

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Morning.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

Welcome to our daily service of morning prayers here in the applicant chapel of our memorial church. I invite you please to rise and join in saying our responsorial Psalm, number 27, in your black salter. The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?

Congregation:

When evildoers assail me, uttering slanders against me, my adversaries and foes, they will stumble and fall.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

Though a host encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Though a war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

Congregation:

One thing I will ask of the Lord, that I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

For He will hide me in His shelter in the day of trouble, He will conceal me under the cover of His tent. He will set me high upon a rock.

Congregation:

Give me not up to the will of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Congregation:

Wait for the Lord, be strong, and let thy heart take courage. Ye, wait for the Lord.

Choir:

(Singing).

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

This is a reading from the fourth chapter of the Gospel of Luke, beginning at the 24th verse. Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. But the truth is, there were many

widows in Israel at the time of Elijah when the heaven was shut up for three years and six months and there was a severe famine over all the land. And yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman, the Syrian." Here ends the lesson. So in the Episcopal church's calendar of saints for today, we remember Hannah Moore. I do not make these lists. Hannah Moore is a complicated, maybe even a problematic person. And if you want to hear about her, come to communion tonight at 5:00 PM here in the chapel when I'll be talking about Hannah Moore. Remember, there is communion here in the chapel at 5:00 PM.

I'm trying to make weekly communion happen, so please join us tonight. Instead, we're going to remember yesterday's saint at this service, a woman named Katerina Zell. She was born in 1498 in Strasbourg. That date 1498, she's right on the eve of the Reformation, Luther Hammers, his thesis Into the Door in Wittenberg in 1517, and shortly after that a pastor named Matthew Zell came to Strasbourg to minister at the church there and he brought Luther's teachings with him and she was convinced. She wanted to join the Reformation and believed that Reformation was the way to go with the future of the church. And as a vocational choice more than a romantic choice, she married Matthews Zell because she wanted to join his work and advance the cause of the Reformation in Europe.

She did this primarily through writing pamphlets and publishing pamphlets. She was a woman writing at this time, which meant she had to apologize probably for her own writing, probably more than we are comfortable reading when we read her writings. But she was also quite unafraid and quite clear-eyed about what she was doing. She said, "I'm convinced that if I agreed with our preachers in everything, I would be called the most pious and knowledgeable woman born in Germany. But since I disagree, I'm called an arrogant fool." This lesson we have from Jesus today about the widow at Zarephath in Sidon and naming the Syrian, what's important about them is that they're not Israelites.

When he says there was famine everywhere, everyone was hungry, everyone had nothing to eat except it was to the widow of Zarephath in Sidon, the Gentile. That was the one Elijah went to. And Jesus says, "There were many lepers in Israel, many Israelites who had leprosy, but it was Naaman the Syrian, a gentile, to whom Elijah went." Jesus is calling us to pay attention to the outsider. And at first glance, I think when we look at this lesson and we think about the story of Katarina Zell, we think of her as the outsider. She was the one and she was the one, this is not a wrong way to read this situation, she was the one whose voice was not heard, who did not have authority and yet asserted it.

But there's another way to think of it, especially since she is the prophet we remember today, which would be to think of her as Elijah, to think of her as Elijah, to think of her as the prophet coming to speak to us who are outside the truth of God and who need to hear what she says. So what did she say? One thing she said, which I think is truth, she said that we need to distinguish between people and creeds and remember that care for the former always outweighs disputing the latter. To say again, we need to distinguish between people and creeds, and it's more important to care about people than to care about creeds. Think about the time in which she was writing, when what was going on was argument over creeds, over belief, over what confessions, what we should say, what we should believe. She's not saying that's unimportant, she's saying that's less important than the person next to you.

If we think about the history of the Christian churches, the history of Christian doctrine, we think if there's been so much spilled ink and spilled blood over belief in the streets of [inaudible] bishops, were getting into fist fights. During the Reformation that Luther started, people murdered each other over belief, over truth. But for Katarina, nothing could be more true than the person next to you. This is the most basic and important Christian truth, love your neighbor as yourself. That's not ethics or not ethics only, that's doctrine. They are the truth, so answer to them. We're at the beginning of a new term, a new school year here at Harvard where our motto is quite audaciously truth, very [inaudible].

Katarina Zell and Jesus have reminded us what truth is, who ought to be true to us. Love your neighbor, that's the truth. Let's get to it. I invite you please to rise for our prayers. The Lord be with you.

Congregation:

And also with you.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

Let us pray. Almighty God, whose servant, Katarina Zell, toiled for the reform of your church both in word and in deed, fill us with the wisdom to speak out in defense of your truth, with love for you and for our neighbor, that we may serve you and welcome all your people with a prophet's heart. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

And now we pray the words Jesus taught us, saying, our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us to evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen. Please join in singing our concluding hymn, number 241.

Congregation:

(Singing).

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

Just a brief word before our benediction. We will not have Mem Cafe today, but next week Wednesday after morning prayers. I hope you will join us for Mem Cafe. And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all, now and always. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

Let us bless the Lord.

Congregation:

Thanks be to God.