

"Jesus taught with authority"

Reading 1: Dt 1:1-20

Reading 2: Cor 7:32-35

Responsorial Psalm: Ps : 94:1-2, 6-9

Gospel

: Mark 1:21-28

And they went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; 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." But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. 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." 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 neighbor 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?

Questions for Community Faith Sharing:

1. Why those at the synagogue were amazed at Jesus' teaching and are you amazed with his teaching too? Share how his teachings amazes you and why?
2. Do you believe that God's word has power to set you free and to transform your life? In what ways can you make the word of God to be alive in yourself and in your service to others?

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.