

Daily Reading & Meditation

GOSPEL READING: Mark 1:21-28 Sunday 2021-01-31

21 And they went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught. 22 And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. 23 And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; 24 and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." 25 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" 26 And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. 27 And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching! With authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." 28 And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

Meditation: Do you believe that God's word has power to set you free and to transform your life? When Jesus taught, he spoke with authority. He spoke the word of God as no one had spoken it before. When the Rabbis taught, they supported their statements with quotes from other authorities. The prophets spoke with delegated authority - "Thus says the Lord." When Jesus spoke, he needed no authorities to back his statements. He was authority incarnate - the Word of God made flesh. When he spoke, God spoke. When he commanded even the demons obeyed.

Faith works through love and abounds in hope

Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) remarked that "faith is mighty, but without love it profits nothing. The devils confessed Christ, but lacking charity it availed nothing. They said, 'What have we to do with you' (Mark 1:24)? They confessed a sort of faith, but without love. Hence they were devils."

Faith is powerful, but without love it profits nothing (1 Corinthians 13). Scripture tells us that true faith works through love (Galatians 5:6) and abounds in hope (Romans 15:13). Our faith is made perfect in love because love orients us to the supreme good which is God himself as well as the good of our neighbour who is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26,27).

Hope anchors our faith in the promises of God and purifies our desires for the things which will last for eternity. That is why the word of Christ has power to set us free from all that would keep us bound up in sin, deception, and despair. Bede the venerable abbot of an English monastery (672-735) contrasted the power and authority of Jesus' word with the word of the devil: "The devil, because he had deceived Eve with his tongue, is punished by the tongue, that he might not speak" [*Homilies on the Gospels* 1.8].

Faith must be nourished with the Word of God

Faith is both a free gift of God and the free assent of our will to the whole truth that God has revealed. To live, grow, and persevere in the faith to the end, we must nourish it with the word of God. The Lord gives us his Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds that we may grow

in his truth and in the knowledge of his great love for each of us. If we approach God's word with trust and submission, and with an eagerness to do what the Lord desires for us, then we are in a much better position to learn what God wants to teach us through his word. Are you eager to be taught by the Lord and to conform your mind, heart, attitude, and intentions according to his word of truth, goodness, and love?

Psalm 8:2,5-9

2 By the mouth of babies and infants, you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

5 Yet you have made him little less than God, and did crown him with glory and honour.

6 You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,

7 all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,

8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the sea.

9 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Daily Quote from the Early Church Fathers: *Knowing without loving*, by Augustine of Hippo, 354-430 A.D.

"Those words show clearly that the demons had much knowledge, but entirely lacked love. They dreaded receiving their punishment from him. They did not love the righteousness that was in him. He made himself known to them to the extent he willed; and he willed to be made known to the extent that was fitting. But he was not made known to them as he is known to the holy angels, who enjoy participation in his eternity, in that he is the Word of God. To the demons he is known as he had to be made known, by striking terror into them, for his purpose was to free from their tyrannical power all who were predestined for his kingdom and glory, which is eternally true and truly eternal. Therefore, he did not make himself known to the demons as the life eternal, and the unchangeable light which illuminates his true worshipers, whose hearts are purified by faith in him so that they see that light. He was known to the demons through certain temporal effects of his power, the signs of his hidden presence, which could be more evident to their senses, even those of malignant spirits, than to the weak perception of human beings. (excerpt from *CITY OF GOD* 9.21)

OPENING PRAYER Lord Jesus, your word is power and life. May I never doubt your love and mercy, and the power of your word that sets us free, and brings healing and restoration to body, mind, heart, and spirit. **Amen**

CLOSING PRAYER:- "Show me the way to Peace"

Father of Heaven and earth hear my prayer and show me the way to peace.

Guide each effort of my life so that my faults and my sins may not keep me from the peace You promised.

May the new life of grace You give me through the Eucharist and prayer make my love for You grow and keep me in the joy of Your Kingdom. **Amen.**