

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time - B - 2018
Isa. 50.4-9///James 2.14-18///Mark 8.27-35

→there once was a married lady who went out shopping one day and when she returned home...she brought with her a beautiful...but expensive dress.

→she showed it to her husband who almost had a stroke when he learned how much it cost

→she agreed with him that it was very expensive but she said...when she tried it on she looked so beautiful and couldn't resist the temptation to buy it.

→her husband told her you have said: "get behind me, Satan."

→she replied...that's exactly what I said and Satan said "you look fabulous from back here too!"

Today...we hear the familiar story of Peter's confession of faith

-→Jesus asks his followers.... "who do people say that I am"...and one by one they reply..."John the Baptist....Elijah.....one of the prophets" until Peter responds "you are the Messiah."

→but **then** what happens....Jesus begins to teach the disciples telling them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly, be rejected by the elders and be put to death..

→and...not liking this scenario...Peter begins to rebuke and scold Jesus for talking this way...

→and in turn....Jesus rebukes Peter telling him "get behind me Satan."

→it is an interesting exchange between the both of them that has meaning for you and me today as we strive to live the gospel message in our lives.

→when Jesus tells Peter: “get behind me, Satan,” he wasn’t calling Peter a devil as much as he was saying to Peter stop doing Satan’s job by trying to tempt him from doing God’s will in his life....to suffer and die for the redemption of the world.

→it is a situation that we sometimes find ourselves in as well...because quite often **we do** Satan’s job by tempting others and ourselves away from doing God’s will in order to fulfill our own desires and our wants.

PAUSE

→Peter answers rightly that Jesus was the Messiah...but he wasn’t ready to accept the suffering that Jesus would undergo

→i.o.w. Peter forgot that he was Jesus’ follower when he called Jesus aside and started to instruct him....so Jesus....literally puts Peter back in his place.

PAUSE

→as we see...things are not always as they seem.

→in our desire to come to quick conclusions...we sometimes come to the wrong conclusions....that is what Peter does today.

→there is a story is told about Elijah the prophet...that perhaps illustrates this point.

→it seems that one day...Elijah dressed in rags of a beggar and knocked at the door of a home where a wedding celebration was being held.

→the father of the bride opened the door and Elijah asked if there was room in the party for him.

--the father slammed the door in his face...saying he didn’t want a beggar in his midst...

→and so Elijah returned sometime after...this time however he was dressed in the garb of a fine gentleman...and he was welcomed in with great respect.

→so upon entering the celebration...Elijah went over to the table and stuffed food into his vest and shirt pockets and poured wine all over his clothes.

→when the host came rushing over demanding an explanation...Elijah replied....

“when I came to your house in the rags of a beggar...I was refused entry....but when I came to your house in the clothes of a gentlemen I was admitted.

I can only conclude that you invited my *clothes* to the feast...so I have proceeded to *feed* them.

---this is what happens to Peter...and today you and I are being asked the very same question by Jesus....”*who do you say that I am.*”

→and to say w/Peter "you are the Messiah" is a proclamation that Jesus is OUR SAVIOR

BUT to accept and understand the consequences of that proclamation is a whole different story...

→because it means we must believe and live our lives according to the challenge of Christ's message

→that is what James means in today's 2nd reading when he writes...

“*What good is it if someone says they have faith....but not works to back it up*”

→i.o.w. to say Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior....to be a follower and a believer...means much more than just saying the words

→it means....actually being a person in whom Christ lives....with a spirit and attitude that is rooted in the Gospel message....and colors and influences our thoughts and actions....

→which very simply put....requires actions, and not just mere words

→and to live with this type of spirit and attitude is difficult at times because it demands us

→to forgive when we would rather to strike back

→to keep on going when we would rather quit

→and to be open and accepting when we are so ///[and] mad///[and] frustrated

PAUSE

→every day of our lives....all of us are continually being asked the same question Jesus asks today....*"who do you say that I am?"*

→and as we see from way back then...ti even today.....words are not enough...piety is not enough....in fact coming to Church is not enough

---it is the way in which we live our lives, and the way we act and talk, towards one another, that expresses our true answer

PAUSE

"who do you say that I am?"

→when you think about it, how we live out that answer determines whether we are in front of Satan or behind him