

Who is Jesus
Mark 1:21-28

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May the words of my mouth and the ears of our hearts be open to the word of God this day. AMEN.

How many listened this past week to the State of the Union address given by the President. The State of the Union address is a major policy speech that the office of the president has had for years. This is the one time during the year that all networks tune into the speech that addresses where we have been and to lay out where we are going. Now over the years some President's have given better speeches than others, some challenge and push, some comfort and speak to your hearts. But the truth is only 42 million even watched this past week. Which sounds like a lot, but its not even half of how many will watch the Super Bowl next week.

So why is the State of the Union address, the major policy speech of the government each year, not more highly rated? Perhaps people think it is just words. I wonder how many find the speech irrelevant, boring, pointless, or not really in touch with what their concerns are.

It's just words without any real emphasis or power to do anything, and so we lose interest and more people tune over to American Idol, or whatever the latest CSI shows is on.

It's just words – What would it take for those words to have meaning for you? What would it take for words to have power in your life?

Our Gospel reading says, The people “were astounded at his teaching for he taught them as one having authority.” And then they saw him heal a man filled with evil spirits, and they were even more astounded, saying, “What is this? A new teaching – with authority!”

You can almost picture that crowd in the synagogue that Sabbath day, standing there with their mouth's gaping open, shocked, amazed, and wondering who is this man that stands before them. He speaks with Authority, His word has power and authority. Who is this man?

So who is Jesus of Nazareth? Before we answer that let's look go back to a time about 4000 years ago. Moses and the Israelites had just left Egypt and they were at the foot of Mount Horeb. They were fresh from a trip through the desert with God as tour guide. They had seen amazing wonders – pillars of fire and smoke to guide and protect them; the Red Sea parted before them so that they could walk through it; manna from heaven; water from a rock. And now they were at the foot of the holy mountain. God Himself was so near that his

presence shook the earth. His awesome presence was so intimidating that they trembled with fear. They heard thunder and saw lightning. They heard blasts of trumpets and smoke and clouds covering the mountain. They shook with fear and fell away in fright. The people implored Moses to go before them, to go and speak to God, because they were too afraid to come into his presence. They begged Moses to go and hear the Lord and then come and tell them and they will listen to Moses.

At the foot of the Mount Horeb, the people trembled in fear when the Lord came near. So the people knew that they could not face God, that they needed an emissary, someone to represent them before God's full radiance that could speak on their behalf and then come and tell them what God has said. And so Moses is given that job. Moses is made a prophet of the Lord.

Now in our first reading today, we get the words of Moses telling us that the promise is made for all time, that the Lord our God will raise up for us a prophet from amongst God's people to speak to us the Word of God. They were so afraid they just knew that if they heard God speaking in all his glory again they would surely die. So God gives them the promise of the prophet who will speak the Word.

And so God has continued to direct His people through prophets - like Moses. From that point on, prophet after prophet would come bringing God's Word. But here's the key: Moses and all his successors - the prophets that followed - were not the ultimate fulfillment of the prophetic ministry. These men and women brought messages from God, words and warnings. But it was just words of men and women and just words get ignored and tuned out.

Now when Jesus comes, he is not simply another prophet with a message from God. But as St. John tells us, Jesus is the Word. The very being of God made flesh, to speak in our presence the very powerful Word of God. Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise to provide an emissary, a mediator that stands in our presence to give the very Word of God, as the Word of God, as the Divine made human.

Through Jesus, we have communion with God without fear. We can in his presence again without trembling in fright. We receive the Word of God from the one who is the Word itself, love itself, grace itself, forgiveness, and justification itself. Jesus the Christ.

Now Jesus brings that Word to us and gives it to us in different ways.

He comes as a teacher sent from God. But no ordinary teacher. There is something unique and amazing about the way He teaches. He reveals heaven, glory, power, TRUTH. The people were amazed because Jesus taught not like the scribes or leaders of their synagogues, but with authority. There is a difference between the way humans speak and

Jesus speaks. As humans talking about the faith, we struggle with our words, with our beliefs, even as we speak we are open to debate, temptations, fears of what others may be thinking. We wonder if what we say is true, hear voices telling us that it can't be proven. We are put ourselves open to rebuttal and possible dressing down by others who may have more knowledge than we do, and we don't want to be embarrassed.. We speak of things we can not prove beyond a shadow of a doubt in this world, that is why it is faith. But when Jesus speaks he speaks as faith, as truth, as power. Because he has no doubt, no fear, no worry, He is the Lord God, speaking as one knowing for certain of what he speaks. That is what makes his Word so different. It is truth incarnate. God fully revealed. That is power.

But Jesus' teaching goes beyond mere spoken words, but to his very being again as the Word in action. He lives it, because even as he astounding the crowds in his spoken words, a man comes that is filled with unclean spirits. This man interrupts shouting, "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." And Jesus rebukes him and says, Be silent and come out of him. And with a loud cry the man convulses the unclean spirit, commanded by the words of Christ.

Again this is authority and power. In today's world we have many scientists and doctors that have done some astounding work. We have scientists that can examine the smallest proton and see to far away galaxies, and they can try to hypothesis their theories of mass and light speed and quarks. But none of these scientists can speak one word to make that quark real, that can change a galaxy. Doctors can cure and have medicines that do amazing things for people with illnesses and diseases. All doctors follow a proper procedure, to help alleviate pain or illness, they try one proven method, but if that doesn't work, then they will try something else, and something else, and something else, going down the line of possibilities that may help find the cause, solve the problem, find the right thing that helps relieve the pain. But not one Doctor can simply speak a word and cause life to reform, to change. Jesus can. Through Jesus, the Word, was spoken and creation came into being. Jesus has power over the winds and the storms, the sea and the fish, the sick and the lame and yes even the man filled with unclean evil Spirit. By his word spoken, all creation can change. That is power that is authority.

Who is Jesus, he is the Word of God, spoken, living, Authoritative, definite, and True. In a world where we hear words all the time, and we don't think much of them anymore, where even state of the union addresses is ignored and shrugged off as unimportant, there is only one who has the Word that with Authority. Jesus Christ. His name is power and glory.

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Jesus is the one we proclaim this day as our Lord, and King, and we go forth sharing that message of his truth, now and always. Amen.

May the peace and Grace of God be with you this day and throughout the week to come.
AMEN.