

January 28, 2018 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time
He taught with authority!

Deuteronomy 18:15-20 Psalm 95: 1-2, 6-9 1 Corinthians 7:32-35 Mark 1:21-28

The Israelites were fearful and petitioned God so that He would speak through an intermediary. Moses indicates that "a prophet like me" will be raised up and the Israelites are to listen to the words God puts in his mouth. If they refuse to listen each will answer for their disobedience and if they speak as prophets on their own they shall die.

The psalmist encourages us to bow down in worship, acclaim the Lord as the rock of our salvation, and be thankful. We hear God's message in the Scriptures and are not to harden our hearts to it as many have done in the past as this tempts and tests the Lord in his patience.

Paul speaks to his brothers and sisters in Corinth and emphasizes that they are to be free from anxieties. He distinguishes between the married and unmarried, indicating the first group will have many worldly concerns while the second will have more time to concern themselves with the things of the Lord. Paul speaks this message to encourage all to serve the Lord without distraction.

Jesus preaches in the synagogue and the people are astonished at his teaching and by the authority of his words. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey and he exemplifies this by casting out an unclean spirit from a man in the synagogue. Nothing like this was ever seen by the onlookers and they were somewhat perplexed at this new teaching with authority.



The Father sent the Prophet,
The Son, who teaches with authority;
The Spirit opens our hearts to listen carefully.

The authoritative teaching of Truth is clear, firm, and definitive - not conjectural. The people of God need to follow closely in Christ's footsteps and guidance comes from a number of ways including, most importantly, the Church. The Israelites did not listen to God's guidance given through Moses, and disobedience led to disaster. The psalmist reminds us not to harden our hearts while Paul indicates there is plenty of God's work to go around. If we are to be anxious then let it be of things of the Lord. Scripture tells us clearly to "listen to Jesus," who gave many examples of good works and consistently expressed his desire for us to be a prayerful people.

It was believed by the Israelites that a great judgment would eventually come and the demons who plagued mankind would be driven back to the "abyss" from whence they came. Therefore Jesus' power in commanding unclean spirits would point the closeness of the coming of the Kingdom of God and make many believe he was the Messiah to come. He was able to bring demoniac after demoniac back to sanity whether they were truly under demonic control or simply delusional. It must have been truly humiliating for the man who was being thought of as in the grip of Satan, and then great relief to mind and body when Jesus healed him.

Jesus exemplified his powers that they could be developed in mankind under his spiritual guidance so that all faithful could pray as he prayed and unlock with prayer the healing forces we do not yet understand. Many of our friends and neighbors are in need of healing so constantly keep them in your prayers....be persistent!

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