

Lent Day 10

Saturday February 24, 2018

Reading: John 5:25-47

²⁵ Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

Reflection

I have just finished reading two books by George MacDonald, *Phantastes* and *Lilith*. Both works are a kind of ‘coming of age’ story, particularly focusing on two different young men taking them to another world to help them know how to live well in this world. It is *Lilith* which comes to mind as I read this passage of John’s gospel. The protagonist has his eyes opened to the vanity of his life and the greater Life he should be pursuing. He is invited by Adam (*the Adam*) to lay down to die in order to wake to true Life. The man is afraid and so refuses resulting in him having to take a much longer way round but also having an opportunity to have a deeper understanding of the necessity of this death. You see he is a part of the human race and has been caught up in a living death which he wanted to hang onto rather than sleep so he may wake to Life without death — Heaven, new life, the age to come.

Judgment. It’s not a very pretty word in our vocabulary. In fact, it is perhaps the greatest cultural sin to commit. Who are we to judge? Well, there is a grain of truth in that, we are in no position to condemn anyone since by condemning them we also condemn ourselves. But there is one who does have authority to judge, Jesus, and if he condemns his condemnation is right. This could be frightening to think of — one day being judged and being found wanting. The good news is God has not left his judgement to the last minute. Instead, he has brought it forward into the present. Jesus encounters us now and judges us now. He speaks into our living dead ears and says, “Wake up and turn to me.” We have the opportunity to lay down this living death and go to sleep so we may wake to Life without death — that happens now. But judgment is needed, we have to believe the judge that what we currently have is not worth holding onto in comparison with the Life to come. And of course, this new Life, when we turn to Jesus, can be had NOW in the PRESENT. We can have Life in the midst of death.

It’s not easy to lay down our life to death — it’s all we’ve ever known — but if, in faith, we will trust the Son of Man sent by the Father of Life we can have new life and Life eternal. Remember, our rhythm of lent is designed to help us lay down the old life in order to take up the new.

Prayer

Son of God, Son of Man who has authority to judge, would you judge us in your righteousness? Expose in us the places where we cling to the shroud of living death for fear of giving it up. Grant us the strength to lay down and sleep so we may wake to your new Life today. Amen.