

## REFLECTION

### Based on Bible Readings from Deuteronomy 18:15-20 and Mark 1:21-28

Moses, the leader of God's people chosen out of the people, knew his time was coming to an end and knew he would not be a leader forever. Assures the people that God will raise a prophet just like him for them. A prophet just like Him, who will take them out of Egypt,<sup>1</sup> walk with them through their wilderness, be their mediator, and not compromise God's word. Therefore, who will this promised prophet be? The testimony about Moses in the last chapter of Deuteronomy describes the incredible magnitude of his role as a prophet.

In Deuteronomy 34: <sup>10</sup> *Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,* <sup>11</sup> *who did all those signs and wonders the LORD sent him to do in Egypt—to Pharaoh and all his officials and whole land.* <sup>12</sup> ***For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.***

This is the testimony written about Moses; a man the Scriptures testifies about. So, who is the one coming who will be like Moses. On the other side, we know Moses had some instances where he disobeyed God.<sup>2</sup> He knew all that but did not allow them to influence him negatively, he did what he could as a leader, so he can confidently say, you will get a leader **like me**. Sometimes, in our lives, we allow our failures to overshadow the trust God has in us. We use self-defeating words to ourselves; hence, we say words that predict and even conclude that we are failures. Can we say, like Moses

*“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me<sup>3</sup>”*

Who will this prophet be?

Firstly, we must ask ourselves the role of a prophet. The meaning of the Hebrew root for prophet is uncertain, but it is most likely "**one who is called**" or "**one who calls.**"<sup>4</sup> Prophets

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 14

<sup>2</sup> Numbers 20:1-13

<sup>3</sup> Deut. 18:15

<sup>4</sup> David Forney, *Feasting on the Word*.

are called to give God's words to the people, bring them back to God, and remind them of their covenantal relationship. We saw last week of the prophet Jonah.<sup>5</sup> Prophets must not utter the words of God, or else they will be under penalty; no wonder none of the prophets in Old Testament ever wanted this job.<sup>6</sup>

If the meaning of the prophets is the "**one who is called**," then let's reflect on these words from Peter.

*"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him **who called you out of darkness** into his wonderful light. **1 Pet. 2:9***

Even though there is a prophetic ministry, we too from 2 Peter, have been called by God to be the prophetic voice of our God, to speak words that would bring people out of their metaphorical Egypt. Like prophetic voices of the old, Martin Luther Jnr and others. Who stood to speak strongly against injustices. Where is this century's Martin Luther King Jnr? Where are **God's people** of old who challenged the establishment and called the people to faithfulness? Where are all the prophets gone? Where are all God's people gone? Those who were not afraid of revealing the very voice of God to the people.

Encouraging our young ones that there is hope in Jesus, there is hope in being the follower of God. Encouraging our youth that even though there are many misconceptions people are generating against the people of God, we testify that our God is not as it is being portrayed out there. Moses, before Pharaoh, spoke with authority; the Lord God said, "**Let my people go**"<sup>7</sup> with such authoritative language before the powerful ruler at the time. Who will this prophet be, like Moses?

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<sup>5</sup> Jonah 3

<sup>6</sup> David Forney, *Feasting on the Word*.

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 9:1

Moses said: *“the Lord... will raise up... a prophet like **me**”* the promise has both individual and corporate significance. By the time of New Testament times, it was understood as a precursor of the Messiah or of the Messiah himself.<sup>8</sup> This is evident in the following verses:

*John 1:21,45 “And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the prophet?’ **He answered, ‘No.’**”<sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and said to him, **‘We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus’ son of Joseph** (from among your own people) from Nazareth.’*

*John 6:14 When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, **‘This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.’***

*Acts 3:20-22 “So that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah appointed for you, that is, Jesus,<sup>21</sup> who must remain in heaven until the time of universal restoration that God announced long ago through his holy prophets.<sup>22</sup> Moses said, “The Lord your God will raise up for you from your own people a prophet like me. You must listen to whatever he tells you. (ref. Deut. 18:18)*

*Acts 7:37: “This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, “God will raise up a prophet for you from your own people as he raised me up.” (ref. Deut.18”18)*

From these verses, Jesus is one of us, God from God with authority. From Mark's reading. *“They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority.”*<sup>9</sup> Like Moses, Jesus came to lead us out of slavery, out of the chains of this world. Like Moses, Jesus came to lead us on a journey through our "Wilderness." Wherever Jesus went and saw people in need, abused, or neglected, he moved with compassion. Our community today needs more of Jesus, needs us.

Boundaries in Capernaum did not limit Jesus; it was on Sabbath day when Mark recorded that he healed the demon-possessed person. Healing on Sabbath, the Jewish law forbids at that time. They were all amazed and kept asking one another, 'What is this? A new

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<sup>8</sup> F. F. Bruce, Zondervan Bible Commentary.

<sup>9</sup> Mark 1:27

teaching—with authority!” Jesus’ authority was used to set people free from bondage and for healing. He teaches by healing; His gospel is healing word and action. Mark wants to demonstrate that Jesus' word is effective and powerful. His word is action, and his action is embedded in his word. The authority is not only in the teaching but also in the action. The forces of evil know of the healing power of Jesus' word. Jesus' powerful teaching is not only fresh to the ears of the faithful, but it also disrupts the undisturbed presence of evil.

Jesus commands in authority— “Be silent” -v25.

If we are the disciples or followers of Jesus, then let reflect on what Mark says about what Jesus said to his disciples or followers.

*“And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message,<sup>15</sup> and to have authority to cast out demons.” Mark 3:14-15*

We have been given the authority to command evil out of our community. We need to silence the evil in our neighbourhood. Amid so many voices, one voice eventually resounds. There are so many words, but that one word is the expected word. What are we experiencing in our lives that we need to say by faith, "*Be silent.*" God has given us his spirit to command and to speak out with authority. These words of authority should be a word of healing, a word of comfort, a word of assurance and a word of hope.

The demon’s cry: “*What do you want with us?*” This can be translated as Why are you interfering with us? For the demons knew that the establishing by Jesus of the kingdom of God, involved their destruction.

They acknowledge Jesus' status as '*Holy One of God*' and the fact that his coming marks the end of their domination over human beings, they were uncomfortable. In Mark’s reading, the crowd sees Jesus as a powerful miracle worker, but they do not recognise that he is the Son of God. But we believe and affirm Jesus as the Son of God; he is our Saviour, and through him, we are called children of God.

We are the Church, the body of Christ, which has to do with those whom the Spirit of God dwells.<sup>10</sup> Our lives are to speak God's Word authoritatively. Christ calls his followers to minister in his authority. We share these healing words with our family, neighbours, and community. The body of Christ, the Church, is a place of healing for all. The Church should be a place of hope.

Just as Moses led God's people out of Slavery, Jesus is with us, giving us the authority to bring others out of this darkened world. Jesus is with us! His authority rests with his Church. Let us use this authority with humility and respect to bring healing to our community in whichever way God's Spirit leads through our prayers and reflection.

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<sup>10</sup> R Kent Hughes, *Preaching the Word- Mark: Jesus, Servant and Saviour*.