**Deuteronomy 18: 15-20 (reader: Mary Cresswell);  I Corinthians 8: 1-13 (Mary);**

**Mark 1: 21-28**

**Sermon:  “The Great Healer”**

**Deuteronomy 18:15-20**

**Good News Translation**

**15** Instead, he will send you a prophet like me from among your own people, and you are to obey him.

**16** “On the day that you were gathered at Mount Sinai, you begged not to hear the Lord speak again or to see his fiery presence any more, because you were afraid you would die. **17** So the Lord said to me, ‘They have made a wise request. **18** I will send them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will tell him what to say, and he will tell the people everything I command. **19** He will speak in my name, and I will punish anyone who refuses to obey him. **20** But if any prophet dares to speak a message in my name when I did not command him to do so, he must die for it, and so must any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods.’

**Commentary:**

This is where we get the teaching that Jesus is a “second” Moses.  Yes, Jesus is the perfect prophet, the WORD become flesh and dwelling among us—yes the very *persona* of GOD!  What a wonderful teaching of the incarnation of God.  Jesus himself alluded to this very scripture when He asserted that He speaks whatever the Father tells Him…for this is the purpose for which He was sent.  (John 12: 49-50)

I like the way the Message paraphrases this passage:  **47-50** “If anyone hears what I am saying and doesn’t take it seriously, I don’t reject him. I didn’t come to reject the world; I came to save the world. But you need to know that whoever puts me off, refusing to take in what I’m saying, is willfully choosing rejection. The Word, the Word-made-flesh that I have spoken and that I am, that Word and no other is the last word. I’m not making any of this up on my own. The Father who sent me gave me orders, told me what to say and how to say it. And I know exactly what his command produces: real and eternal life. That’s all I have to say. What the Father told me, I tell you.”

Indeed, Christ is the Messiah, the holy One of God, the anointed One who came for the salvation of all creation.  Lord, what a Saviour we have!

Let us listen to and obey Him.  Love one another.

❤️ Amen.

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**1 Corinthians 8**

**Good News Translation**

**The Question about Food Offered to Idols**

**8** Now, concerning what you wrote about food offered to idols.

It is true, of course, that “all of us have knowledge,” as they say. Such knowledge, however, puffs a person up with pride; but love builds up. **2** Those who think they know something really don't know as they ought to know. **3** But the person who loves God is known by him.

**4** So then, about eating the food offered to idols: we know that an idol stands for something that does not really exist; we know that there is only the one God. **5** Even if there are so-called “gods,” whether in heaven or on earth, and even though there are many of these “gods” and “lords,” **6** yet there is for us only one God, the Father, who is the Creator of all things and for whom we live; and there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things were created and through whom we live.

**7** But not everyone knows this truth. Some people have been so used to idols that to this day when they eat such food they still think of it as food that belongs to an idol; their conscience is weak, and they feel they are defiled by the food. **8** Food, however, will not improve our relation with God; we shall not lose anything if we do not eat, nor shall we gain anything if we do eat.

**9** Be careful, however, not to let your freedom of action make those who are weak in the faith fall into sin. **10** Suppose a person whose conscience is weak in this matter sees you, who have so-called “knowledge,” eating in the temple of an idol; will not this encourage him to eat food offered to idols? **11** And so this weak person, your brother for whom Christ died, will perish because of your “knowledge”! **12** And in this way you will be sinning against Christ by sinning against other Christians and wounding their weak conscience. **13** So then, if food makes a believer sin, I will never eat meat again, so as not to make a believer fall into sin.

**Commentary:**

Here St. Paul discusses what has classically been called our obligation to our “weaker” brother or sister.  His argument goes like this:  1) Eating food consecrated (dedicated) to idols (false gods) is prohibited.  2) Enlightened Christians, however, realize that idols and false gods do not actually exist, therefore, the whole premise for prohibition is based on a false assumption and therefore null and void!  3) There is a caveat’s in that “weaker” believers don’t fully appreciate this finer point and still believe that you and they are sinning by eating food dedicated to idols.  4) Therefore, for the well-being and sake of “weaker” brothers and sisters, he will never eat meat dedicated to idolatry again!

So there you have it, for the sake of inadvertently leading another down the wrong path just refrain from doing something that is misunderstood.  Don’t flaunt your superior understanding and intelligence in the face of one who is not where you are in the faith.  This is specifically in terms of things that are of no major consequence and make no difference to God in the big picture.  On the other hand, in terms of life and death issues, in terms of oppression, war, killing, abuse, violence and immorality…we are clearly called to take a stand so as to live and die by our core beliefs.  Discerning the difference between the two is accomplished by God through prayer and a cry for help to live our faith in a way pleasing to God.

As someone once said, “You’ve got to stand for something, or you’ll fall for anything !”  Our task with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is to discern what is essential and what is meaningless—i.e. “which hill to die on!”  We follow Jesus to the “hill” of Calvary by taking up our cross of justice, mercy and humility.

Amen ✝️

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**Mark 1:21-28**

**Good News Translation**

**A Man with an Evil Spirit**

**21** Jesus and his disciples came to the town of Capernaum, and on the next Sabbath Jesus went to the synagogue and began to teach. **22** The people who heard him were amazed at the way he taught, for he wasn't like the teachers of the Law; instead, he taught with authority.

**23** Just then a man with an evil spirit came into the synagogue and screamed, **24** “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Are you here to destroy us? I know who you are—you are God's holy messenger!”

**25** Jesus ordered the spirit, “Be quiet, and come out of the man!”

**26** The evil spirit shook the man hard, gave a loud scream, and came out of him. **27** The people were all so amazed that they started saying to one another, “What is this? Is it some kind of new teaching? This man has authority to give orders to the evil spirits, and they obey him!”

**28**And so the news about Jesus spread quickly everywhere in the province of Galilee.

**Commentary:**

Jesus is teaching with authority.  Clearly the people discern immediately that He knows what He is talking about from experience and not just regurgitating book knowledge!  To prove the point a man “possessed” by evil appears and out of nowhere demonstratively shouts at Jesus—“get out of here, why have you come, I know you are the anointed One!”  And Jesus demonstrates divine power by calming him.  Thus He backs up His words with action.

Christ proves to be the ultimate healer sent by God to cure the human race as well as all creation from every disease.

Give your dis-ease to God to be made whole.  Lay all you troubles and burdens at the feet of Jesus to be made well.  Reach out and touch even the hem of His garment and you will find complete salvation! (Matthew 9: 20-22)

“Behold, The Great Healer!”

Amen❤️‍🩹

Pastor Austin