

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany

Hymns: 127, 134, 132, 50

The INTROIT

(Ps. 66:4,1,2)

P: All the earth shall worship Thee:

C: And shall sing unto Thee, O God.

P: They shall sing to Thy name:

C: O Thou Most High.

P: Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:

C: sing forth the honor of His name, and make His praise glorious.

The COLLECT

Almighty and everlasting God, who does govern all things in heaven and earth, mercifully hear the supplications of Your people and grant us Your peace all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

Deuteronomy 18:15-19

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

The GRADUAL

(Ps. 107:20,21; 148:2)

P: The Lord sent His Word and healed them:

C: and delivered them from their destructions.

P: Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness:

C: and for His wonderful works to the children of Men! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

P: Praise ye Him, all His angels:

C: praise ye Him, all His hosts. Hallelujah!

The EPISTLE

Romans 12:6-16

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation;

continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.

The SENTENCE for the Season

(Psalm 117:1-2)

P: Hallelujah! Oh, praise the Lord, all ye nations, and laud Him, all ye people. For His merciful kindness is great toward us:

C: and the truth of the Lord endureth forever. Hallelujah!

The HOLY GOSPEL

St. John 2:1-11

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.

His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

Deuteronomy 18:15-19 — “A Prophet from the midst of Thee”

INTRODUCTION

I. A PROPHET FROM THE MIDST OF THEE

II. THAT I DIE NOT

III. WHOSOEVER WILL NOT HEARKEN

CONCLUSION

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Deuteronomy 18:15-19 — “A Prophet from the midst of Thee”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Today is the Second Sunday after the Epiphany and the Old Testament reading appointed for this day is Deuteronomy 18:15-19:

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

How marvelous is the gracious Word of the LORD our God! From beginning to end the Word of God is gracious. Even with the giving of the Law, God’s intention is that we be directed to the preaching of the Gospel. This is what the LORD declares to us today through His prophet, Moses.

I. A PROPHET FROM THE MIDST OF THEE

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.

At the end of his ministry amongst and to and for the people of God, Moses prepares and gives this recounting of all that the LORD had done for the people. With the words of our text we hear a magnificent promise recounted to us. The promise is that all of God’s promises will be fulfilled for us. The ultimate revelation and fulfilment comes through the raising up of a second prophet like Moses.

How is the second prophet like Moses? This we will hear more clearly explained in the verses that follow, but for now, in these first words of the text, we have the beginning. First of all, this prophet will be raised up by the LORD, the God of the true people of God. He will not be selected or elected or anointed or ordained or commissioned by anyone other than the LORD God Himself. He will not be the people’s choice, but the chosen instrument of the LORD.

Secondly, this prophet will be like Moses in that He will be raised up from among the body of the people. He shall be a brother. He shall be a fellow descendant of Abraham. He shall be from amongst the people and not from afar off. He shall truly be one who knows the needs of the people. He shall be one who identifies with them.

Thirdly, this prophet shall be like Moses in that the people will hearken unto Him. The people who truly are of the LORD will heed the voice of this prophet. It is notable that at this point Moses switches from thee to ye. He switches from the singular second person to the plural second person. This promised prophet shall be like Moses in that He shall be raised up by the LORD, the God of Israel, the singular nation, the singular people, the singular congregation, the singular body of Christ. And this promised one, who is raised up from the one body shall be heard and heeded by individuals from amongst this singular body. That is to say, the promise is that some will hear and believe.

This is where the explanation becomes expanded.

II. THAT I DIE NOT

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

After the LORD delivered Israel from bondage through the redemption administered through Moses, then the LORD brought the congregation to the foot of Mount Horeb or Sinai. Here the ministry of Moses was expanded greatly. Now Moses became not merely the administrator of Redemption, but also the mediator of the Law. Now Moses was to administer what the people could not hear from God directly.

Yes, the Redeemed need to hear that their redemption comes at a terrible price and on account of a terrible debt. The redeemed of the LORD need to hear the powerful administration of death. For this is what the Law administers. The Law administers judgment.

When the LORD appeared in His glory atop Mount Sinai the very mountain caught on fire. The people were terrified by the revelation of God's glory. The glory of the LORD is judgment to sinners. No sinner can stand in the presence of the LORD and live. The fact is that sinners are already dead, like the rocks atop the mountain are dead. The glory of the LORD reveals this and the corruption of death is accelerated by the fire of judgment. The people were terrified and begged Moses to stand between them and God so that they would not have to face the judgment of His glory directly. They begged that God would speak to them through someone whom they could dare to approach. They needed to hear the Word through a mediator. They cried out as one, **"Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not."**

The LORD heard their request.

And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

With this we hear the LORD's declaration as to the true ministry of Moses. His ministry was to stand as the mediator of the Law, which the people could not hear according to their flesh. He was to stand between them and God to hold them safe until the LORD should raise up for them the Prophet who would be the end and fulfilling of the Law.

St. Paul declares that the Law was given as a teacher and a guardian, to keep us until faith should come. Now this is not to say that the people of the Old Testament were not saved by faith. Rather, what this says is that until the author and perfecter of faith should come, the Law would have to keep the people looking toward the fulfillment of that in which faith trusts.

A teacher/guardian is very harsh to those who do not obey. The teacher/guardian tests and tries the disciples. The teacher/guardian chastises those who do not obey. This is to prevent the greater harshness that comes if disobedience is not corrected. For if anyone should not listen to the teacher/guardian, the person wanders from that which is taught. And what does the Law teach? It teaches the holiness of God, which we do not have except through the merits of Jesus. It teaches us to see our unbelief and our distrust of God's goodness. It teaches us to know our own sinfulness and need of the salvation that is in Christ.

Moses stood as the administrator of this to the people God had redeemed.

III. WHOSOEVER WILL NOT HEARKEN

But the likeness of the two prophets ends here. For the second prophet speaks Words of freedom and life. While Moses administered the Law of God, the perfect, holy, and glorious Law of God, this administration was incomplete. This ministry could not remove the curse of death. It could only magnify that death reigns apart from the faith that was to come, the faith in which the Law meets its finish. This is why the LORD says of the second Prophet: **“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”**

Moses could only point to the One who was to come, the One who would complete what Moses directed all hearts to believe and to trust. Moses stood between the people and the judgment of God's glory so that they could hear that their full redemption would come to them. Moses stood to proclaim to the people that the Messiah would come in the fullness of time and that their fear of death would be taken away in Him.

Jesus, is the fulfillment of all of God's promises. Jesus is the prophet who preaches not that life shall come but that life has come. He is the fulfillment of all that is incomplete. He is the faith by which we receive life through the remission of sins and readmission into God's Holy Communion.

Yet Jesus is like Moses in that we still can approach God only through a flesh and blood mediator. Thus we still partake of the heavenly glory only through receiving in our bodies the body and blood of Jesus. As we eat the bread we receive the communion of His fullness of the glory of God. Yet we receive God's glory in a way that is veiled and concealed and wrapped within the body of Jesus. We gather in the oneness of His body as we speak with one voice the confession that has been given by the Father and confirmed by the Holy Spirit. As we gather as one in this one body of singular confession we eat the body of the unity of God which we can perceive only in this sacramental union.

Likewise we drink the blood of Jesus and receive the remission that He purchased with His blood shed for many. The Holy Spirit comes to us with the water of Baptism and the Father and Son come to us in the bread and the wine. Truly this is the fullness of God's glory, but still we receive it in a manner that is concealed in flesh and blood. This is the true worshiping of the Father in spirit and in truth as Jesus promises, but it is still a knowing of God through means rather than face to face.

But this comes with a very severe warning. Anyone who will not listen to Jesus and receive Him as He has commanded will not receive any of the benefits that He comes to give. For a person cannot receive Jesus partway. A person cannot deny just some of what Jesus teaches and commands. For the words of Jesus are the words of God. As Jesus quoted from the Law of Moses to the devil, **“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”** (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4, Deuteronomy 8:3)

Life is by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. One cannot pick and choose which of the words that are recorded for us as spoken by God. They all point to the same faith that is in Jesus. And this is most especially manifest in the blessed Sacraments. For Jesus says that one cannot even perceive the kingdom of God unless he be regenerated and that one cannot enter the kingdom of God unless he be regenerated by water and the spirit. (John 3) Likewise Jesus says:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. (John 6:53-57)

Thus the promise of God is still accompanied by the stern warning of the Law. The promise is real. The promise is undeniable. Those who deny it in any part must hear the judgment of the Law so that they may be washed with the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit and eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus by which He keeps us in communion with His life.

CONCLUSION

Thanks be to God that this is all His doing. He speaks the words, both of Law and of Gospel. He has redeemed us. He calls us to faith in this redemption. He washes us into His kingdom by His water and Spirit of life. Our sin is taken away and we are made worthy to enter into His Holy Communion where we eat and drink the life and unity of the body and blood of Jesus in His one true body of which we have been made members by God's grace through faith. Moses directs us to this. Jesus comes to us to make it ours. This is what God declares to us today and forevermore. In this we live. In this we wait until that final Day when the LORD comes with the full display of His glory, when He shall bring us to be with Him in His glory forevermore. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.