

Outline: He has all the authority you need
1. For He is our greater mediator
2. And He has a greater message

Deuteronomy 18 →
You must listen to him.

→ *Mark 1:21ff.*
A new message – and with authority.

← *2 Corin. 8:1ff.*
Exercise freedom in love

This past Wednesday the most powerful man in the world, leader of the most powerful nation in the world, presented his State of the Union address. President Obama addressed subjects which were closely scrutinized by millions throughout the world. He spoke with authority on economics, taxes, renewable energy and the Afghanistan War. Media critiqued and his political opponents criticized. That’s what happens when you carry the authority of the most powerful person in the world.

But one thing that is true with every State of the Union address, is that even the President, with all his authority, can’t always guarantee things for the future. Even the most powerful person in the world cannot possibly know what natural disasters or world problems or economic challenges will take place in the next year or four years or 100 years from now.

And if we can’t count on the president, who can we count on? Noone.

Let me tell you about a couple of conversations I had this week which prove that.

- I visited with a girl who looks to her parents for authority and for answers. She counts on them to make her feel safe and to take her worries away. But she sees the stress and hears the arguments about a lack of money and an uncertain future – even parents don’t have all the answers.
- I also visited with one of our members who was diagnosed with cancer this past week. When I asked what the treatment was going to be and when she would start and what kind of prognosis there was, she said she didn’t know yet. Isn’t that why you go to the doctor? They are supposed to have all the answers – but even doctors, with all their knowledge don’t have absolute authority.
- At the missionaries’ conference I attended this past week, I had conversations with a lot of my pastor buddies and heard about the awesome things God is doing through them and their churches. But I also heard some terrible things and challenging things happening in those same churches. What Martin Luther said is so true: “Where the Word is preached, the Devil is close behind.” Even churches and pastors don’t have all the answers.
- The most difficult conversation I had this past week was with myself. At a missionaries conference one hears about all the things I should be doing, all the people I should be reaching and all the things I should be accomplishing. And while motivating, it is also frightening. There is simply a lot that doesn’t get done and that means I don’t have all the answers. Isn’t that the hardest to hear? When you realize that you don’t have authority over your own life?

But there in a synagogue on the shores of Galilee, another State of the Union address is given, and did you how the people responded? They said, “He taught as one who had authority.” God’s Word sounds clearly this morning, Jesus has all the authority you need. 1,500 years before Jesus stood in that synagogue, Moses proved that for us – Jesus has all the authority you need.

1. He is the greater mediator or go-between

Our lesson comes from the 5th book of the Bible, called Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy is Moses' farewell speech. This is his State of the Union speech before Israel enters into the Promised Land and Moses would enter into heaven. This is his last chance to share a message with his people. I asked one of our shut-ins this past week what she would say to her family if she knew she had one last chance to address them, and she answered, “Love your family and love God.” And that's exactly what Moses shares with his people. Those are the two great commandments: Love God and love your neighbor as yourself.

But Moses also knew they would be facing challenges in the new land, especially from their neighbors who worshipped false Gods and practiced witchcraft and sorcery and called upon the dead (v.14). He wanted them to know they weren't to listen to those messages but to make sure they listened to the voice of God after Moses was gone. So he prophesied, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.” (v.15)

A prophet like me... one who spoke with authority.

Moses was a great prophet and one who spoke with great authority

- because he was the one who entered into Pharaoh's palace and demanded that he “let my people go.”
- He was a great prophet because God spoke to him from a burning bush and then took him to the holy mountain and spoke to him “face to face.”
- Moses was great because he led a million and a half people or more through the wilderness for 40 years, leading, guiding, directing, organizing, judging.
- But Moses finest moment came as a mediator between God and his people.

It took place only a month after the Israelites left Egypt. He came down from Mount Sinai or Mount Horeb as it's called in our lesson for today, and what he found at the bottom made him gag. It made him smash the tablets of stone that he held in his hand to pieces. There were his people, God's people, worshipping a false god, dancing around a golden calf, listening to a false voice. Moses would have divorced his people there on the spot if God hadn't thought of it first.

When it comes to sin God means business, so he told Moses: “Leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.” But Moses didn't leave God alone. Instead he argued, he pleaded, he whined. He appealed to God's pride, to his reputation and then finally to his mercy. He begged God to take him, Moses, instead and let the others live. He reminded God of his favorites: of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And at last God relented. He spared the people of Israel. Then he allowed Moses to see a visible glimpse of him that no one on earth had ever seen. He made a new covenant, agreeing to accompany his people to the Promised Land.

That's a great prophet, doing a great thing for his people, before a great God.

But if Moses is great because he spoke to God face to face, what do you say about Jesus, who not only speaks to God the Father face to face, but comes from the Father's side, and is God himself.

And if Moses is great because he could make a plea to God's mercy, what do you say about Jesus who is God's mercy.

And if Moses is great because he offered himself in place of his people, what do you say about Jesus who offered himself for all people and whose offer was accepted.

Moses was a great prophet because he was a mediator up on Mt. Sinai, a go-between for his people, but Jesus actually went into heaven itself to plead on our behalf.

That’s what a mediator does when relationships are strained. When a husband and wife can’t settle differences, they go to a marriage counselor. When baseball players and owners argue over millions of dollars, a lawyer comes into to try to bring the two sides together. When a nation threatens war against another, the United Nations or different leaders might try to bring the two sides together. But we’re not talking just divorce or millions of dollars or war – we’re talking about God’ anger over our sins – we’re talking about hell – and we need someone much greater than a counselor or a lawyer or even Moses himself.

We need someone who has no sin; someone who can represent us as our brother, yet at the same time be our Lord and God. The only one who could do that was Jesus. Only he could satisfy our God’s anger over our sins, only he could take that anger upon himself on the cross, and only he could provide a sacrifice that would be accepted by God on our behalf; and that’s why he has all the authority you need.

2. Who has a greater message

Moses was a great prophet. There’s no doubt about that. He wrote the first five books of the Bible. And this is the one who told God in front of the burning bush, but I don’t know what to say, I’m not a good speaker. Yes, God had Aaron help his brother speak, but it’s funny how Aaron quickly slips to the background. And his message – wow. God’s law – very clearly, powerfully spelled out. You shall do this and you shall do that – and do this because I the Lord your God am a jealous God punishing the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me.”

No wonder his message was so powerful and frightening. They heard the thunder and saw the smoke and they felt the earth quake. No wonder they ran to Moses and asked him to take their place and receive God’s Law from the Lord for them. “Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die,” they cried out. (v.16)

But if Moses’ message was that powerful and great, Jesus’ message was even greater. One of his disciples wrote, “The Law came by Moses but grace and truth came by Christ Jesus.” Jesus message was powerful. He preached with authority – you heard the people say that earlier in our Gospel lesson. But it was a powerful message of love and forgiveness. His message comforts and brings hope. His message removes fear and gives us hope and life.

“The LORD said to me: (Moses preached) ‘What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account.’” (v.19) In other words, “Whoever believes in him will be saved, but whoever does not believe in Jesus and his message, will be condemned.”

Jesus’ is the greater message, because his message is that powerful – it has the power to save.

Power – to drive demons away, power to raise the dead, power that he shares with his through his Word. When we are feeling helpless, when our world seems to be caving in, when we seem so small in such a big world – we look to the one who is greater than Moses, greater than the world, who has the greatest message – a slam dunk and with authority!

Love - and when we look at our lives and our failures and feel about this tall, after looking at Moses’ message and come away as timid and fearful as the people of Israel, we remember what the Bible says, “that when our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts.” His message of love and forgiveness in Jesus

is far greater than any guilt we may know. He loves us, embraces us, blesses us so we can live at peace and in love with him and others.

The State of our Union with God? Jesus says EVERYTHING IS OK because He has all the authority you need! He is the greater go-between and has the greater message – which gives us the authority to live for him now and in eternity.

SDG – Phil Sievert

Note: Please remember this was written to be spoken. If you wish to share this with others let me know so I can include references and clean up the grammar so it will present God's Word clearly.