

The God I Believe in : (33rd Sunday)

Mark 13:24-32

The 1st reading from the prophet Daniel provides us one of the few reflections on the 'Hope of Resurrection' contained in the Old Testament. The Old Testament did not contain an instruction, or a hope of resurrection, not surprising really since the hope only found real meaning in the coming of Christ into our world.

The second reading from Hebrews contains a very important detail for all of us Christians,..... It says many sacrifices have been offered to God in atonement for sin But the only one that really matters is that one offered by Christ where He actually took on our sins. Because of that sacrifice we can be at-one with Him (atonement).

The Gospel provides a number of details about the 'end times'. I believe that St. Mark was really speaking of many things that had already taken place the apostles being dragged before governors and magistrates, and ominous signs there were plenty of them.

Jesus says to us don't get bogged down in all of these signs and claims by people in the world that the end is here..... Rather keep your eyes on me and on my Word. "Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away' How important is that declaration !!!! How many of us could make that same declaration ? Really ?

During the course of our lives we hear a lot of words, and we also speak a lot of words. Some speak a whole lot more words than others Right ? To be honest a lot of the words spoken by people are about 'others' and quite often those are not very good words. There tends to be a great lack of real sharing about one's self in the words that are spoken. That can be a real problem !

Fortunately we forget most of the words we hear, some do remain with us.

In fact some words make a huge impression on us, they burn themselves into our memory, so much so that they remain with us to our dying day. Some of these are words
That hurt us, and remain with us.

Others are words that comfort us, encourage us, and lift us up, they remain to inspire us through our lives.

Words can be very hurtful at times, and inflict deep and lasting wounds on the receiver of those words.

Sometimes it is not even the words themselves that have such an impact on us, but the manner in which they were spoken.

A woman recalls :

“When we were young, mother sometimes said very hurtful things to us, mean-spirited, critical, accusatory things. And she never apologized for them. When we raised the issue with her many years later she excused herself by saying, “But I never meant them” And we

were left wondering, Well then, if you didn't mean them, why did you say them ?

That's a very important question !!! Why do we say so many things that we don't mean ?

But words can also be inspiring, and healing, and uplifting. A friend who went through all of the theology courses in seminary says ;

“During the course of my theology lectures I heard a lot of things. Most of these I will forget in time. Indeed, I've already forgotten a lot of them (Thank God) But there is one thing I will always remember that one of my professor's said : “Love keeps a low profile” I know it sounds like a very simple thing, but somehow it hit my heart and it has always remained with me ever since.

“LOVE KEEPS A LOW PROFILE”

How important is that in relationship to the gospels we have listened to these past few weeks ?

James and John looking for places of honor on His left and right side in the kingdom It's as if Jesus is saying to them ‘don't worry about these passing things boys ... think about ‘bigger’ things. Think about loving, and all these other things will be taken care of (by Me).

We had the story of ‘which is the greatest commandment Jesus was very clear : Love God Love Self... and Neighbor as Yourself !

Then last week the gospel story, all those individuals putting large sums into the treasury, and a little widow coming and putting in a few coins Jesus says to his

disciples ... “Here is a woman who Gets It !! It’s about loving and trust God and doing the good thing !

Words are very important and very powerful. Once uttered, they can take on a life of their own, for good or ill. They can bring life or death, wounding or healing, a blessing or a curse, in a relationship. I am aware of many instances where an estate was being divided up and somebody had their feelings hurt, sometimes hurt so badly, that the relationship was never restored again ! Words can continue to hurt or help us for many years after they are spoken. Hence it is important to choose our words carefully.

When we are very angry, it is very important to be careful in how we use words. In fact it may be best to remain silent in such cases “Silence is Golden” !

As one person put it :

‘Sometimes loving others means keeping quiet and letting them be’.

Jesus says, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away”. A very powerful declaration. The words of Jesus remain with us always, to comfort and console us, guide us, and challenge.us. They can turn our life-values up-side- down when we really hear them ! WE may overlook them sometimes, but we never forget them. !