

## **Speak Out in Faith or Shut Your Mouth!**

‘A nun in a contemplative order was allowed to speak one sentence every ten years. Her first utterance was: “I don’t like the food”. Ten years later she said, “I don’t like the beds”. Thirty years went by and she said, “I don’t like either the food or beds and I sure would like to get out of here”. Mother Superior [replied]: “Then why don’t you go. Ever since you’ve been here, it has been nothing but gripe, gripe, gripe”.’

Can you imagine living that way? I suppose it could be very peaceful, what with no conversations, no possibility of eavesdropping, purposely or inadvertently, on anyone else’s conversations, because there simply aren’t any conversations to be heard! No radios, no TVs, no internet. Though no one is in solitary confinement per se, because you’re with other sisters, or brothers if at a monastery, at meal times, in chapel services and devotional times, it seems that such enforced silence could get monotonous, even oppressive. It truly does have its place, for some, if for no other reason that it would quite possibly come very close to precluding any rash words or flippant comments from escaping one’s mouth! Which, it’s my observation, particularly when looking at the current state of “public” discourse in our social-media-connected world today, would be a very, very good thing! Why, what

is allegedly dialogue and discussion these days on public forums and in person-to-person encounters is often little more than mindless, irrational, psychotic, obscene shouting, a virtual hurling of invectives toward others without the slightest semblance of actual thought and reasoned meaning. Am I wrong or right? Would not a lot more shutting of people's mouths, a lot fewer comments on social platforms, a lot more quiet, replaced by a lot more rational, reasoned, logical *thought*, actually make a much needed improvement in our national state of mind? Don't hold your breath. Just yet! Because at some point, the nation as a whole is running out of breath and is going to have to stop and inhale a big breath. When it does, I heartily expect that Holy Spirit is going to move in to many people, giving them the much needed pause to, at least momentarily but probably more enduringly, clear their minds, eyes and ears to finally begin to understand what's really going on, and how, unless we keep ourselves attuned to Holy Spirit, we are often little more than pawns on a demonic chessboard, moved hither and thither at the behest of evil powers and rich, evil people.

Consider our hero, Peter. In last week's Gospel, the Lord asks him and the other disciples point blank, in Matthew 16:15: "But Who do you say I am?" Peter answers in the next verse: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God". And the Lord praises him, saying in the next verse: "You are blessed, Simon son of John, because My Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being". But then, just

minutes later, after the Lord prophesied what lay ahead for Himself personally, Peter, in a burst of manly, almost protective pride, blurts out, asserting, “Heaven forbid, Lord,” he said. “This will never happen to You!” And how does Lord Jesus take this? Now this is verse 23, only 7 verses later! “Get away from Me, satan! you are a dangerous trap to Me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God’s”. Whew!! From praise to castigation in one fell swoop!! What just happened?

Well, Peter had heard from Holy Spirit showing him Who Lord Jesus actually is. But just moments later, like Eve in the Garden who parroted the devil’s words to husband Adam so he would also eat the forbidden fruit, now Peter becomes the devil’s own mouthpiece, *tempting* Lord Jesus to bypass all the prophesied torture, suffering, and death that lay ahead of Him. Why, there had to be an easier way which would avoid all that unpleasantness! Right? And those very words that came out of Peter’s mouth were the devil’s own words implanted into him by the devil himself. Peter had just heard from Holy Spirit, and now he’d just heard from the devil. We know this because Lord Jesus specifically says so: “Get away from Me, satan!” Can you imagine how Peter felt? “What did I say?” Yes, indeed, what did *you* say? And we should ask ourselves that very question over and over and over again, so that we let our mouths run away with themselves fewer and fewer times each day. Because our words do carry weight, and unimaginable authority because we were given it by

God Who originally ordained us with the office of Dominion over all this planet and its creatures! Yet we run off our mouths saying things that undermine our very own lives, and God's kingdom purposes on Earth. Mindlessly, that is, without thinking, we put our feet in our mouths, create headaches, quandaries, predicaments and cans of worms galore for us and future generations to have to deal with, making countless lives far more difficult, precarious and shorter than they would, could and should otherwise be.

Besides Peter, another example is right here in II Kings 6 and 7. Recall from last week, chapter 6 ended gruesomely. Israel's capital city was under siege, blockaded on all sides. Nothing was getting in. The underground water supply apparently was enough to survive on, but the food had all run out. Imagine our modern-day cities. What if all the trucks stopped bringing in food from thousands of miles away? How long before all the food in the grocery stores was sold out? How long before people starting killing each other and eating each other? Horrible to imagine. But this is exactly what was happening in sin-filled Samaria. Two women had agreed that they would kill each of their presumably infant sons and share them to eat in order to survive. Well, one was killed, but when it was the other mother's turn, she balked and hid him to save his life, for the very short time they might still live. The king was powerless to do anything about it. It doesn't record that he prayed. Yet he blamed God, projecting on God all the sins that he himself and the nation as a whole had committed

against God. As if God were somehow to blame! Preposterous! Exactly what's been happening in our country today though the names have changed. So King Joram sent an officer to find Elisha, haul him before the king to be summarily beheaded. Blame God. Can't arrest God and put Him in custody? Well, get the man of God, the next closest thing. Elisha, the recognized head of the prophets, *the* man of God of that era, was to experience having his head separated from the rest of his body.

But God had other plans. Man's plans matter nothing to God. As we'll soon see here in II Kings, we'll soon see here in America in the coming several months!! The official messenger arrives at Elisha's house. As forewarned by Holy Spirit, Elisha has the doors to this house bolted shut. He and the other prophets were safe inside. The officer, and the king arrive, who pronounces his "grievance" against God. Unable to break down the door, as apparently God somehow prevents the king and his official from getting through it, Elisha instead delivers a message to Joram, recorded in 7:1: "This is what the Lord says: By this time tomorrow in the markets of Samaria, six quarts of choice flour will cost only one piece of silver, and twelve quarts of barley grain will cost only one piece of silver". How wonderful would that be! But, "from a human point of view", it was absolutely impossible. So, the king's official said exactly that, outright contradicting Elisha, saying: "That couldn't happen even if the Lord opened the windows of heaven!" Would that that man had just kept his mouth

shut!! For God doesn't like to be called a liar. Nobody does! So God replies, ominously, through Elisha, "You will see it happen with your own eyes, but you won't be able to eat any of it!"

We've already read what happened. God, in His awesome, indescribable mercy, caused Ben-hadad's great Aramean army to hear a massive army approaching. Perhaps God opened their ears to hear the sounds of an army of angels rustling near them. However God did it, the Arameans became terrified, literally dropped everything, and fled for their very lives. So much booty, plunder and supplies were left behind, that the Israelites feasted for weeks afterwards, as the price of bread and other commodities fell by over 1000%! Just as Elisha had prophesied. The king's official saw it all, but he hadn't spoken in faith, instead calling God a liar, and was trampled to death at the city gate he was manning. The obvious "moral" of this story is, Never, never, never contradict God's word. Never call Him a liar. Instead, speak in faith! Disregard entirely the "human point of view", for the human point of view does not and can not see the whole picture. We're bombarded with so-called "news", "discoveries", blah, blah, blah every day, every minute of every day. Do not listen to it! Instead, pray! Pray, and then be silent. Not as silent as those nuns, but be quiet and listen to hear Holy Spirit speaking to you in His still, small voice. If you listen closely, you'll hear Him speaking peace that passes understanding into the very heart of your soul. For you see, prayer has more benefits than you ever imagined!!

