

Fulfillment or Waiting First Week in Ordinary Time Tuesday, January 12, 2016
8:15 AM 1 SM 1:9-20; **Mk 1:21-28** (We have to trust that God's work is begun, but it's not finished.)

“The people were astonished at his teaching for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes.”

The word “authority” in the Greek language, and this is written in Greek originally, is *exousia*; *ousia* means being; *exousia* something coming from being, so therefore basic, creative, creating, and therefore very real. So their observation was that **Jesus had a reality to him, and his teachings had a rootedness in being that the scribes and Pharisees didn't have.** Their ideas were rooted in their heads. Their ideas were rooted on paper. It was the scrolls that they copied. It was the scrolls they interpreted. It was a mental exercise. This is not having authority. **Authority isn't on paper or in one's head; it's in being itself**—that's the idea.

This whole mission of Jesus was inaugurated with the statement, “This is the time of fulfillment.” Now we cannot overgeneralize that. When Jesus said, “This is the time of fulfillment,” what he meant was that **right now in this very moment the will of God is being fulfilled**, and the demonstration of that is the deliverance of this demonic from some unclean spirit. That's an example of fulfillment. It doesn't mean that now with Jesus there's this new general period of history called the “time of fulfillment,” not necessarily. **It meant specifically in Jesus' own talking the word of God was fulfilled. His word was sufficient to bring about what it said.** He healed the sick by word. He forgave sin by word. He delivered the oppressed by word. That's what it means: fulfillment.

Now what about us? **Is this the time of fulfillment? Sometimes.** When a prayer is answered, that's the time of fulfillment. When we are healed from distress or sickness, that's the time of fulfillment. When we are delivered from oppression, that's the time of fulfillment. Is that

every time, all the time? Well, no, we know it isn't. We know we offer prayers to God and wait. So this time, our time here and now, our now is mixed. **It's sometimes the time of the fulfillment and sometimes the time of waiting.** We mustn't imagine the waiting is over; it's not.

But if we wait too long **we could become despairing. That's why we need hope. But hope is based on something else: trust.** We have to trust that God's work is begun, but it's not finished. That's the very nature of our lives: begun but not finished; started but not ended. Sometimes some of our Christian brothers and sisters will say, "Have you been saved? I have been saved." Well, that isn't the way the Bible would speak of it actually. That's not biblical thinking, especially it's not Pauline thinking, but it's not from the gospels either. If you have been saved, then you must be quite dead, finished, your life is over. **Salvation is the ultimate goal. And if we move towards salvation, we have moments of fulfillment, moments of consolation, moments of healing, moments of deliverance, and then periods of dryness and waiting.** And in those periods of waiting and dryness it doesn't mean nothing is going on. There is something happening, but we don't see it or feel it. **It's a deepening of our trust. It's an awaking of our hope in the fulfillment that God promises. But it's a long journey.**

These stories of Jesus' early life are all about beginnings, and in a way it's always **a time to begin.** But then we are not always beginning; **we are also moving on.** And that's the nature of Christian life. So we take these readings; we listen: Where are we today? Is today a day of fulfillment or is today a day of waiting?