

Lenten Devotional March 30, 2023

Scripture

John 10:19-42

19 Again the Jews were divided because of these words. 20 Many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is out of his mind. Why listen to him?" 21 Others were saying, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

22 At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. 24 So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; 26 but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. 27 My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. 30 The Father and I are one."

31 The Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus replied, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?" 33 The Jews answered, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God." 34 Jesus answered, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'?" 35 If those to whom the word of God came were called 'gods' — and the scripture cannot be annulled — 36 can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, 'I am God's Son'? 37 If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. 38 But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." 39 Then they tried to arrest him again, but he escaped from their hands.

40 He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing earlier, and he remained there. 41 Many came to him, and they were saying, "John performed no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true." 42 And many believed in him there.

Devotional

The Rev. Darryl Lockie '17

"Look man, I don't need your whole life story." Do you ever feel like saying that to a particularly garrulous friend, coworker, or family member? Maybe/hopefully you're not as grumpy as I am and have never felt this way, but I know I sure have. One might want to say the same to Jesus in today's Gospel passage. At the temple Jesus is asked a simple, albeit loaded question: "Are you the Messiah?" His response is almost 100 words long. The old axiom might apply: sometimes a simple "yes" or "no" will suffice. After all, it was Jesus who once said, "Let your 'yes' be 'yes'" (Matt 5:37), though granted in a slightly different context there.

Jesus' gratuitous response encapsulates well what this season is about though. Lent is a time when we seek to more finely tune our ears to the Good Shepherd's voice. It's where we consider more deeply, how closely, we ourselves are following after that voice. Lent is a season when we might also rest in this present gospel truth: no matter what we are wrestling with, demons that are personal or societal, the One who made us in his image has us firmly within his grasp. There is no darkness nor evil that can indelibly mar that image or snatch us from God's hand. That's a good word for a world as broken as

ours. Hence, perhaps we might add a bit of correction to that axiom above. Sometimes a “yes” or “no” will simply *not* suffice.

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for Christ the teacher. He who so often answers our prayers and questions, not in the way we expect but in the way we need. Give us then our daily bread; that which *you* determine is necessary for the journey ahead. In these days, tune our ears to the voice of the Good Shepherd. Amen.