

LENT DEVOTIONAL



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Rooted in the Reformed tradition, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is committed to the formation of women and men for theologically reflective ministry and to scholarship in service to the global Church of Jesus Christ.

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Miller Summer Youth Institute

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World Mission Initiative

Zeitah Excavations

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LENT DEVOTIONAL MARCH 29, 2020

SCRIPTURE

JOHN 8:46-59

46 Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? 47 Whoever is from God hears the words of God. The reason you do not hear them is that you are not from God.” 48 The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” 49 Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. 50 Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is one who seeks it and he is the judge. 51 Very truly, I tell you, whoever keeps my word will never see death.” 52 The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and so did the prophets; yet you say, ‘Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.’ 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets also died. Who do you claim to be?” 54 Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, he of whom you say, ‘He is our God,’ 55 though you do not know him. But I know him; if I would say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him and I keep his word. 56 Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad.” 57 Then the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” 58 Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.” 59 So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Joan E. Reasinger ’86, Pastoral Ministry (2015)

Jesus said to the Jewish leaders, “Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am” (v. 58). And once again they attack Jesus. This time they insist that his teachings are demonic in origin; that his power is evil rather than good; that he is from Satan rather than God; that he proclaims Yahweh, not Abraham, as Father. Jesus ends the controversy with the affirmation that he has existed long before Abraham.

Earlier the leaders had asked him the question, “Who are you?” Jesus told them: “I am the light of the world.” Now they ask accusingly, “You’re a Samaritan, aren’t you? You have a demon, don’t you?” Then they add, “Are you greater than our father Abraham?” Jesus brings the controversy to an end when he says “Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.” With this statement, Jesus declares his deity. He declares that God is his Father. In Jesus, the eternal God showed himself to humanity.

How often have we asked “Jesus, who are you?” and failed to listen for his answer. How often do we set traps for Jesus seeking to challenge his power? How often do we seek our own power to save our troubled world instead of trusting in the power of Jesus? How often do the sounds of our own thoughts drown out the voice of the I AM?

The season of Lent gives us the opportunity to step back from the controversies that fill our lives, to silence the questions that cloud our minds, and to focus on Jesus and what we see God to be through and in Him.

PRAYER

Forgive us, Lord Jesus, when we question and doubt, when we challenge and accuse. Fill our hearts and minds with your love and grace, and help us know you are the “I AM,” who is all we need. Amen.

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Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
616 North Highland Avenue
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