

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Pentecost 5
Quincy, IL
p.m.
Rev. Martin R. Eden
a.m.

Saturday, June 22, 2013 at 5:00

Sunday, June 23, 2013 at 9:00

“From the Overflow of the Heart the Mouth Speaks”

Luke 8:26-39

How easy it seems to walk through the mall or drive down the street or go to dinner with your friends, look around and have a pretty good idea who is and who definitely is not going to be joining us in the heavenly realm? We all think it is easy to figure this out – especially when the outward appearance makes it so obvious.

Perhaps it is the way someone is dressed. But then, last week, we heard about the faith of the sinful woman who had been called to repentance. The prostitute; the notorious woman who had heard Jesus' words and washed His feet with her tears, received faith that saved her.

Simon the Pharisee looked like someone who should be worthy of a place in heaven – I am sure Simon and most of his guests would agree with that. But he was appalled that Jesus would allow this woman to touch Him and even doubted that Jesus could be a prophet, because it doesn't take a “prophet” to know what kind of woman she is. Everybody knows her.

Perhaps it is the way in which someone uses words that helps us to “separate the sheep from the goats.” Jesus says, “From the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.” And it is true that we are to produce good

words. This doesn't mean just avoiding the "bad" words that seem to get thrown around in the vain attempt to gain attention for what you have to say. Just, as an aside: if your other words aren't worthy of attention, throwing in profanity isn't going to help. As the old proverb says, "Vulgarity is the fool's attempt to appear wise."

We are to produce good words. When you read the previous verses in Luke chapter 8, Jesus tells the parable of the Sower. We know this one too well. Some seed falls on the path, on the rocks, in the weeds, and on the good soil. The seed is the Word of God. The Word of God sown on the good soil produces 30, 50, 100 fold. What does "seed" produce? It produces more seed. A kernel of corn is a seed that produces more corn. A grain of wheat is a seed that produces more wheat. The Word of God is a seed that causes the Word of God to spring forth in you so that from the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.

But even with the greatest of words or the worst of words coming out of someone's mouth, it is still not my job or your job to separate the sheep from the goats. My job and your job is to plant that seed.

Which brings us to the Gentile region of the Gerasenes. Jesus and the disciples step off the boat and are met by the last guy anyone would want to meet. He ran around naked, lived outside of the city and hung out in the caves where they buried their dead; we learn in Mark's Gospel that the local people had tried to bind him with chains and shackles, but he just broke them off.

He is possessed by demons and is strong and dangerous. This is the last guy anyone would think has a place in the kingdom of God. And when Jesus met him, he did not have a place in the kingdom of God. He was possessed, controlled by demons.

Jesus immediately commands the unclean spirit to come out of him, and the demon offers an interesting assessment of the situation. He acknowledges Jesus as the Son of the Most High God and begs Jesus not to torment him and cast him into the abyss. The demons know who Jesus is, and they know what is going to happen to them. Remember that hell is Satan's prison; it is not his kingdom. The demons know that they are already judged, but are loose in the world for a short time.

Then the demons ask if they can go into the herd of pigs (notice that they have to get permission). No matter how chaotic the world seems to be, Satan is not in control – God is. And the pigs run down the hill into the water and are drowned. And all the local people freak out and asked Jesus to leave – except for the man from whom the demons had departed.

He begs to go with Jesus. Jesus gives him a simple command, "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." From the overflow of your heart, let your mouth speak. The seed of the Word will produce more seed.

This man who was despised and dangerous is now filled with faith and he cannot hold in the words. Jesus told him to go and "declare how much God has done for you." And he went into the city and told

everyone “how much Jesus had done for him.” Because Jesus is God, this once despised and dangerous man has been completely changed. He has faith.

It is just like with the sinful woman at Simon’s house who responded to Jesus’ words and in her sorrow for her sin could not hold in her tears. Jesus says to her, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

In between these two events, Jesus and disciples take a boat ride. The crazy demon-possessed naked man wasn’t the first scary event of the day. On the boat ride, a fierce storm erupted and Jesus was sleeping in the back of the boat. We all know the story. The disciples freak out, wake Him up and say, “Master, we are going to die!”

Jesus calms the storm and says to them, “Where is your faith?” The sinful woman has faith – saving faith. The disciples see Jesus calm the storm and they ask, “Who is this that even the wind and the waves obey Him?” Jesus is God, and even the crazy naked man knew this once the seed of the Gospel was planted in him and he was filled with the abundance of what that seed produces.

And we see the result of that seed being planted. Regardless of your background, your past history, whatever sinful baggage you might think you are carrying. “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” Go and declare how much God has done for you. From the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. Amen.