

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

January 28, 2018



THE LESSON

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

¹⁵The LORD your God will raise up a prophet like me from your community, from your fellow Israelites. He's the one you must listen to. ¹⁶That's exactly what you requested from the LORD your God at Horeb, on the day of the assembly, when you said, "I can't listen to the LORD my God's voice anymore or look at this great fire any longer. I don't want to die!"

¹⁷The LORD said to me: What they've said is right. ¹⁸I'll raise up

a prophet for them from among their fellow Israelites—one just like you. I'll put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. ¹⁹I myself will hold accountable anyone who doesn't listen to my words, which that prophet will speak in my name. ²⁰However, any prophet who arrogantly speaks a word in my name that I haven't commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods—that prophet must die.

THE RESPONSE Psalm 111

Praise the LORD! I thank the LORD with all my heart in the company of those who do right, in the congregation.

²The works of the LORD are magnificent; they are treasured by all who desire them. ³God's deeds are majestic and glorious. God's righteousness stands forever.

⁴God is famous for his wondrous works. The LORD is full of mercy and compassion. ⁵God gives food to those who honor him. God remembers his covenant forever. ⁶God proclaimed his powerful deeds to his people and gave them what had belonged to other nations.

⁷God's handiwork is honesty and justice; all God's rules are trustworthy—⁸they are established always and forever: they are fulfilled with truth and right doing.

⁹God sent redemption for his people; God commanded that his covenant last forever. Holy and awesome is God's name!

¹⁰Fear of the LORD is where wisdom begins; sure knowledge is for all who keep God's laws. God's praise lasts forever!

THE EPISTLE

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Now concerning meat that has been sacrificed to a false god: we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes people arrogant, but love builds people up. ²If anyone thinks they know something, they don't yet know as much as they should know. ³But if someone loves God, then they are known by God.

⁴So concerning the actual food involved in these sacrifices to false gods, we know that a false god isn't anything in this world, and that there is no God except for the one God. ⁵Granted, there are so-called "gods," in heaven and on the earth, as there are many gods and many lords. ⁶However, for us believers,

There is one God the Father.

All things come from him,
and we belong to him.

And there is one Lord Jesus
Christ.

All things exist through him,
and we live through him.

⁷But not everybody knows this. Some are eating this food as though it really is food sacrificed to a real idol, because they were used to idol worship until now. Their conscience is weak because it has been damaged. ⁸Food won't bring us close to God. We're not missing out if we don't eat, and we don't have any advantage if we do eat. ⁹But watch out or else this freedom of yours might be a problem for those who are weak. ¹⁰Suppose someone sees you (the person who has knowledge) eating in an idol's temple. Won't the person with a weak conscience be encouraged to eat the meat sacrificed to false gods? ¹¹The weak brother or sister for whom Christ died is destroyed by your knowledge. ¹²You sin against Christ if you sin against your brothers and sisters and hurt their weak consciences this way. ¹³This is why, if food causes the downfall of my brother or sister, I won't eat meat ever again, or else I may cause my brother or sister to fall.

THE GOSPEL Mark 1:21-28

²¹Jesus and his followers went into Capernaum. Immediately on the Sabbath Jesus entered the synagogue and started teaching. ²²The people were amazed by his teaching, for he was teaching them with authority, not like the legal experts. ²³Suddenly, there in the synagogue, a person with an evil spirit screamed, ²⁴"What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to de-

stroy us? I know who you are. You are the holy one from God."

²⁵"Silence!" Jesus said, speaking harshly to the demon. "Come out of him!" ²⁶The unclean spirit shook him and screamed, then it came out.

²⁷Everyone was shaken and questioned among themselves, "What's this? A new teaching with authority! He even commands unclean spirits and they obey him!" ²⁸Right away the news about him spread throughout the entire region of Galilee.

Scripture quotations are taken from the Common English Bible, copyright 2011. Used by permission. All rights reserved.