

March 14, 2024

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Lent



Center for Spiritual Development

LOVE IN YOUR HEART

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Today's Gospel

Jesus said to the Jews: "If I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is not true. But there is another who testifies on my behalf, and I know that the testimony he gives on my behalf is true. You sent emissaries to John, and he testified to the truth. I do not accept human testimony, but I say this so that you may be saved. He was a burning and shining lamp, and for a while you were content to rejoice in his light. But I have testimony greater than John's. The works that the Father gave me to accomplish, these works that I perform testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me. Moreover, the Father who sent me has testified on my behalf. But you have never heard his voice nor seen his form, and you do not have his word remaining in you, because you do not believe in the one whom he has sent. You search the Scriptures, because you think you have eternal life through them; even they testify on my behalf. But you do not want to come to me to have life.

"I do not accept human praise; moreover, I know that you do not have the love of God in you. I came in the name of my Father, but you do not accept

me; yet if another comes in his own name, you will accept him. How can you believe, when you accept praise from one another and do not seek the praise that comes from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father: the one who will accuse you is Moses, in whom you have placed your hope. For if you had believed Moses, you would have believed me, because he wrote about me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

JOHN 5:31-47

Reflection

The readings for today, including the psalm, reflect on how the people believe in Moses, yet they struggle with believing in Jesus, whom the Father has sent to them. Jesus' words in the gospel are hard to hear and yet understandable since the people are not recognizing Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus says, "I do not accept human praise; moreover, I know that you do not have the love of God in you. I came in the name of my Father, but you do not accept me... ."

Rather than a lot of words today, I offer two questions for us to ponder that flow from John's gospel. Jesus says, "But you do not want to come to me to have life." This statement from Jesus can be posed to us today as: "Do you want to come to me to have life?"

Stepping back and pondering this question in depth can be challenging. At first blush, I can say "yes" very easily as I do want to come to Jesus to have life. On the other hand, I can see where I have looked elsewhere for life. Being a disciple takes heart, commitment, prayer, fortitude, courage, and strength. Sometimes it is easier to take the path of least resistance and respond in ways that are more aligned with the values of society -- which don't always align with the values of the gospel. Today in social media, the almost relentless quest for "likes" can lead to pretty disturbing content that shows others being injured, their personhood or good name being attacked, etc. There are countless ways we can lose focus on seeking Jesus as the path to life as opposed to instantaneous gratification at another's expense. Declaring that I come to Jesus to have life in him requires choices that reflect favorably on my desire to be among his disciples.

The second question to ponder is very direct and concise: "Do you have the love of God in you?" This can be a rather sobering question if we dig deep within ourselves and reflect on our thoughts, words, deeds, actions, or inactions. The love of God is manifest in how we live our lives and make our way in this world. Do we look for ways to be of service to others? Do we seek

out how we can give of ourselves in both small and generous ways? Lent gives us this opportunity to ponder our lives and take stock of what might need to shift to align ourselves with the ways of Jesus and allow God's love to freely flow through us to those around us.



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For Pondering

- Do you want to come to Jesus to have life? In what ways does your life reflect this desire?
 - Do you have the love of God in you? How is God's love manifested in you?
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For Prayer

*O God who loves us without bounds,
may we pray for the openness to love as Jesus loved
and to serve as Jesus served.
May we be the love in the lives of those we encounter,
pointing always to the source of our love found in you.
Amen.*

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