

There is always a constant tension, that The Church is necessarily in the World, but not of the World. The church is a corporation, with internet communication, audits, property and financial concerns; we are at one and the same time citizens of the world and members of the body of Christ. We are to affect the culture, and not be limited by the culture. Where the Church focuses on Reconciliation, Hope, Compassion, Ethics, Worship - the World is about Profit, Power, Wealth, Success, Control and Winning.

There is an irony to today's Scriptures. GOD created the world; AND the world rejected GOD repeatedly. GOD gave the Covenant, freed the enslaved, gave Promised Land; for which GOD was rejected.

Jesus came to a home so popular he could not even eat; his family were embarrassed and rejected him, thinking he lost his mind! Jerusalem's teachers rejected him as Beelzebub, and Jesus tried to teach them.

Which leads to the passage from Samuel.

- In the history of the World, every ancient culture: The Mesopotamians with Hammurabi's Code, the Egyptians where RA created Pharaoh, the Babylonians with Marduk, The Romans' Caesar... In every Ancient Culture, the Gods chose to create a King or Queen to be GOD's human leader on the Earth, except our Old Testament where PEOPLE WANT TO MAKE A KING. Remnants of this continue, that ROYALTY are coronated by the CHURCH, the Religious Leader.
- According to Samuel, THEOLOGICALLY, Customs of COMMUNITY come into conflict with persons, families desiring to be a ROYAL CLASS, the accumulation of inherited wealth and power.
- At the same time, internal & external conflicts expose the POLITICAL weakness of TRIBAL SYSTEM.
- MILITARILY, the need for a POWERFUL Warrior, a Commander against the Philistines... all these coalesce, AND for the first time, a culture chooses to create their own Not-GOD-King.

No longer a Child, Samuel has been a great leader in Holy War, a Tribal Judge over the Nation, a Prophet speaking for GOD. BUT Samuel has sons, and tries to appoint them to lead, who are evil men, corrupted by the ways of the world. Samuel is put out, that the people do not want him, or his sons, but a King of their making.

GOD explains that the people are not rejecting Samuel as Prophet, Priest, Judge; they are rejecting GOD. Raising the question, what do we expect to owe a KING for being KING? When GOD is KING, we owe our LOYALTY, COMMITMENT above other authorities, our LIVES, COVENANT. When a MAN is KING, expect 1/10th of all you earn to go for TAXES, unquestioned LOYALTY, the KING may demand your SONS as Servants and Soldiers, your DAUGHTERS as Concubines, and The KING DECIDES what is JUSTICE.

GOD instructs Samuel: if people know this and choose it for themselves, they can reject GOD as KING, FREE WILL, GOD allows us to make our own mistakes. However, the remainder of the Books of 1st and 2nd SAMUEL & 1st and 2nd Kings will be about whom GOD accepts as KING. BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR.

In the Book of Mark, we also have a story of people who should have known to TRUST; choosing to REJECT. Here, the story is something of a Sandwich.

This was an ancient writing style called a CHIASM, where you introduce a story, then interrupt that with a 2nd story, all of which point to the real CLIMAX, which resolves the 2nd story, then the 1st story.

Jesus came to a HOUSE like his HOME, where just as in Samuel between GOD and the Nation, Jesus should have been trusted, welcomed and loved, but his Mother and Brothers went to restrain him! Because people were saying "he had gone out of his mind." Jesus was supposed to be HOME surrounded by his FAMILY, instead, his family rejected him wanting to RESTRAIN HIM.

That 1st story is interrupted by Scribes who came down from Jerusalem, claiming Jesus was possessed by Beelzebub in order to cast out demons. The subtlety of this is the issue of KING-ship, because BEELZEBUB is the Name of a particular DEMON, the KING OF FLIES. Not Lord of the Flies that is about Civilization & Chaos, instead this is about GOOD & EVIL.

2nd as religious leaders/teachers from Jerusalem, the Scribes should have treated Jesus as FAMILY and trusted, instead of rejecting and accusing. Rather than becoming angry Jesus TEACHES THEM IN PARABLES.

This Parable is what President Lincoln used in description of The Civil War, in reference to A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF. Jesus' Parable being that, if he is trying to help people, to cure ailments, then he cannot be ridding the house of demons if he himself were a Demon.

If wanting to enter the House of a Strong Man, you must first bind the Strong Man...

When dealing with any addiction or problem, no one else can take control from the outside.

The Strong Man in each of our Homes, IS US, and we have to come to decision that we value our relationship with our family, with GOD, with Democracy, with our sanity MORE than with the Addiction.

Years ago, I recall one Friday night when our dog began Barking seemingly for no reason. We had already been to Court once over this, so restrained the dog and went back to sleep. Coming downstairs Saturday morning, the kids were playing Videogames, Judy was making Coffee, and THERE WAS A YOUNG MAN ASLEEP ON THE COUCH, he was wearing a suit that was badly torn. I thought this odd, but I got him a cup of coffee, then woke him up. He said the night before had been his Sister's Wedding Rehearsal and the Groomsmen had gotten him drunk. He had grown up near here, so instead of trying to find the hotel, he had come in the back of what he remembered as his childhood friend's house. We made certain he was okay and sent him on his way. WORD TO THE WISE, Do not tell a Pastor you were at a Wedding Rehearsal... I phoned the other clergy in town, asking who had a wedding that afternoon. 20 minutes later the Catholic Priest, Father of the Bride and the young man were back in our house, making restitution for what he had broken. We said nothing to anyone, until the following Christmas season, when one of the College kids in the Church came to me Sunday morning stating that the story going through town, is that if Kids get into trouble, go to The Lindsey House, they won't call the Cops, they will make certain you are okay, and they will give you a cup of coffee. I decided that was a pretty good reputation for a local pastor to have.

Following up on the reference to Beelzebub casting out Demons, Jesus states that People can be forgiven all their sins, BUT WHOEVER BLASPHEMES AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT is guilty of an Eternal Sin. Because, while he is not Beelzebub casting out Demons, Jesus and Holy Spirit are ONE, therefore naming him Evil, they have blasphemed against GOD.

There actually is a concluding verse to this, which the Lectionary cut off. After answering the Religious Leaders, Jesus Mother and Brothers are described as standing outside the door of the house where Jesus is surrounded by those whom he had been ministering to. And Jesus responds that these who are surrounding him are his true family.