
Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

November 2, 2014

The Silent Word

*“Because of his powerful deeds and words,
he was recognized by God and all the people as a prophet.”*
Luke 24:19 (Common English Bible)

I was told this week that a member of the church I have served for better than two years somehow has the notion that the regular reading of the Bible isn't important. They do read each day a devotional provided by the church and that devotional does have a sentence of scripture provided prior to each meditation – much like the one you are reading now. But that is all. The Bible remains a closed book in their home. It is unimaginable that this person listens to me each week and concludes that reading the Bible is unimportant.

The words you are reading now are human words. The words of the devotional mentioned above are human words. Certainly, I hope that these words are helpful in directing people to the one, Holy Word that is the Bible. It is my prayer that my words here each week provide some deeper insight and understanding to God's Word. Yet, I submit, my words – or any human words – are not an adequate substitute for God's Word recorded in the Bible. Only the Bible is capable of communicating “the silent word.”

“The silent word” that I speak of here is that unspoken word that is heard in the heart. It is that word spoken by the Holy Spirit to convey the reality of God with an imagination and force that human words are incapable. It is a word that has uncommon resonance with the particulars of our daily life: the myriad little and large decisions that press for our attention each day. God certainly uses the stumbling human words of women and men to help convey the silent word of God's kingdom. But it is God's Word in the Bible that has a unique power to bring the silent word to life in our hearts. It is a word that ultimately silences our chatter and confronts us with the living word that is Christ.

In this sentence of scripture from the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is presented as a prophet that is powerful in deeds and words. The mighty deeds and the mighty words Jesus spoke were inseparable. With considerable force, Luke seeks to be clear that Jesus' words were not less important than Jesus' deeds. When a paralyzed man was brought to Jesus for healing, his first act was the spoken word, “Your sins are forgiven.” Luke wants us to understand that when God's Word is spoken - or read - the silent word finds lodgment in the human heart. Sooner or later, that silent word accomplishes what no human word can, it conforms us to the image of Christ.

Prayer: Implant Your Word deeply into my heart, O God, that I may know Your will more clearly and love You and others more deeply. In Christ's Name, I ask. Amen.

Doug Hood