

Sermon  
2 Pentecost/Proper 5 B  
William Bradbury  
June 6, 2021

Genesis 3:8-15  
Psalm 130  
2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1  
Mark 3:20-35

After my first year of seminary, I took a year off to sort out my personal life and worked as a Psychiatric Assistant on the 24 bed Adolescent Unit in a small Psychiatric Hospital in Northeast Atlanta. As a confused 26-year-old, it was therapeutic working with teenagers who were dealing with anorexia, depression, schizophrenia, and violence.

As staff we learned the official DSM diagnosis of each patient but generally, we just talked about them as kids who were not in their right minds.

One day a handsome 19 year old walks up to me and says with menace in his voice—"you know who I am don't you?! I'm Jesus."

I knew he was a talented baseball player for the Detroit Tigers Triple-A Team, and now clearly wasn't in his right mind.

Believe it or not, according to the reading today from Mark, Jesus's mother and family believe he is not in his right mind. Mary **is shocked by her son:** From the beginning of his ministry Jesus steps outside the box of standard religious practice: not just in his healings and teachings on the Realm of God, but also in his loving association with those caught in sin and suffering.

**Jesus colors way outside the lines of his society and therefore he appears not be in his right mind.**

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But what if your society is not in its right mind? What if the culture is crazy? Don't we agree with Indian mystic Krishnamurti who says, **"It's no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society"**?

For example, are we in our right mind when we fit in while the Nazi government drags away Jews and homosexuals to death camps?

Are we in our right mind when we stay silent about racial and sexual discrimination in our society, because that's the way things have always been done?

**“It's no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society”!**

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In the Biblical story Adam and Eve are in paradise living inside the divine vision of unity, wholeness and peace with one another and their God.

But after they eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they stop believing in God's vision of unity, and instead follow their own fractured vision of a world in which human beings now have the power to decide who is good and who is bad, who is in and who is out, who is holy and who is evil.

**In short, they fall out of their right minds** and create a world of division, hatred, and violence. A world that operates under **the illusion that we can hide from the One who holds us in being and love**, and without whom we would cease to exist.

As Stephen Gottschalk puts it: Sin “the basic belief of mortal mind—is the **claim of a selfhood apart from God.**” [The Emergence of Christian Science in American Religious Life](#)

Jesus reveals to us, however, what it looks like when human beings catch God's vision and come into their right minds again.

**Yet, because his actions are counter-cultural, Jesus can't help but look crazy to those who have accommodated themselves to a sick society.**

**But here's the thing: Jesus's actions are just as counter-cultural in our own time as they are in his.**

So, when Martin Luther King holds a march in Birmingham and then gets thrown in jail, some sympathetic white church leaders are horrified! They tell King to slow down and be patient, while they gently work behind the scenes to end the sin of white supremacy.

But King and his followers, filled with Jesus' Vision of the Beloved Community, are not willing to accommodate themselves to a sick society for another 400 years. **Who in their right minds would do that?**

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**The culture, with the Church's help, has** domesticated Jesus so he will fit into its fractured view of reality. **The domesticated Jesus** is a normal, down to earth, non-disruptive, non-mystical guy who would never challenge the status quo or take to the streets to end systemic evil.

**We imagine he is just like us, only nicer.**

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Mary and family show up in order to take Jesus home, so he can slow down and come to his senses. But then Jesus acts out again and seemingly violates the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment to honor his father and mother when he says:

**"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."

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**How is this possible? Hasn't the Church taught us that Jesus is a family values guy?**

**Yet here he is rejecting Mary's maternal claim on him and instead joins a family of misfits and other sinners who choose to live inside the divine vision of unity, wholeness and peace with one another and their God.**

**Mary of all people is shocked.**

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 The Scribes are also shocked, but they have a less generous view of Jesus—he isn't sick, he's possessed by the chief demon Beelzebub, which means "the Lord of the Flies".

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**The good news is that God sends Jesus to restore us to our right minds.**

That's why the apostle Paul tells the church in Philippi: "Let the same **mind** be in you that was in Christ Jesus..." Philippians 2:5

And he tells the church in Rome: "**Do not be conformed to this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your **minds**, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and whole." Romans 12:2

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 Being in our right mind comes not from conforming to this world, **but from letting Jesus conform us to God's world.**

As we go through the summer our scripture readings will seek to put us into our right minds by showing us what it looks like to live inside Christ's vision of the family of God:

**It is this vision that transforms and heals us—even** someone as sick and violent as Saint Paul is healed by the Risen Christ and therefore can tell the church in Galatia: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28