

MORNING PRAYER AT THE OPENING CEC/WACC SEMINAR 10.4.2019

The first bible reding is from Genesis, Chapter 3.

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,

3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

4 "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman.

5 "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

The second Bible text is from The Gospel according Mark, chapter 14

53 They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the law came together.

54 Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

55 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any.

56 Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.

57 Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him:

58 "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.'"

59 Yet even then their testimony did not agree.

60 Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?"

61 But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Sermon

We are living in the very center of lent, there are already five weeks since Ash Wednesday. Next week we concentrate on the last days of our savior. We will follow his trip from the last supper to the Mount of Olives, via palaces of powerful people to Golgotha, crucifixion, our altar painting.

The week the bible is telling us about, is full of suffering, fear, hate, anger, lies, mistrust, betrayal, accusations, dis-information, populism, nationalism. It sounds like a normal week in social media or some parliamentary election week, like we have during this week and next Sunday here in Finland. Perhaps that description does not fit totally the situation in modern Finland, but however, some similarities we can find also here. And probably all of you colleagues from different parts of Europe and wider, can find some familiar phenomena from that list. And this description I mentioned is not only part of elections or other such activities in society but also and foremost part of everyday life especially in social media.

When we have gathered here to discuss question **What Makes Us So Angry?**, it is important to remember that, / even it sounds very modern and current theme in our societies and even in our churches,/ these bible texts we just heard show us we are talking about very profound and human questions from the beginning of human history. The serpent or snake offered Eve the alternative truth, spread suspicion among Eve and Adam // or the men at the palace of high priest giving false testimonies against Jesus, // they are examples of the same questions we are dealing with today in Europe and around the world. Alternative truth or false information.

If and Because the questions are the same as they were in the Bible, could we find also some solutions from there, or do we need new answers to the old questions?

What kind of answers we could find from Jesus? What he did when people challenged him, wanted to argue with him, used capital letters in their sentences?

Could it be for example from the verse 60 from the Gospel-text we heard: Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" 61 But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Or similar from the Gospel of John, chapter 8 "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery, accusing her. But Jesus bent down

and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

Jesus used also strong answers and quite often we find similar answers in social media: “You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?”

In general, perhaps Jesus discussions with pharisees and the teachers of law are not the best examples for behaving in social media today. Staying silent without answering anything or using strong language as Jesus did, seldom helps.

But however, Jesus offers us also other examples and perhaps the most useful answer for the question. It is the Golden rule **“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets”**.

What I wish from the person I’m talking face to face or in social media, how I hope that she or he behave with me. Instead of confrontation, instead of alternative truths, instead of false accusations I would like to meet a person with mutual respect, who listen to me, who try to find common solutions.

In the middle of the content of the next week: suffering, fear, hate, lies, anger, mistrust, betrayal, accusations, dis-information, populism, nationalism there will come the light and hope. After the dark shadows of Holy week, we will have the rising sun of the Easter morning. The darkness of the tomb is filled with light. The message is: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! We are not left alone with our weaknesses but given the strength to overcome the barriers of hate and anger, to meet and to love my neighbour. **What Makes Us So Angry?** The change must start from myself, not from others, because **“Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them.”**