



LENT DEVOTIONAL MARCH 20, 2017

SCRIPTURE

JOHN 7:14-36

14 About the middle of the festival Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach. 15 The Jews were astonished at it, saying, "How does this man have such learning, when he has never been taught?" 16 Then Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine but his who sent me. 17 Anyone who resolves to do the will of God will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own. 18 Those who speak on their own seek their own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and there is nothing false in him. 19 "Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you looking for an opportunity to kill me?" 20 The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is trying to kill you?" 21 Jesus answered them, "I performed one work, and all of you are astonished. 22 Moses gave you circumcision (it is, of course, not from Moses, but from the patriarchs), and you circumcise a man on the sabbath. 23 If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath in order that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because I healed a man's whole body on the sabbath? 24 Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." 25 Now some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Is not this the man whom they are trying to kill? 26 And here he is, speaking openly, but they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Messiah? 27 Yet we know where this man is from; but when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from." 28 Then Jesus cried out as he was teaching in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I am from. I have not come on my own. But the one who sent me is true, and you do not know him. 29 I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me." 30 Then they tried to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him, because his hour had not yet come. 31 Yet many in the crowd believed in him and were saying, "When the Messiah comes, will he do more signs than this man has done?" 32 The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering such things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent temple police to arrest him. 33 Jesus then said, "I will be with you a little while longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. 34 You will search for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come." 35 The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? 36 What does he mean by saying, 'You will search for me and you will not find me' and, 'Where I am, you cannot come'?"

DEVOTIONAL

As we know, teaching and healing were intrinsic parts of Jesus' ministry. He taught right up to the very end. He healed right up to the end. During his last trip to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus deliberately chose to heal a man on the Sabbath. This violation of the Sabbath Law greatly angered the Pharisees and the Jewish leaders, who believed that their interpretation of the law was the only path toward being "right" with God. Jesus set out to remove the pillars of power from the religious leaders of his time. That he was well versed without any formal teaching threatened the Pharisees and the Jewish leaders. Jesus publicly questioned and revealed a fatal flaw in the belief system they had established. They were so bound by their understanding of the Law that they missed the true character of God revealed in the Law. Jesus wanted his captive audience to understand that honoring God by tending to the needs of others will always be the priority of the Kingdom of God over following the rules for rules' sake.

PRAYER

May we follow Jesus . . .
May we teach like Jesus . . .
May we question those in power like Jesus . . .
May we work to serve like Jesus . . .
May we bring healing like Jesus . . .
May we point to Jesus . . .
May we hope in Jesus . . .
May we do all these things in the mighty name of Jesus Amen.

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