

He alone is THE Teacher



I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

FIRST READING (Deut 18:15-20)

Announcement

¹⁵Moses spoke to all the people, saying: “A prophet like me will the LORD, your God, raise up for you from among your own kinsmen; to him you shall listen.

Background

¹⁶This is exactly what you requested of the LORD, your God, at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let us not again hear the voice of the LORD, our God, nor see this great fire any more, lest we die.’ ¹⁷And the LORD said to me, ‘This was well said. ¹⁸I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their kinsmen, and will put my words into his mouth; he shall tell them all that I command him. ¹⁹If any man will not listen to my words which he speaks in my name, I myself will make him answer for it.

Warning to a prophet

²⁰But if a prophet presumes to speak in my name an oracle that I have not commanded him to speak, or speaks in the name of other gods, he shall die.’

THE FOCUS: Nature of a Prophet

COMMENTARY

- In v.15, Moses announces that God would raise up a prophet, like him.
- V.16 explains the reason why: it is people’s request, they are afraid to hear God’s voice, for fear of death (*they are overwhelmed*).
- V.17 is the response of God (promise to raise a prophet).
- V.18 defines what a prophet is: the speaker of God, obediently speaks on behalf of God.
- V.19 is a warning to those who do not listen to the prophet

- V.20 is likewise a warning, but to the prophet himself. He will be punished if he does not speak on behalf of God (*misrepresents God*).

REFLECTIONS

The prophet is anyone who has a message capable of changing your life, not the one who approves of your present comfortable status.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 95: 1-2, 6-9)
**IF TODAY YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,
HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS.**

SECOND READING (1 Cor 7:32-35)

Paul argues for celibacy

³²I should like you to be free of anxieties.

Contrast: unmarried and married man

An **unmarried** man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. ³³But a married man is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, ³⁴and he is divided.

Contrast: unmarried and married woman

An **unmarried** woman or a virgin is anxious about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy in both body and spirit. A married woman, on the other hand, is anxious about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. ³⁵I am telling you this for your own benefit, not to impose a restraint upon you, but for the sake of propriety and adherence to the Lord without distraction.

THE FOCUS: Celibacy

COMMENTARY

- Paul is sold out to celibacy.
- He wants celibacy for practical purposes. He cites the advantages of a celibate life: free of anxieties (v.32); anxious about things of the Lord (vv.32 and 34); propriety and adherence to the Lord without distraction (v.35).
- Paul is talking from the practical point of view.
- Paul is thinking of a whole hearted and not divided service to the Lord and the community.
- That service is his work in the mission which demands full time, prolonged absence from family, etc.
- Celibacy here was not yet imposed by the Church.
- Careful: We must not use the verses to downgrade married life. Married life is also a vocation.

REFLECTIONS

Paul here is willing to forgo marriage for the sake of work. Being single frees one from obligations and too much concern for one's partner or family which usually hampers missionary work.

GOSPEL READING (Mk 1:21-28)

²¹Then they came to Capernaum, and on the sabbath he entered the synagogue and **taught**.

²²The people were astonished at his **teaching**, for he **taught** them as one *having authority* and not as the scribes.

²³In their synagogue was a man with an unclean spirit; ²⁴he 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!" ²⁵Jesus rebuked him and said, "Quiet! Come out of him!" ²⁶The unclean spirit convulsed him and with a loud cry came out of him.

²⁷All were amazed and asked one another, "What is this? A new **teaching with authority**. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him." ²⁸His fame spread everywhere throughout the whole region of Galilee.

THE FOCUS: Jesus' Teaching Authority

COMMENTARY

- The focus of the Gospel is on Jesus as a teacher.
- He teaches with authority (vv.22 and 27).
- The setting of his teaching is the synagogue (vv. 21 and 23).
- Two things happen in the synagogue: one, the quality of his teaching (with authority), two, authority over unclean spirit (exorcism) (vv.23-26).
- These two are sources of amazement and questioning of the people in the synagogue.
- One more thing to notice: "he commands..." This should make us remember "God's commands to the prophet in the First Reading.

REFLECTIONS

Jesus as a teacher is credible. He is convinced of what he is teaching. He has the power to persuade and make people follow his teachings. His teaching is not just one of the teachings of the rabbis but the teaching.

II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR SHARING/HOMILY

The First Reading is focused on the prophet. The Second Reading is focused on celibacy which enhances missionary (prophetic) work.

The Gospel Reading presents Jesus as a teacher (with authority). Being a teacher is being a prophet itself.

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