

Astonished and Amazed

Fourth Week of Ordinary Time – Mark 1: 21-28

January 28, 2018

We are alive in the age of information when anything and everything we wish to know can be “googled” with the answer at our fingertips. And yet, there is still so much mystery to the world, the universe. Why do people suffer? Why are some people so rich, while others live in garbage heaps? Why are there so many cultural, social, political and religious conflicts today?

Technology has yet to answer questions of the human heart. Technology can aide, but cannot solve the issue of human suffering. The answer to these deep human needs is at the heart of the gospel this week. The answer is Jesus.

Are we astonished and amazed by Jesus? Do we see Him as the one having authority in our lives? Do we know that Jesus has the authority to change lives, influencing good and expelling evil?

This seems to be the message from the gospel of Mark this week. Jesus is teaching in the synagogue. We are not privilege to what he is teaching. What we do know is that the people who heard him **“were astonished at his teaching, for he taught as one having authority and not as the scribes.”** The challenge seems to be that we are called to see, to hear and to embrace this authority in our relationship with Christ. If we are not astonished by Jesus’ authority then how can we be changed to grow in holiness and act as he does?

In the gospel, the one who recognized Jesus as **–“the Holy One of God,”** is the unclean spirit. Evil seems to recognize that God has power while the people were not sure. Might this be true for us as well?

Do we sometimes take Jesus out of the box at Christmas, set him on the mantel and joyfully sing songs of praise, while at the same time we keep him at arm’s length? We very much want Baby Jesus. We aren’t so sure that we want the adult version of Jesus who battles demons and calls all of us, by his authority, into the loving and suffering service of our brothers and sisters.

This is where the **“new teaching with authority”** gets very difficult. Jesus has the power to cast out the demons of greed, envy, selfishness, hatred and despair. But we must seek this authority by being astonished and amazed at what God has done through the gift of Jesus Christ.

Blessings!

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