

<Children's Time>

Gospel lesson

We skip over to the Gospel of Mark today, a little after the beginning of Jesus' ministry.



picture screencaptured from
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIj41JJk7pg>;
credit: LUMO

Mark 2:23-3:6

(NRSV)

²³ One sabbath he was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain.

²⁴ The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?"

²⁵ And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food?

²⁶ He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions."

²⁷ Then he said to them, "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath;

²⁸ so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath."

^{3:1} Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was

there who had a withered hand.

² They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him.

³ And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come forward."

⁴ Then he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent.

⁵ He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

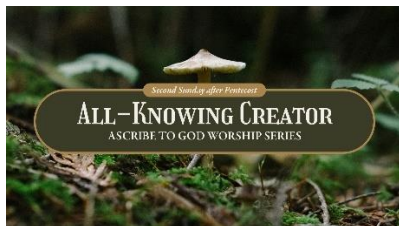
⁶ The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

The word of God for the people of God

<Hymn "Oh, I Know the Lord's Laid His Hands on Me"

TFWS #2139 vv.1,3,4>

Interactive Lesson/Message: All-Knowing Creator



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/ascribe-to-god/second-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/second-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-graphics>

Please pray with me?

All-Knowing Creator, as we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may learn to relate more fully with You and (in Your grace) with others. Amen.

We continue our “Ascribe to God” series with “All-Knowing Creator”:

“[P]erhaps being fearfully and wonderfully made is not just an affirmation, but an invitation – an invitation to dive deeper and deeper into knowledge of and relationship with God, self, one another, and all creation.”

How did God call on your heart this weekend (or week)? <Let them respond>

Did you recognize the call for what it was when you first heard it? <Let them respond>

Did anyone around you understand that you were being called or what you needed to do? <Let them respond>

Did anyone see the light of God shining in you? How (or why not)? <Let them respond>

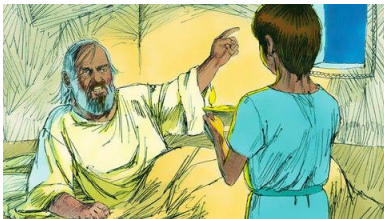


pictures from MMMS collection

There were a lot of people at the Annual Conference gathering this weekend. At times all that “people-ing” could be overwhelming. Yet there were places to take a moment to take a break – some official, some

less so. In the ladies' room, someone had placed sticky notes and pens, and a lot of us used them to write general notes of encouragement to one another, stuck to the mirror to be read while washing hands.

The notes were a fun pick-me-up each restroom break. "You are awesome!" "God loves you!" and such like. A few of the notes were written backwards, which confused at least one woman (until I showed her that she could turn it over and read it in the mirror). She was not in the habit of dealing with mirror writing.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/samuel-listens/>

Samuel did not understand the call from God at first, either, until Eli figured it out and explained to him what to do. God knows us, but we seem to have a hard time understanding God's call - especially when we are not in the habit of looking or listening for it.

The psalmist points out that God's "knowledge is too wonderful for" us and that God knows us very well, even from before we were born. Yet even though our Creator merits all awe and praise, God came to us as Jesus so that we could relate to and love Him.

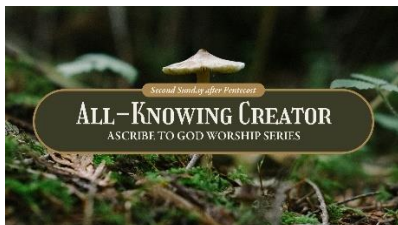


picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-synagogue/>

But the Pharisees in Jesus' day were not in the habit of looking for a peaceful, nurturing Messiah. Instead they became hard of heart with rules-mongering, even going so far as to reject that Jesus' healing miracle could be a sign from God when done on the Sabbath.

Jesus calls us to share God's love – as Paul referred to it, to “Let light shine out of darkness.” We have so much good within us, that love that we have for others, the desire for them to be well – yet we hide it behind our own desires or societal expectations, like the clay jars Paul talks about.

All that is good comes from God. Put aside Sin-driven expectations that you have for others, especially if they never agreed to meet those expectations. Trust our Creator, for they, like you, are fearfully and wonderfully made. Turn instead to Jesus, and let God's glory shine through you.



picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/ascribe-to-god/second-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-Lectionary-planning-notes/second-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-graphics>

Instead of dwelling upon what others fail to do, take time to observe what our awesome Creator has already done. Perhaps try a meditative exercise to invite the

Holy Spirit's presence to be more well known to you, or take a walk and give God thanks for something you after each step you take.

Once you have spent some time praising and calling to the Lord, take some time to *listen*. Practice listening to and responding to God, so that you learn

- † to recognize that voice for what it is,
- † to let the Holy Spirit work through you, shining God's holy light into the world darkened by sin even when (or especially when) you deem the recipient unworthy or the timing off - let God's will be done, not sin
- † Practice so that you learn to share the love of Jesus more fully, that others may see the power of God at work in this world and recognize it for the glorious blessing it is.

Our All-Knowing Creator knows your situation, what you and those around you are experiencing, and what is needed for the world to be reconciled with our God. How is God calling on your heart this week? Will you answer and let the treasured glory of Jesus shine out of your clay vessel, and through the power of the Holy Spirit let God's kingdom be manifest in our now?