

We keep Jesus here.

I am the one appointed to guard Jesus, especially his body and blood.

Notice how I dress so differently when I am near Jesus body and blood.

Notice how we build a fence to keep common people out.

We say you must have right understanding to receive Jesus, to touch him, to taste him.

Notice how all of the windows here keep outsiders from seeing in. You must come through the door, pass the greeters and ushers before you can even see inside the place where Jesus meets his people.

What if we were to take Jesus out into the streets, take him out there where the people are and live? Would we lose the Jesus we now have? Would strangers abuse him, treat him with disrespect, take advantage of him?

When Jesus walked among the people of Galilee This is how it was. Mark tells us that people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

People touching Jesus, all sorts of people touching Jesus. Jesus did not station himself in some holy shrine and make people come through some narrow door to receive his healing. Jesus went everywhere the people were, villages, cities, farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and they touched him. And all who touched even his cloak were healed.

Now some Pharisees and scribes came from Jerusalem and and they gathered around him. Will they be Jesus followers also? It looks like they might. They ask a question, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders but eat with defiled hands?"

Mark explained about that tradition, the practice of washing even the food from the market place, not to make it sanitary, but to keep the proper distance between common life and religious life.

Like we do here with our windows and fences separating the holy from the common.

Think of the contrast, the Pharisees are worried about being contaminated by what has been touched by sinners. Jesus goes to the marketplaces and when sinners touch him, they are infected by his wholeness, his holiness enters them and makes them well.

Jesus does not need to be protected from the world of sin and evil. If sin and evil are to survive, they need to be protected from Jesus.

Think of your life. Think of what happens when you let Jesus into your home. Into your place of work, into your most private thoughts. Is it Jesus who is in danger then or is it sin that is exposed, named to be what it is. Take Jesus into an adulterous relationship, Let Jesus into the corner of your heart that is locked up in greed, let the secret pride that is in you be touched by Jesus and the next thing you know you are on your knees asking forgiveness.

O, but if I can keep Jesus locked up here behind these windows that no one can see through, then I can have God and my sin. If I can keep Jesus fenced in at this altar, then I can see a neighbor in need and walk right by and never give that neighbor a thought. The scribes and Pharisees and I want to keep God confined, away from the marketplaces where I worry about great increases in my investments. Because if Jesus ever gets out there into life, I might have to ask myself why I am building such big barns to store all my goods while a family sleeps in a car. If Jesus gets out into the world, he might upset everything.

Pharisees and scribes found a solution, they put Jesus to death.

We find a solution also, when we lock Jesus up here and go into the world without him.

But death could not contain Jesus, nor will our attempts to leave him here.

He is Lord of this place and the marketplaces and homes and schools. He enters you here that every where that you go you will bring his healing touch, his love, his peace. You who eat his body are his body in the world.

I love this place. I love the dark windows, the world being kept out. Pharisees loved their rituals of cleansing, their holy lives. But Jesus did not die so that I could have warm cozy feelings in my heart.

Jesus said, I came that all might believe through me.

Jesus loves people. All the people in all the marketplaces.

Go into all the world and make disciples.

Go. *Grace goes with you.*
Amen.