

Sunday, August 29, 2021 – Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

First Reading: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

Deuteronomy 1: 1-5 – These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan. In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month.

Moses spoke to the Israelites just as the Lord had commanded him to speak to them.

This was after he had defeated King Sihon of the Amorites and King Og of Bashan.

Beyond the Jordan in the land of Moab.

4: 1 - So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you.

4: 6 - Observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples.

4: 7 - For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is whenever we call to him?

4: 9 - Take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children.

Judges 2: 7-10 – The people worshiped the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work that the Lord had done for Israel. Joshua, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of one hundred ten years. Moreover, that whole generation was gathered to their ancestors, and another generation grew up after them, who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel.

Psalm: Psalm 15

Verse 1 - LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle? Who may abide upon your holy hill?

Verse 2 - Those who speak the truth from their heart.

Verse 3 – Those who do not slander with the tongue, do no evil to their friends, and do not cast discredit upon a neighbor.

Verse 4 – Those who do not take back their word. (Stand by their oath even to their hurt)

Second Reading: James 1:17-27

1: 17 - Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

1: 19 - Let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak.

Why do you think God gave us two ears but only one mouth? Was it so that we would do twice as much listening as speaking?

1: 19-20 – Be slow to anger, for your anger does not produce God's righteousness.

The Bible often describes God as slow to anger.

Ephesians 4: 26-27 – Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil.

James 1: 22 - Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves.

1: 26 - If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless.

James 3: 5-9 – How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. It stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. Every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God.

James 1: 27 - Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Luke 4: 18 – The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

Matthew 25: 32 – All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

Gospel: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Here Jesus challenges traditional ways in which religious people determine what is pure or impure. For Jesus, the observance of religious practices cannot become a substitute for godly words or deeds that spring from a faithful heart.

Mark 3: 6 – The Pharisees had already begun conspiring with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

7: 1-5 - Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around [Jesus], they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?"

Significance of the explanation

7: 6-8 - He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.' You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition."

7: 14-15, 21-23 - Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "There is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile. For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

We show what we have on the inside but what comes out to the outside.