

Saturday's Gospel: Listening to our Lord

Gospel for Saturday in the 4th Week of Lent, with commentary.

Gospel (*Jn* 7:40-53)

When they heard these words, some of the people said, “This is really the prophet.” Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” So there was a division among the people over him. Some of

them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

The officers then went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why did you not bring him?” The officers answered, “No man ever spoke like this man!” The Pharisees answered them, “Are you led astray, you also? Have any of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, who do not know the law, are accursed.” Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, “Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?” They replied, “Are you from Galilee too? Search and you will see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee.”

They went each to his own house.

Commentary

The passage from Saint John in the liturgy today shows us a range of attitudes in how people listened to our Lord. Some considered him “the prophet” expected by Israel, or the “Christ,” the Davidic messiah who would save his people. While others some saw him as an impostor and wanted to arrest him.

The presence of Jesus, then as today, is a reason for disagreement and division, “a sign of contradiction so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed” (cf. *Lk 2:34-35*).

The guards sent by the priests and Pharisees to arrest Jesus are amazed on hearing his words: “No man ever spoke like this man.” These nameless characters in the scene remind us of the need to listen to God’s word with simplicity and a heart open to the divine will.

In contrast, the Pharisees are imprisoned in their own ideas and positions. A rigid knowledge of Scripture and tradition does not allow them to be surprised by the newness of our Lord's words.

Jesus' words continue to resound in our hearts. Nicodemus, one of the few prudent Pharisees open to the truth, shows us the need to listen closely to that Man and know what He has done for us. We need to listen to him with a simple heart, like Mary of Bethany, who "sat at the Lord's feet, listening to his words" (cf. *Lk* 10:39), or like Peter, who realized that only Jesus' words can save us: "to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (cf. *Jn* 6:68).

In short, the words of Jesus, which we find in the daily reading of the Gospel, speak to us about our own lives; they show us the will of the Father amid our ordinary daily

endeavors. For “in our own life we must reproduce Christ’s life. We need to come to know Him by reading and meditating on Scripture” (Saint Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 14).

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