

FAITH COMES BY HEARING THE WORD OF GOD 7.4.2021

Let's look at the Bible readings for Sunday, July 4, to prepare for on-line, drive-in, and in-person worship (at 9:00 am) with Abounding Joy.

1ST READING: Ezekiel 2:1-5 God speaks to His prophet and to His people

¹The Lord God said to me, “**Son of man**, stand on your feet, and I will **speak with you**.” ²And as he **spoke to me**, the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard him **speaking to me**. ³And he said to me, “**Son of man**, I send you to the people of Israel, to nations of rebels, who have rebelled against me. They and their fathers

have transgressed against me to this very day. ⁴The descendants also are impudent and stubborn: I send you to them, and you shall **say to them**, ‘Thus says the Lord God.’

⁵And whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house) **they will know that a prophet has been among them.**”

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO EZEKIEL, CHAPTER 2

1. 90 times in this book, God calls Ezekiel “son of man,” a term which basically means a weak human being. In the New Testament, 88 times Jesus is referred to as “the Son of Man.” In what ways is Jesus weak, and why do you think the definite article “the” is used for Jesus?
2. God makes things happen by His Word. Do His people always listen to Him? Why, or why not?
3. In what ways and how does the Lord speak to us today? In what ways does He send us?

2ND READING: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 In Jesus, when we are weak, we are strong

¹I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. ²I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. ³And I know that this man was caught up into paradise — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows — ⁴and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. ⁵On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses — ⁶though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think

more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. ⁷So to keep me from becoming **conceited** because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming **conceited**. ⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. ⁹But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO SECOND CORINTHIANS, CHAPTER 12:

1. What does it mean to boast and why do we do it?
2. In verse 2 Paul most likely is talking about himself. What are the experiences that he had that led him to boast?
3. Why does he now, instead, boast in his weaknesses (vss. 5 and 9)?
4. What does it mean to be conceited? What led Paul to be conceited?
5. How is God's power made perfect in weakness? (vs. 9)
6. How can we be strong when we are weak? (vs. 10)

THE GOSPEL: Mark 6:1-13 Jesus and the disciples teach, preach, heal, and exorcise

¹Jesus went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ²And on the Sabbath he began to **teach** in the synagogue, and many who heard him were **astonished**, saying, "Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? ³Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. ⁴And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household." ⁵And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and **healed** them. ⁶And he **marveled** because of their unbelief. And he went about among the

villages **teaching**.

⁷And he called the twelve and began to **send** them out two by two, and gave them **authority over the unclean spirits**. ⁸He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff — no bread, no bag, no money in their belts — ⁹but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. ¹⁰And he said to them, "Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. ¹¹And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." ¹²So they went out and **proclaimed** that people should repent. ¹³And they **cast out many demons** and anointed with oil many who were sick and **healed** them.

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO MARK, CHAPTER 6:

1. In this text, in what ways is Jesus (His person, His message, and His ministry) resisted and rejected? What does that say about the reception we might receive as we share the Gospel?
2. What are the sociological and psychological reasons behind Jesus' statement in vs.4?
3. What might the disciples learn by "traveling light" as described in vss. 8 and 9?
4. Jesus and His disciples **taught, healed, and cast out demons**.
Is the church today called and empowered by God to do the same? (see James 5:13-18)
5. Verse 3 references Jesus' brothers and sisters. If the Bible clearly says this, why do some Christians say that Jesus had no siblings and that His mother, Mary, was a virgin for her whole life (and had no other children)? How do they get around this passage?
6. When and how does God exorcise us of the evil and the demons that afflict and possess us throughout our lives?