**January 31, 2012 – Your Prophetic Jesus Voice**

# **Based on Deuteronomy 18:15-20 and Mark 1:21-28**

**Prayer:**

From the ancient text of Deuteronomy Yahweh (God) speaks encouraging words. ***I will raise up for them a prophet[***[***c***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2018:15-20&version=NRSV&interface=print&showfootnotes=no&showxrefs=no&showheadings=no&showwoj=no#fen-NRSV-5403c)***] like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet,[***[***d***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2018:15-20&version=NRSV&interface=print&showfootnotes=no&showxrefs=no&showheadings=no&showwoj=no#fen-NRSV-5403d)***] who shall speak to them everything that I command.*** God speaks to bringing forward a prophet from within the people.

Perhaps this is God saying that the prophetic voice can come from any one of us. Prophetic voice echoes God’s will for justice, fairness, equality, compassion and of course unconditional love. Prophetic voice speaks to Jesus in the world. And prophetic voice can cast out demons within and around us.

That is in part what Amanda Gorman did during her speech at President Biden’s inauguration I spoke about last week. (For those of you not with us last week, Amanda was the 22-yr. old author and poet that offered a passionate plea about climbing the hill to reconciliation and nation building. Her sharing captured a nation caught up in chaos and conflict).

In many ways Amanda was Jesus in today’s gospel, rebuking the unclean spirit from the man demanding ***“Be silent and come out of him.”*** ***“And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.”***

Whatever the unclean spirit was, it was in no hurry to leave. When Amanda shared her dream, there were many who saw Jesus again, or perhaps saw Jesus for the first time. They were comforted and encouraged. But there were also many, possessed by demonic forces that will resist the call to “come out of him, come out of society, come out and be gone.”

When we use our Jesus voice, it is a prophetic voice. That voice brings forth compassion and tenderness. It is a birth place for harmony and reconciliation. It enfolds, holds, nurtures and encourages. It can cast our demons of loneliness, fear, anxiety and depression. It is also a prophetic voice casting out demons that breed corruption, greed, selfishness, racism and prejudice.

 We know all to well such evils abound today albeit we wish that were not the case.

I am praying that there is an explanation for Sara Morrison’s experience last Friday when she was turned away from the Kitimat Hospital overdue in her pregnancy and in labour. Her uncle drove her to Terrace, an hour away, where she delivered a still born child. Sara is indigenous. If she was turned away because of her status, this unconscionable injustice needs the prophetic voice of Jesus to speak out and demand the demon of racial prejudice leave. It needs the voice of ordinary prophets like you and I to be Jesus in the world. That might be the only time Sarah experiences Jesus.

We can cast out demons in many ways. We can call out injustices, speak publicly like Amanda Gorman, perhaps run for political office, live and share the gospel, sing harmonies of love and share our prayers for hope and peace. On those occasions perhaps, we might be the only voice of Jesus to be heard.

So how does that make us feel? **“How does it feel to be the only Jesus many people will ever experience?”** Or at the very least, how does it feel knowing you were Jesus in someone’s life for even a moment?

I met up with an individual before Christmas, a stranger from out of town. She needed to talk and had no one close to share with. Her husband was in an institution and her son was one step away from being homeless. She carried a huge burden. She was trying to live in hope but she had serious doubts about how things were going to turn out, especially for her son. She talked, I listened, we met for a good hour. I offered a prayer as she left and she was grateful. Perhaps that was the first time Jesus met her in a long while.

Apparently her son was too embarrassed to ask for any assistance so I arranged to drop of some food to him. At the delivery point, his expressions told the story. He was humble and sincerely grateful. That day I was likely the only Jesus he would encounter. Perhaps that was the only Jesus he would encounter for weeks or months. Perhaps that was his first visit from Jesus in a long while. Who is to know?

I would encourage you to recall a time when you were Jesus in the world. Don’t be bashful, you all have lots of examples. Perhaps think of a time you offered something of yourself and how that might have made a difference. How does that feel?

Most of you good folk in Penticton will not know that I lost my buddy and best friend Liam in mid December. Liam was a Flatcoat Retriever and we were inseparable. Well the outpouring of sympathy was incredible, so very supportive and humbling. Phone calls, emails, and cards. Several folks on the street stopped me and expressed their condolences when I answered their question, where is your dog? It was very moving and I was truly grateful. How does it feel knowing you may have been the Jesus in my days then?

Several of you were on-line the evening we offered a candlelight service for the pastor here at the community church. Since his passing, how has our pastoral care, our Jesus voice resonated with his wife and family? How does it feel to have been a part of that?

Some of us did a drive by and offered a blessing to Peter and Moneca as they prepared to leave and relocate to Alberta. They were elated. How does it make you feel to have been a part of that?

I am sure down the road from us at Penticton United there are any number of examples of the same thing. You have folks in care homes, institutions or grieving and you can’t visit so you phone or perhaps see one another on Facebook, Messenger or Zoom. You will know I expect, how much they appreciate it. How do you feel knowing you have spread that kind of nurturing love within your community?

I expect you all know the story of the Grinch. Do you recall the part in the story where he is standing in the snow cold and miserable because he could not keep Christmas from Coming? (Picture) Suddenly out of his frustration comes a different feeling and something happens. And the Grinch says to his dog Max, “I feel all warm and fuzzy inside.” (Picture)

That’s a good way to describe how I feel when I know something has gone well, when I know somehow, that some simple thing I may have done or been a part of, has made a difference. And that my friends is a gift. The incredible gifts one can receive from letting Jesus live in you are endless and amazing. It’s like watching a child open a Christmas gift.

Well at least that is my experience. I can’t speak for you but when we leave this place today think about that and let yourself be surrounded by light, spirit and love. And celebrate that.

Our prophetic voice is critical in this world as it has been for centuries past. All of us have that gift. That voice calls out wrongs and exorcises demons of cruelty, manipulation, coercion, and hatred. We must continue to be those voices.

In that work, remember and celebrate the gift that you receive knowing that your voice may be the Jesus someone needs to hear and how that might make a difference.

Amen, and I thank you for listening this morning.