Galilee, where we have attended synagogue, and after services or after church, if you will, we're all going to go home to Simon and Andrew's house. And they're in Simon and Andrew's home, Jesus begins a ministry of healing and I can't help but think of all the times I've traveled around the church, shared in church, and then some family graciously takes me home, and shares a meal with me and we share around the table. So it's kind of that feeling here with Jesus at Simon and Andrew's.

Blake Smith 01:28

You know, I love that we have the technology that we have, and the things that we're able to do now. But that's one of the things that I miss, with, at least here in the Chicago Mission Center where I am, and we're doing weekly hybrid worship, that a lot of people are already at home, and there aren't as many people gathered. And we often miss that opportunity to just go to each other's homes and, and share in a meal. So we just pack it up, pack up the equipment and, and move on with the day. So that's an important thing to maybe pick back up in some way, so.

Well, our passage today comes from the Gospel of Mark, it's the first chapter and the 29th through the 39th verse...

As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, then the fever left her and she began to serve them. That evening at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons, and the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak because they knew him. In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place. And there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. And when they found him, they said to him, "everyone is searching for you." He answered, "let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message they're also for that is what I came out to do." And he went throughout Galilee proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

We think about this scripture today, and why it matters. What really matters here, and it's often the case actually, with Jesus. But he models some things here that are really important for us, as disciples and as ministers in our own way. First of all, Jesus model's compassion. You know, there was so much pain and suffering in this. The whole town gathered, I just get this image in my mind of, you know, hopefully, it wasn't too large of a town. But I can just see hundreds of people swarming around this waiting for their place in line, because of the pain and suffering. And, it's not too different from where we are today in our own time and place. But person after person hears of these healings that he's doing, and they bring their sick and suffering. And so these crowds have formed, and Jesus engages, in the midst of his visit to Simon and Andrews house, he takes time to offer compassion and to provide healing, to cast out spirits. That was what mattered most for the well being of the people. And so that was what mattered most to Jesus.

Karin Peter 04:45

Blake I want to tail on that a little bit because I think as a female, when I read this story, what catches my attention and it goes along with that as the beginning where it says, They told him that Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and he came in took her and lifted her up and healed her. And she jumps up and begins to serve them. I want to clarify in that, that that is out of compassion. They told Jesus that she was sick, so that he would know there was illness in the home for one, which you would do with any guest, let them know that there's illness in the home. But he didn't heal her so she would jump up and serve. That's not why they, that's not why they brought it to Jesus' attention. But as a healed person, she was both grateful and obligated by her culture to serve. So I just want to call that out that it reads in a way that's really kind of uncomfortable. But if, if we remember that it was out of compassion Jesus heals, not because they needed the servant to be whole.

Blake Smith 05:47

I really appreciate, I and I laugh, because when I read the passage, in preparation for our episode, I was like, Oh, that doesn't go over well. That's exactly the way it reads. And so, so thanks. Thanks for that clarification, I would not expect anything less. It's important for us to hear because there are no doubt folks who read that passage. And that's, you know, from the, from the masculine the male side and say, Well, you know, he healed her so she could do her job. No, no, no, no, that wasn't it. So thanks for that. That, again, the compassion that Jesus models is then returned out of gratitude for the healing, not out of obligation so. Another thing that Jesus models is self-care. And I'm the worst at this. I'm absolutely the worst at this. And I admit that, but he went out alone to pray. And it wasn't just a quick prayer, I would guess, because it says that they went out searching for him, he had been gone, if he just stepped outside for a minute or two, that'd be one thing. But he actually went out for a time of renewal and prayer. And so they had to come looking for him. And self-care, and I don't practice what I preach as much, but self-care is so important. And it's an important enough that Jesus took the time and and we also need to take time to take care of our own wellbeing so that we can be able to do the things that we're called to do as much as just honor this temple, if you will, this gift that God has given us, we have a stewardship over that as well.

Karin Peter 07:41

Well, there's a reality to that when you're involved with people all day, every day, there are times where you just need some alone time, I can't think of how many young mothers I talked to her. It's like, I just

need a few minutes. And I go into the bathroom and shut the door. So I don't have to answer a three year old's conversational questions anymore. But sometimes we just need some alone time to focus. And Jesus models that rule. Well,

Blake Smith 08:10

People are surprised when I say, Oh, I love this two and a half hour car ride I have across the Mission Center, because it's quiet, and I don't even turn on the radio. And they're like, how could you do that? You are just always go go go and you're an extrovert. I'm like, well, even that has its limits. Sometimes we just... I just so appreciate that quiet time. Where I can't answer the phone. I can't text, I'm driving. And again, I don't even turn on the radio. So yeah, that's probably where I do my most self-care. I should I should spend more time in the car. So the other thing that that Jesus models here that I just want to pick up on real quick is that Jesus models spiritual connectedness with God. Jesus does what only God can do. He heals, he casts out spirits. But he doesn't, the other thing is that he doesn't claim that as his rightful authority, nor does he seek acclaim for having done it. He's done what he needs to do, which is most important. He showed compassion, and he wants to offer service to people. But then he's ready to move on and leave to go on with his ministry. He probably could have stayed there and been really popular. People would give him all the praise and glory because of what he was doing. And yet that was not his purpose. His purpose was to serve and then he moved on so.

Karin Peter 09:40

So as a as a Seventy, I also have to look that there's a good model for there that I didn't realize it first, and that is that we don't wait for people to come to us to tell them the kingdom has come near we actually take that to the people and that proclamation that the kingdom has come near to you that that piece has come near to you. So an extra model, a bonus model in there that Jesus is doing.

Blake Smith 10:09

So some questions that we can ask ourselves, I think if we start with the self-care, which might feel uncomfortable, because we were supposed to be other-focused, but in order to be other-focused, we have to be in good shape ourselves. So we might ask ourselves, what needs to be healed in the am I willing to bring my need to the holy one? It's often the case that we think we need to just go and serve, or we might get that message. But, sometimes are we willing, we need to ask ourselves if we're willing to allow someone to be there for us, not even just the holy one, but the Holy One through someone else.

Karin Peter 10:56

There's a short prayer I learned when I was in high school from the Osage tradition, and it is "Here needy he stands. I am he."

Blake Smith 11:09

Yeah. Interesting. So another question is, do we take time for self-care?

Karin Peter 11:19

Yeah. Do we Blake?

Blake Smith 11:21

Hey, I've already come clean. I've already admitted that. I'm not good at that. No, I know, I, (but we are going to this week.) Yes. But we're going to this week, I guess I have to because it's going to be our experience for this week. Right. (Yep) So do we do we take time for self-care, or are we trapped in this rat race of busy, busy, busy? And yes, that is me? And I think, well, I'm doing good. So this is my spiritual practice. But I need quiet spiritual practice, too. So, in that vein, I would say what is a habit or practice that I need to engage, to establish more intentional self-care, rather than rationalizing all the reasons why I don't? And finally, I would ask, why, how am I connected to the creator and sustainer of life? We're counseled to be healthy in our relationship with God and ourselves and others, and the earth. So we need to ask ourselves, How are our relationships going in all of those arenas? And where do we need healing?

Karin Peter 12:31

Yeah, very reflective questions this week. So one way we can experience this both for Blake and myself and for you, our listeners, and that is this week, be intentional about your self-care. So work on breaking a habit. We all have them that we would like to get rid of. So take some time to look at that and what you might need to do to break a habit or, to establish a routine. Something that you you can begin to work on and remind yourself to do every day this week, whether it's eat healthy, or go to bed early, or adopt a spiritual practice, as Blake said. And if you're looking for some there are some really great ones for kids that you can do, no matter your age or as a family because they're really geared for children. And that's at allthingsarespiritual.org under spirituality for kids. At the end of the week, take some time to reflect on your sense of wellbeing and see what your next steps from this week might be. If you'd started a routine or broken a habit, how might you continue that vein in your own life? So that's what we've got for this week, Blake.

Blake Smith 13:53

All right, well, let's finish out with a blessing. And our blessing today is adapted from a poem by Stephanie Kaza.

Let go of the place that holds. Let go of the place that flinches. Let go of the place that controls. Let go of the place that fears. Just let the ground support you. Listen, the wind is breathing in the trees. Sense the edge of soft and hard. Follow the unseen path. Walk in the dark night. Practice faith. Build confidence in the unknown. Walk in the dark night. Practice courage. Accept the vastness of what you cannot see.

Thanks to everyone for joining us here today at coffee to go we invite you to join us next time again for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.