|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The Lessons Appointed for Use on the** | http://www.lectionarypage.net/Art/Newshield.gif |
| Sunday closest to June 8 |
| Proper 5 Year B RCL |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Track 1*** |  |  |
| 1 Samuel 8:4–20, 11:14-15 Psalm 138 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1 Mark 3:20-35 |  |  |

**The Collect**

O God, from whom all good proceeds: Grant that by your inspiration we may think those things that are right, and by your merciful guiding may do them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen*.

**Old Testament**

**1 Samuel 8:4--20, 11:14-15**

All the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, “You are old and your sons do not follow in your ways; appoint for us, then, a king to govern us, like other nations.” But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to govern us.” Samuel prayed to the Lord, and the Lord said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. Just as they have done to me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so also they are doing to you. Now then, listen to their voice; only—you shall solemnly warn them, and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.”

So Samuel reported all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a king. He said, “These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots; and he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his courtiers. He will take one-tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and his courtiers. He will take your male and female slaves, and the best of your cattle and donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take one-tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the Lord will not answer you in that day.”

But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; they said, “No! but we are determined to have a king over us, so that we also may be like other nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles.”

Samuel said to the people, “Come, let us go to Gilgal and there renew the kingship.” So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal. There they sacrificed offerings of well-being before the Lord, and there Saul and all the Israelites rejoiced greatly.

**The Response**

**Psalm 138**

***Confitebor tibi***

1 I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart; \*  
before the gods I will sing your praise.

2 I will bow down toward your holy temple  
and praise your Name, \*  
because of your love and faithfulness;

3 For you have glorified your Name \*  
and your word above all things.

4 When I called, you answered me; \*  
you increased my strength within me.

5 All the kings of the earth will praise you, O Lord, \*  
when they have heard the words of your mouth.

6 They will sing of the ways of the Lord, \*  
that great is the glory of the Lord.

7 Though the Lord be high, he cares for the lowly; \*  
he perceives the haughty from afar.

8 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe; \*  
you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies;  
your right hand shall save me.

9 The Lord will make good his purpose for me; \*  
O Lord, your love endures for ever;  
do not abandon the works of your hands.

**The Epistle**

**2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1**

Just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—“I believed, and so I spoke” —we also believe, and so we speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

**The Gospel**

**Mark 3:20-35**

The crowd came together again, so that Jesus and his disciples could not even eat. When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, “He has gone out of his mind.” And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.” And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

“Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”— for they had said, “He has an unclean spirit.”

Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.” And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

As much as we can feel so very connected to God, God still gives us free will. When the people of Israel tell Samuel that they want a king, this seems like a baffling decision. Along the lines of teenagers who want to be doing what everyone else is doing, the people of Israel want a king because every other nation has one. Now to be fair, if you have read the book of Judges (which we don’t read very often in the lectionary). the time of Israel under judges was less than desirable. And Eli’s sons as well as Samuel’s sons are just less than morally upright judges. We almost can’t hold it against Israel to want a King versus judges. Still Samuel couches his argument against having a king in what all that will mean for the people, “These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, .… He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his courtiers. He will take one-tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and his courtiers. …And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the Lord will not answer you in that day.”

…, but at the root of this argument it is clear that Samuel is concerned thtat the people are putting something else ahead, specifically someone else leading them instead of God. You make this choice and God will not answer you.

Just like in days of old, God lets us do this. God hears that his people want a king and God isn’t threatened. It’s going to be okay. Then and now we can consistently put things ahead of God. We can want a king. We can put our work ahead of God,. We can put our savings for retirement ahead. We can put our vacations, we can put our family. We can put our recreation, we can do all these things, and God isn’t threatened. God seems to have infinite patience to let us turn around. As much as this flies in the face of the first commandment to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and soul… God says “sure, let them have their king.” It is the largeness of God, God’s infinite grace and love for humanity that allows God to do this. It never makes it right, but God allows us to mess up time and time again.

God is not threatened, and still God makes no beans about what is acceptable and what isn’t. If you want to be heard, you don’t put other things in front of God but God is still available. Where God does not allow us to transgress is AGAINST GOD, against the Holy Spirit. The Gospel reading is quite clear.

There is one thing that just will not wash, will not be tolerated. that is… We cannot be actively against God and expect it to be okay. Don’t call something evil, or dark or not of God.… If we aren’t sure whether something is righteous— if something is of God— , then it is best to keep our mouths shut and our heart open. What matters to God is that we don’t get in the way of God’s purposes. You can have your own purposes. What you can’t do is accuse the prophecy from God, the words of God as being something against God, of being demonic. On this one thing,…don’t be on the wrong side.

Now is the time to get on the side that will be victorious.

You can be Jesus’s family and think he isn’t right in the head.. (Of course, please remember that we know from elsewhere that Mary and James were all part of the Jesus movement, they were not actually against Jesus.) Jesus may have seemed a little rude to his family in this story, but more importatly in the Gospel lesson, Jesus broadens the concept of how we think about family. Your family is who has claims on you. Through Jesus, the human family has claims on you.

A house divided cannot stand. We are divided with factions, little subfamilies. Conversely, we know elsewhere in the bible that those who are not against us are for us. We have more in common than we think. Help us embrace and be kind to those who sin differetly than we do.

We don’t have to like what someone else does, but we DO have to recognize the God in each other. We do have to treat others with kindness. We don’t have to feel love for them it; we do have to show them love, we have to show them grace. We are one house, one nation, one world, the more factions we have, the less we can stand. In all honesty we are all from God. In the big scheme of things, as God shows us *hesed—* that loving kindnessor grace to each of us in spite of all our sins, we are to show others that same *hesed*—that same loving kindess or grace.

Then, and then only… what unites us, where the spirit is moving is love, loving kindess, grace.