

Advent Devotional December 2, 2024

Weekly theme: Hope

Scripture

Luke 20:1-8

1 One day, as he was teaching the people in the temple and telling the good news, the chief priests and the scribes came with the elders 2 and said to him, "Tell us, by what authority are you doing these things? Who is it who gave you this authority?" 3 He answered them, "I will also ask you a question, and you tell me: 4 Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" 5 They discussed it with one another, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why did you not believe him?' 6 But if we say, 'Of human origin,' all the people will stone us; for they are convinced that John was a prophet." 7 So they answered that they did not know where it came from. 8 Then Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

Devotion

The Rev. Canon Eric McIntosh '12

By now we have a new president. Whether our new president is the one you voted for or not, the Triune God is never dethroned. God is still God, and Jesus still has all power, in heaven and earth, in his hands. I find myself seized by the questions asked of Jesus. I find that their questions are telling. They inquire about the source of Jesus' authority, or can I say, power. They ask what kind of power it is. It is indicative of a very intriguing fact: those asking these questions know neither his power nor its author.

We also face contestations of Jesus' identity today. The "American Jesus" permits us to hate one another. That is not the real Jesus. The "American Jesus" permits us to be content with division, individuality, privilege, notions of supremacy—all of which are not of Jesus. His authority does not earn us rights over others.

After Jesus returned questions with questions, the leaders' reply was that they "did not know." We today must not allow forces that "do not know" Jesus to shape our faith. Allowing partisanship to shape our faith instead of our faith shaping our partisanship is a travesty. Will we ever actually and collectively walk in the power and authority of Jesus? I reply: I do not know. Will we ever realize Beloved Community? I do not know.

God is love! Love drives Jesus! In our refusal of him, Jesus invites us to get to know him. I hear him saying: You don't know...but you can! You are divided but you don't have to be! Restoration and revival are love-inches away! The power and authority of Jesus are in his love.

Let us not permit the forces that do not know God to define who God is or how he ought to be. Let us instead get to know God better, draw closer to him, and be fashioned to be like Jesus, and walk this journey with authority in love!

Prayer

Lord God Almighty, fall fresh upon us with a fresh wind and a fresh anointing, that we may consider and imagine what love can do. Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of your Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and bring

forth in us the fruit of good works, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.