

## **Lent Day 24**

Tuesday March 13, 2018

### **Reading:** John 12:27-50

<sup>42</sup> Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; <sup>43</sup> for they loved human praise more than praise from God.

### **Reflection**

None of us want to be seen as strange. Most of us remember our school days well enough — whether you were the bully or the bullied — that you don't want to stand out as weird. There's lots in that fear. Afraid to be made fun of by people we want to be thought well of. We don't want to feel shame. There can also be fear of losing opportunities. After all, we all know that money makes the world go round! If our colleagues question our sanity they are unlikely to advance us into better situations. For this and much more, we want to be viewed as normal.

Again, these feelings aren't new. Here we have Jewish leaders who believed in Jesus. This is what Jesus has been talking about through out this whole gospel, "Believe, believe, believe." However, we begin to see belief redefined beyond a conviction that what Jesus has been saying about himself is true — that he is the Messiah. Believing is great, but it is nothing if we are not openly acknowledging that faith and risking shame.

This is almost a perfect description of what is expected of us today. Have a private belief, but hide your conviction. If you begin changing your lifestyle — maybe you stop drinking or swearing, maybe you start reading your Bible at lunch, whatever — people will start to caution you to not become radical. You want to be moderate — don't take it too far. Now, we aren't called to alienate people for the sake of alienating people, but we are called to conform our lives to match our beliefs and if God is renovating your heart — calling you to let go of some habits and/or take up new habits — then you need to do that obediently. If there are things you are being asked to do that are out of line with your convictions you need to say no and maybe explain why. Yes, it might cost you and there are no promises that everything will work out in your favour. The call is faithfulness. It's risky but necessary.

### **Prayer**

Father, help us to move beyond belief to living out our conviction before a watching world. Forgive us for the times when we desire the praise of our peers to your praise. Remind us that you have not given us a Spirit of fear, but of adoption to sonship. Amen.