

## **Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Jan 23rd 2017**

Both today's reading (Hebrews 9:15, 24-28) and Gospel lesson (Mark 3:22-30) remind us of the reality (that is, the real-ness) of Jesus Christ as the son of God. Just in case there were any doubt, we have two accounts to help us remember and revere Jesus Christ as our Savior.

In Hebrews, we are told of God's new covenant - a covenant of grace - established when Jesus entered heaven following his earthly death so as to appear before God on our behalf, to take away our sins and assure our salvation. Christ did this only once, and for all, that we might have eternal life. In the reading I was struck by the passage that "Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made by hands, a copy of the true one, but heaven itself". Can we even hope to imagine that 'real' sanctuary? The power and peace that it must hold? My entry into most earthly places of worship brings upon me a profound sense of peace; I am humbled with reverence; I am conscious of being held and loved. Upon reaching the 'true' sanctuary, those feelings will surely be multiplied beyond human comprehension. It is only because of Christ's love and sacrifice that any of us will one day know and understand the 'real-ness' of God and Christ as his son, when we enter that heavenly sanctuary.

In the Gospel lesson, the scribes (the teachers of the law) were afraid of Christ's power and unwilling to ascribe his works to God. Instead, they accused him of obtaining his power from Beelzebul (Satan), something that Christ could readily discount. Through his parable, Christ let the scribes - and us - know that to blaspheme God by rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit is to commit an unforgivable grievance. Most of us would say that we don't reject God, or Christ, or the Holy Spirit in our lives.

And yet, how often do we genuinely, with open arms, accept the work of God in our lives? Or even accept that God is AT work in our lives? I've had my share of disappointments, to be sure, and sometimes I'm able to be open to the teaching and growth that comes from heartache. At other times I am angry and want to blame someone - human or God - because either I can't accept the presence of God in the moment, or I go turning over stones searching mightily but can't recognize God in anything, let alone in all things.

In either case - the times I can dream about myself with Christ in the 'real' sanctuary of heaven, and the times that I struggle to see and trust the work of God revealed in my life - God is with me and I am with God. Christ assured me of that gift and I am ever grateful for it. Likewise, God is with you, today and everyday. I pray that you believe it and feel it, too. Amen.

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