

Lent Day 20

Thursday March 8, 2018

Reading: John 10:22-42

³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I have said you are “gods”’?”

Reflection

Many people find Christianity to be an offensive religion for a variety of reasons. We see from Jesus’s encounter with the Pharisee’s here that one reason is his claim to be the Son of God. Based on John’s account they understood Jesus to be claiming something for himself that Israel as God’s son did not. God didn’t just bring this person to be, but Jesus comes from God. Without getting into a whole theology of the Trinity, this reflects the early church’s wrestling and understanding that the Father and the Son are the same substance — they are one. The Pharisee’s weren’t the last to pick up stones around that one. People today are happy to allow Jesus to be a good man and moral teacher, but they will not entertain the idea that the person of Jesus *is* God with us in our own sinful human flesh.

As offensive as that is, I’m not sure it’s the most offensive thing in the passage or why some hate Christianity. Rather, I think it’s scripture’s claim (Jesus is quoting Psalm 82:6) that God’s people are gods. Now before anyone thinks I’m putting humanity on the same level as God, I’m not. In fact, this is not really a compliment. Look at the gods of the ancient world; they were terrible. Take every human foible and magnify it and put it into the hands of a more powerful being and there you have the gods. But why I think this is offensive is because it tells us we are powerful, and I’m not sure we want to be.

I think a lot of the time we want to be victims. We’d much rather say the devil made me do it rather than be accountable for our own sin. For the choices we make. For the people we hurt. For the homes we break. For the poor we ignore. For the orphans we abandon. To be called gods seems to attribute to us a power and a responsibility. What’s worse, not only can we not blame the devil, but we can’t blame God either. He has made us free and powerful to create, to choose, to worship, to love, to care. God has said we are gods and we seek to stone him for it. To make him be responsible for us. Which he does. He comes in human flesh and uses his own power to take responsibility with us and for us. God with us.

Prayer

Almighty God, thank you for being willing to use your power to take responsibility for our sin. This is indeed good news. Now having broken the power of sin in our lives and having given us your Spirit, would you help us to exercise our own power and to take responsibility in Christ for our own sin. Amen.