

Lent Devotional March 27, 2019

SCRIPTURE

John 8:12-20

¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” ¹³ Then the Pharisees said to him, “You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid.” ¹⁴ Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge by human standards; I judge no one. ¹⁶ Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is valid; for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. ¹⁷ In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. ¹⁸ I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf.” ¹⁹ Then they said to him, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” ²⁰ He spoke these words while he was teaching in the treasury of the temple, but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

DEVOTIONAL

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“Then the Pharisees said to him, ‘You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid.’” One has to feel sympathy for people confronted by Jesus. He did not behave or talk the way they expected, so it was easier to judge his testimony to be invalid. Making assumptions about people is part of human nature. We learn by making associations and noticing patterns. My baby granddaughter is learning to identify human faces; soon it will be cars, trees, animals, and birds. She will learn to generalize and classify—doing so saves time and brainpower. Adults judge people by their appearance, color, accent, dress, speech, and by what we already know. We then make assumptions about what we can’t see—intelligence, trustworthiness, education, religious and political reliability, and so on. Listening to Jesus, the Pharisees could not make sense of who he was, so they relied on their knowledge and experience to disregard him.

When we talk about Jesus, we will meet people who disregard him, and who regard our testimony to him as invalid. We should never underestimate how persistent, consistent, and understanding of others we must be in our witness about Christ, nor should we underestimate the great personal cost that our hearers’ setting aside their hard-won knowledge and experience will involve.

PRAYER

Gracious God, we pray for the church’s witness to Jesus Christ—a witness that is often colored more by our preferences than by the light of Christ. Illuminate our understanding so that our faith and worship reflect you more clearly. And to you be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus from generation to generation for evermore! Amen.