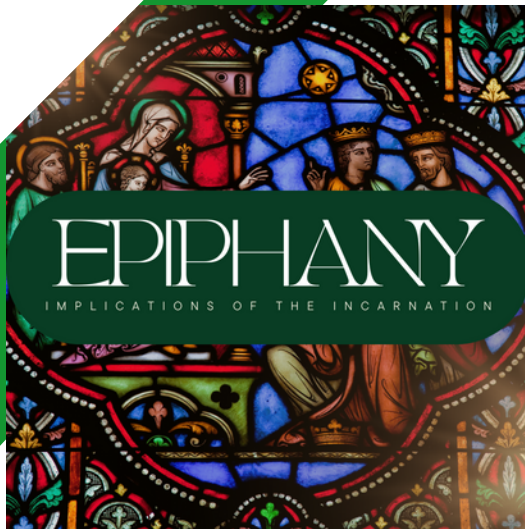
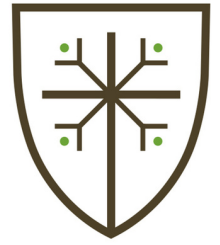


SERMON NOTES



January 28, 2024

SERMON INFO

TITLE

"Fame's Urgency"

PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

TEXTS

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Philippians 3:7-11

Mark 1:28, 32-45

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. How is Jesus's handling of fame different from what we might expect?
2. Instead of simply seeking after a return to God's presence like the leper, what kind of conditions do often put on answering God's call on our lives?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

This week, Tim continued our Epiphany sermon series looking at Jesus's fame and how he handled it very differently from how we might imagine fame in our world. We considered three points – the sense of urgency in Mark, the Son's response to fame, and the leper's request.

Sense of Urgency

After Jesus calls his first disciples in Mark, his teaching is immediately interrupted by an evil spirit. Mark's focus in his gospel shows that everyone and everything is inexplicably drawn to Jesus with a sense of urgency. The crowds and even the demons surround him. Do we heed Mark's point here? Is there a sense of urgency for us with Jesus or in attending to our own souls? This sense of urgency is what makes him famous throughout the country. Everywhere he goes he draws people to him.

The Son's Response

People are coming to Jesus from all directions. And Jesus's response to the demons and the crowds alike is to rise early in the morning and go to pray. Jesus knows that fame cannot be the foundation or driving force behind anyone's life, but prayer can be. Prayer is not getting stuff from God, it is getting God himself. For Jesus, his driving force is not the crowds and the fame but prayer and communion with his Father. The joy of his sonship with the Father is the foundation of his life.

The Leper's Request

The leper's word choice in our gospel passage is significant. He doesn't ask Jesus to heal him or make him well. He asks him to make him clean. Clean is a Jewish, religious word. Lepers lived their lives as ceremonially unclean, a lonely, touchless existence. They were unable to go to the temple to worship. Even worse, it was believed that leprosy was a punishment for doing something wrong. The leper asks Jesus to give him back God. The very presence of God and communion with him is what he wants, the same as Jesus.

We are the leper in Mark's story. And we are called to be this kind of leper – the kind who comes to Jesus, even though it could cost him his life, and puts his every last hope in Jesus' mercy to him. He says in essence, "If you mercifully will, you can give me back God's presence." Jesus became the leper, the outcast, the unclean on the cross in order that we might be welcomed back.