

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 2021- FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE EPIPHANY

DEUTERONOMY 18:15 – 20 (NRSV) A NEW PROPHET LIKE MOSES

Setting of Deuteronomy – “Second Law”

¹⁶This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: “If I hear the voice of the LORD my God anymore, or ever again see this great fire, I will die.”

¹⁷Then the LORD replied to me: ¹⁸“I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command.”

John 1: 19-22 – The Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask (John the Baptist), “Who are you?” He confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” They asked him, “Are you Elijah? Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.”

Jesus as Prophet, Priest, and King.

Do you heed the words of Jesus as Prophet?

Does it help you that God’s Word comes to you through Jesus? If so, how does it help you?

PSALM 111 (NRSV) PRAISE FOR GOD’S WONDERFUL WORKS

¹I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart.

Do you give thanks to the Lord with your whole heart? If not, what makes you hold back?

²Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.

Which of the works of the Lord do you most study and/or most delight in?

⁴He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds; the LORD is gracious and merciful.

What are some of the wonderful deeds of the Lord that you have experienced?

How have you experienced the Lord as gracious and merciful?

⁵He is ever mindful of his covenant.

When and how have you personally experienced God’s being mindful of His covenant and remembering His promises to you?

¹⁰The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.

How has the fear of the Lord been the beginning of wisdom for you?

1 CORINTHIANS 8 (NRSV) FOOD OFFERED TO IDOLS

¹Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

⁴Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “no idol in the world really exists,” and that “there is no God but one.”

⁷ It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.

⁹ Take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰ For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? ¹¹ So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed.

¹² When you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

¹³ Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

Proposal for Halloween party in the fall of 1970 – during my first job as youth director.

MARK 1:21-28 (NRSV) THE MAN WITH AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

²¹ They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught.

Significance of Capernaum – black (1st century) vs. white (4th or 5th century) synagogue

²² They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

²³ Just then 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.”

When the Bible speaks of demons, it is speaking of reality – spiritual reality.

Why was there so much demonic activity during the ministry of Jesus?

The Malagasy Lutheran Church – Lutheran Church of Madagascar – role of shepherds

Comment made in the mid 1990's by a member of the national staff of ELCA Global Missions

Matthew 8: 29, 31 – “What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?” The demons begged him, “If you cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.”

James 2: 19 – You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe – and shudder.

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.

Mark 4: 39 – He woke up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” (“Be muzzled!”)

²⁷ They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”

²⁸ At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.