

The grace, mercy, and peace of Christ Jesus be yours this day. The title for today’s sermon is “*Those Words*”, and it is based on the Gospel reading from St. Mark the first chapter. Let us pray...Amen.

I’d like you to walk with me through the life of a man who went to the local synagogue one Sabbath, just like he did every week. This day he heard God’s Word spoken by the prophets, recorded in the Holy Scriptures. But this day, *Those Words* originally spoken by Moses some 1400 years earlier resounded in his ears. Those spoken words carried the power of God and carried the full authority none had heard before.

This day though, *Those Words* hit a little too close to home. *Those Words* convicted him of things he had, or had not been doing. Perhaps, *Those Words* convicted him of reading or watching material which caused him to devalue life or to enjoy watching people get killed; or perhaps *Those Words* convicted him in regards to the words spoken by his lips which gossiped and tore down the reputation of those around him, or just maybe those convicted him of the things he did in the dark when he was alone at the computer or TV and knew no one else was around, actions which caused lust to burn in his heart; or *Those Words* may have accused him of doing any number of things he knew he should not have been doing, or revealed all the things he should have been doing and wasn’t. In any way, his pride was attacked, arrogance assaulted, and his ego beaten down. *Those Words* shone a light and exposed his sins and his idols.

Now, he had heard all *Those Words* before, but had just tuned them out, rejected, or ignored them. But this day, *Those Words*, were spoken with their full authority because the Word, God in the flesh, the Holy One of God was in his presence speaking them into his ears. And he did not like it one bit. Immediately the unclean spirit cried out against Jesus. He was fighting mad. But what was crying out against Jesus was not what was outside of the man, it was what was in him.

That unclean spirit in that man is all too similar to the Old Adam that lives in each of us. That sinful pride, that arrogance, and selfish ego which lurks in the recesses of our soul and which each of us has to deal with on a daily basis. We like *Those Words* as much as the man in the synagogue.

We would much prefer to blame the devil, or an unclean spirit, or the world, or anyone or anything else outside of us for our sins, our weaknesses, and our failings. But the reality is, our own flesh and blood, our own ego and pride hate *Those Words* of God spoken into our ears. Our sinful ears hear *Those Words* and recoil.

We cry out with the man, “**What have you to do with us Jesus of Nazareth!?! Have You come to destroy us!?! I know who You are—the Holy One of God!**” We hear *Those Words* and recoil as if hit by a ton of bricks. *Those Words* of Law itemize and label all of our sins. *Those Words* of Law then nail us to the wall. *Those Words* don’t just hurt, they kill! I hate hearing *Those Words* of Law because they rub my nose in the reality of my sinful, corrupt, and failed life.

I fully understand the words, and can agree with what Israel said at Horeb, when they said: **“Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see His great fire any more, lest I die.”**(*Deuteronomy 18:16*) They too could not handle the burning truth of their failings and rejection of God. They were terrified to stand before God and hear *Those Words* of TRUTH spoken from the mouth of God. With God in their presence, guiding and directing them, feeding and providing all they needed, they failed miserably and repeatedly. How can we expect to do any better?

But here Jesus stands in our presence and speaks with His full authority and says: **“Be silent!”** and our words end. But Jesus is not just speaking *Those Words* of Law, He speaks His Words of grace, of comfort, of reconciliation, of His forgiveness for you and me. *Those Words* Jesus speaks to us are to silence our fears and quiet our hearts. Here in God’s house—in His presence and at His invitation—He speaks *Those Words* from the Word made flesh. Jesus rebukes our sinful pride. Christ calls out our ego. Our LORD admonishes of our arrogance. In short Christ Jesus grabs hold of our Old Adam and says **“!Be silent, and come out of him!”**

And just like the man with the unclean spirit, at Jesus command, our Old Adam is commanded to come out, and it does kicking and screaming. Much of the fight is us having to let go of our selfish pride, our overblown ego, and our sinful arrogance. Yet here, Jesus speaks *Those Words* into our hearing and brings us peace. For *Those Words* are words of Gospel: of healing, of reconciliation, of forgiveness.

Here into God’s presence we come beaten, abused, scarred, and tormented by the world, by the devil, but most is self inflicted. Still God invites and commands us to come. And so we are dragged to the foot of Christ’s cross and hear *Those Words* spoke: **“Father forgiven them”**, and **“It is finished.”**

For as we try to work to save ourselves, even if only a little, we hear *Those Words*: **“Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.”**(*Psalms 37:7*) We hear *Those Words*: **“Be still and know that I am God!”**(*Psalms 46:10*) In the midst of our talking and us trying to participate in saving ourselves from our sins we hear God’s word to the Israelites when confronted by pharaoh’s army at the Red Sea: **“Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will work for you today. For the (~~Egyptians whom~~) sins which you see before you today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you only have to be silent.”**(*Exodus 14:13-14*)

Yet it is here in our unholiness, in our rejection, and even in our calling out against Christ Jesus that Jesus comes to us with His word saying: **“Be silent!”**, for behold **“I have not come into this world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through me.”**(*John 3:17*) I have atoned for your sins. I have delivered you from you death and the devil. I have given you eternal life. I came for you and to save you.

In the midst of our talking we are pointed to our Saviour, and Isaiah words of prophesy about Him: **“Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him**

stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ **But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.** ⁶ **All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.** ⁷ **He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.”**(*Isaiah 53:4-7*)

When it counted, Jesus was silent for us. When He could have talked His way out of our death sentence, yet He didn't say a word so now He can speak His comfort, forgiveness, and eternal life into you now. Jesus paid the full price for the burden of our sins. Those sins which nail us to the wall with guilt have already nailed Jesus to the cross and no longer have any hold on you. Jesus says to you and me: ‘I have already taken your unrighteousness, your failings, your shortcomings, your mistakes, your laziness; in short I've taken all your sins and I nailed each one to my cross. On top of that, I've also taken your anxiety and your weaknesses and freely give you my comfort and my true and everlasting peace. I can do this because I've already died you death, destroyed the power death and the devil had over you, and I give you eternal life in me. I gave all of Myself for you so I could have all of you in Me.’

Now it can be hard to hear Jesus' Word of promise with the devil, the world, and our Old Adam shouting in our ears. But Jesus' word is even louder, saying: “**Be silent, and come out!**” Jesus call us back to our baptism where we were both delivered from the hand of Satan, and our Old Adam was first drowned. The Holy Spirit carries us back to our Baptism, when God made us His own, when we hear *Those Words*, even if everyone and everything is shouting against us. Returning to the font daily through repentance and prayer, our Old Adam is called out again, and drown again and again, every day of our life.

Instead of us having to fight for our eternal life, Jesus has already intervened and won salvation for you. When our sinful pride screams or shouts out, Jesus continues to quiet it, He calls us to Himself, and in Him we have rest and peace. Despite the turmoil, suffering, struggles, and even pain in this life, we stand redeemed, forgiven. Instead of walking through life with the man shouting against Jesus in synagogue, we can rest secure while being carried through our life in Jesus while also having the privilege to proclaim *Those Words*, Jesus' Word of comfort, peace, and salvation with everyone. Amen.

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