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June 3, 2021

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“Praise the Lord, O my soul!” (Psalm 146).

Tobit 11:5-17; Mark 12:35-37

Today’s short Gospel from Mark seems to encapsulate one of the themes important to the early church about Jesus’ identity. He is shown in the temple responding to some scribes who held that the Christ is the son of David. Jesus quotes Psalm 110, in which the author, presumed to be David, calls the Christ his Lord. How can he be his son if he is Lord? The crowds delight to hear Jesus win the debate. Early in his Gospel (1:22), Mark says the crowds were amazed at Jesus because “he spoke with authority, unlike their scribes.”

Since the church claimed that Jesus was both Lord and Christ, he was more than a descendant of David; He was David’s Lord, the Son of God. These scriptural debates have less meaning for us today, but they give us a window into the conflicts over messianic identity in Jesus’s time and among the rabbis rejecting the church’s claims. The Gospel writers also went to great lengths to show that Jesus did not break the Law but fulfilled it.

Faith is the basis for our trust that Jesus is Lord and that his words have authority over our lives. One test of this faith is to ask if reading the daily Word gives us a

sense of delight. If the Spirit makes the Word resonate with our experience or fills our minds with insight, we know we are encountering a Living Voice and not just print on the page. We receive both message and messenger. We are meeting the Author personally.

This is the goal of the practice of *Lectio Divina*, a slow, prayerful reading of the Word to seek the personal encounter we believe God is seeking with us. A genuine conversation also contains the word conversion, turning our hearts toward the source, the Author of Life. Isn't this what Jesus meant when he promised that those who seek will find, who ask will be answered, and who knock will have the door open?

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