

5 Sunday after Pentecost

The authority of Christ's messenger is based on their living contact with him

1 Kings 19.19-21

Psalm 65. 4-8

Acts 4.13-22

Mark 3.7-19a

Good morning, dear brothers and sisters in Christ. As we gather on this 5th Sunday after Pentecost, we reflect on the profound theme: "The Authority of Christ's Messenger is Based on Their Living Contact with Him." This theme challenges us to understand the true source of spiritual authority and how our relationship with Christ empowers us to be effective messengers of His Gospel. We will delve into the scriptures from 1 Kings, Psalms, Acts, and the Gospel of Mark to uncover the depth of this truth.

Understanding Christ's Messenger

To begin, we must define what it means to be a messenger of Christ. A messenger, in the biblical sense, is someone who is called, equipped, and sent by God to deliver His message to the world. This role is not limited to the apostles and prophets of old but extends to all believers who are commissioned to share the good news of Jesus Christ. A true messenger of Christ speaks with authority because they have a living and dynamic relationship with Him.

The Call of Elisha (1 Kings 19:19-21)

In 1 Kings 19:19-21, we see the call of Elisha by the prophet Elijah. Elijah finds Elisha ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen and throws his cloak over him, symbolizing the transfer of prophetic authority. Elisha immediately leaves his oxen and runs after Elijah, expressing his readiness to follow God's call. He says, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you" (1 Kings 19:20). This passage highlights the importance of divine calling and immediate response. Elisha's willingness to leave everything behind and follow Elijah signifies the wholehearted commitment required to be a messenger of God. His authority as a prophet stems from his obedience to God's call and his continuous relationship with Him. As Christ's messengers, our authority is rooted in our willingness to follow Him without reservation and maintain a living contact with Him.

The Blessings of God's Presence (Psalm 65:4-8)

Psalm 65:4-8 celebrates the blessings of God's presence and His mighty works. The psalmist declares, "Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts! We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple" (Psalm 65:4). This verse emphasizes the joy and satisfaction that come from being close to God. The psalm continues to describe God's power in creation and His ability to still the roaring seas and the tumult of the nations (Psalm 65:7). These images of God's majesty remind us that those who dwell in His presence experience His peace and power. As messengers of Christ, our authority comes from this intimate relationship with God. When we live in His presence, we are filled with His strength and equipped to proclaim His message with boldness and conviction.

Boldness Through Jesus (Acts 4:13-22)

In Acts 4:13-22, we witness the boldness of Peter and John before the Sanhedrin. Despite being ordinary, unschooled men, they spoke with great authority, leaving the council astonished. The key to their boldness is found in verse 13: "They took note that these men had been with Jesus." Their living contact with Christ gave them the courage to stand firm in the face of opposition. Peter and John's response to the council is a powerful testimony to their unwavering faith. They said, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard"

(Acts 4:19–20). Their authority as Christ's messengers was not based on their education or status but on their personal experience with Jesus. For us, the lesson is clear. Our authority to speak and act in Jesus' name is derived from our ongoing relationship with Him. When we spend time in His presence, learning from His Word, and seeking His guidance in prayer, we are empowered to witness boldly and effectively.

The Calling of the Twelve (Mark 3:7–19a)

The Gospel of Mark 3:7–19a recounts the calling of the twelve apostles. Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to Him those He wanted, and they came to Him. "He appointed twelve that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons" (Mark 3:14–15). This passage underscores two critical aspects of being a messenger of Christ: being with Him and being sent by Him. The apostles' authority was directly connected to their time spent with Jesus. They learned from Him, observed His miracles, and received His teachings. Only after this period of close companionship were they sent out to minister. For us today, the principle remains the same. To be effective messengers of Christ, we must prioritize our relationship with Him. Our authority to preach, teach, and serve comes from our intimacy with Jesus. When we are rooted in Him, we bear much fruit and carry out our mission with divine authority.

Theologically, spiritual authority is not a product of human effort or status but a gift from God that flows from a living relationship with Him. This authority is characterized by humility, obedience, and dependence on the Holy Spirit. It is through our connection with Christ that we receive the wisdom, power, and courage to fulfil our calling. Living contact with God involves regular practices of prayer, meditation on Scripture, worship, and fellowship with other believers. It is a dynamic and ongoing process of drawing near to God and being transformed by His presence. This relationship fuels our passion for ministry and equips us to overcome the challenges we face as Christ's messengers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the authority of Christ's messenger is intrinsically linked to their living contact with Him. From the call of Elisha, the blessings of God's presence in the Psalms, the boldness of the apostles in Acts, to the calling of the twelve in Mark, we see a consistent theme: true authority comes from a life spent in communion with God. As we embrace our role as Christ's messengers, let us commit to deepening our relationship with Him. May we be found faithful in seeking His presence, listening to His voice, and walking in His ways. In doing so, we will speak and act with the authority that comes from knowing Him intimately.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for calling us to be Your messengers. We are grateful for the privilege of knowing You and sharing Your love with the world. Lord, deepen our relationship with You. Help us to spend time in Your presence, to listen to Your voice, and to follow Your leading. Empower us with Your Holy Spirit to speak and act with boldness and authority. May our lives reflect Your love and grace, and may we be faithful in carrying out the mission You have entrusted to us. Lord, we lift up those who feel distant from You today. Draw them close and renew their hearts. Fill them with Your peace and strength, and remind them of the authority they have in You.

In the name of Jesus, our Saviour and Lord, we pray. Amen.

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