

## Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time -- 2012 -- Year B

Some words can open doors and others can slam them shut.

In the time of Christ, it was largely the common folks who were amazed at the way Jesus used simple words and actions to reveal God's Kingdom with authority. The religious leaders on the other hand were always upset with the new words and new ideas that Jesus was preaching about God's Love and God's Mercy.

Words can have different meanings to different people. Words seem to have a power all in themselves--Christ's words have the power to heal & to change, as in today's Gospel. Other words have the power to harm. They can be like long sharp knives, slicing others to pieces. Or short sharp ones cutting, hacking our opponents to shreds: whether they are our neighbors, co-workers, politicians, pastors, or other students in school.

Our words have power. What we say to others and about others has power: positive or negative--as we choose.

We can gossip and use our words to constantly criticize and find fault with others. Or we can speak words that uplift and encourage those around us.

Our words can also dismiss people when we say things like: Go away--You're nothing but a failure--You're Not welcome here... Or we can withhold our words, treating others with cold stony silence. Then there are those words we only speak when driving--not here in church!

Christ's words in today's Gospel were FEW and powerful. Yet they completely set a paralyzed man free with a simple phrase: BE QUIET, come out of him. Maybe we too need to listen to that phrase again: BE QUIET!

Some years ago a monk named Matthew Kelty said, "One of the most powerful tools used by Satan today is NOISE."

- Noise can block out God's Word to us.
- Noise can obscure God's Call to us.
- Noise can push the Holy Spirit out of our hearts.

So today we all need to LEARN TO LISTEN. Maybe then you and I can say those words that need so much to be said. We can begin to say things like "I apologize " or "I was wrong" or "Your 're forgiven" or "It's OK, come home." Let's say what we need to say to open a door, to take down a wall, especially in our homes and families.

Before my Mom died she would always end her phone conversations by saying "Love You". This week maybe we could all make an extra effort to use our words more thoughtfully--to help and to heal--not to criticize or condemn.

May we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus then and pray for this Grace in our lives this week.

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