

The 12th Sunday after Pentecost

“God’s great mercy through Christ upon all - disobedient Jews and Gentiles alike!”

Romans 11:28-32

August 16, 2026

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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 12th Sunday after Pentecost is from our Epistle reading, Romans 11:28-32.

“28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. 29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 30 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, 31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.”

So far our text:

Something unusual happened on July 31st in the uppermost level of our government. Maybe you saw this on the news. For the first time ever, reporters were allowed to come inside Camp David in Maryland, president’s secure secluded location. There we were able to see gathered around a large table the cabinet members who make the world’s most important decisions. The press were able to ask questions for an hour on foreign policy, domestic economic issues and other items, before the remainder of the meetings were closed off.

The press sat outside the table. Had access to the table for a short time, although they didn’t have a seat at the table. They didn’t have the seat at this high level table of power and authority. What table or tables do you have a seat at?

Maybe you have had a seat as a board member in a company, learning institution, or a nonprofit organization. Of course, we all have a seat around our own tables at our homes.

Yesterday, I was visiting a family that I’ve known for awhile, and at the doorway they told me to come in. The only problem was their dog didn’t get the message. Instead this big dog let out a low growl and charge me knocking me back a foot with its front paws.

He instinctively knew that I wasn't part of the family table and he pushed me back. The family immediately apologized and secured the dog, and I wasn't hurt at all.

Today's Gospel reading tells us of Canaanite woman, a Gentile, who asked to have a seat at the table of Jesus. Her daughter was severely demon possessed and she looked to Jesus for help. The guard dog disciples told Jesus to send her away. The Jews didn't have any dealings with the Gentiles. And Jesus Himself told her after she persisted that "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

And that is true. Jesus' personal mission was to the lost, disobedient sheep of Israel, the Jews. But would Jesus make an exception? Did He not heal large crowds that travelled to Him from non-Jewish regions like Syria and the Decapolis? Yes, He did. Did He not heal the Roman Centurion's paralyzed servant? Yes, He did.

And this Greek woman firmly believed that there was mercy for her from the Lord, the Son of David! She begged Jesus, Friend of sinners, to help her.

Jesus tested her further didn't He? **"It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs,"** He said. And if we also include what Jesus said in Mark 7, the parallel account, we see Jesus opening the door a crack for her to see the daylight of His grace and mercy for her. For Jesus said in Mark 7: **"Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."**

Did you catch that little word, "first". That implies that there is a "second". That Jesus came to the lost sheep of Israel first, but He didn't forget about the Gentiles. His gracious plan of salvation was also for them. And the Canaanite woman seized upon Jesus gracious words.

"Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.'²⁸ Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour."

She wasn't desiring a seat at the Master's table, but just a crumb that fell from it. For even a crumb of God's mercy overflows to abundance for the one who receives it. And with that crumb, she indeed received a seat at the Master's table. For faith in Jesus, whether Jew or Gentile is entrance into the one Holy Christian church. As we heard in our epistle reading from Romans 11:

**“And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:
“The Deliverer will come out of Zion,
And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;
27 For this is My covenant with them,
When I take away their sins.”**

All Israel are the believers from Jews and Gentiles, sons and daughters of Abraham, not by lineage but by faith! And this Canaanite woman had put her faith in the promised Deliverer, the promised Messiah, Jesus who takes away their sins – the sins of all the disobedient – Jews and Gentiles alike.

That is the only way to have a seat at the table of the Master, Jesus...to receive the good news of the Gospel for the forgiveness of sins. The Jews, God's chosen people were given the amazing promises of the coming Deliverer. Yet, when Jesus came, many rejected Him. And by their rejection of Jesus, God fulfilled His ultimate plan of salvation through the death of His Son Jesus on the cross. What the unbelieving Jews proposed for evil, God used for the great good of the world.

And what is that good? **“32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.”**

God shows all people their disobedience through the law so that He might have mercy on all people through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And that mercy, thanks be to God comes to us disobedient Gentiles today. God has given us His Word that shows us that none can come to His table by his or her works of righteousness, or by one's claim to be a descendent of Abraham. As our epistle reading tells us:

**“David says:
“Let their table become a snare and a trap,
A stumbling block and a recompense to them.
10 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see,
And bow down their back always.”**

What an unbeliever treasures as one's joy, happiness, delight turns into a snare and a trap. What one seeks in this life to give satisfaction, if it is not in Jesus alone, it will never give true satisfaction. Again, we each have to ask ourselves, what is trying to have a seat at

our table? What are we allowing to sit at our table that may be turning our eyes away from Jesus into more disobedience?

God in His great mercy calls all to repentance. And this mercy, this crumb of grace extends to all people that there is full forgiveness in Jesus. What has God done for us Gentiles? Paul tells us.

“17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.”

Grafted in! Partakers of the root and fatness of the Gospel! Members with the Canaanite woman in Jesus' Holy Israel. God pours out His love for us through His washing of regeneration in Holy Baptism so that we are assured that we are part of God's people.

And He then invites us to His Holy Table where we are given the very body and blood of Jesus, our Savior. At the Master's Supper, the Lord's Supper, Jesus calls us to repentance and gives to us the fatness of the olive tree – forgiveness of our sins through the body and blood of Jesus, in with and under the bread and wine. Jews and Gentiles alike are invited into this common faith and confession of the Savior to receive what supports our souls – Jesus righteousness!

What mercy God shows to the disobedient, repentant sinner! What mercy He shows to us!

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!”

Amen.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)