

## Lent Day 27

Friday March 16, 2018

### Reading: John 14:1-15

<sup>7</sup> If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

<sup>8</sup> Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup> Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. <sup>11</sup> Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.

### Reflection

“I believe in God,” is a phrase I’ve heard often when trying to share my faith. This phrase is used as a shield to keep the conversation at bay. The implication is that I should be satisfied with this belief in God. Of course, this comes as much out of the Christian world as the non-Christian world. As churches in North America went into attendance decline they began looking for ways to appeal to people. One of the conclusions that seemed to be drawn was that being too dogmatic turned people off — it was too complicated. This seems to have led to a boiling down of faith to “I believe in God.”

Of course, we think we mean the same thing when we say ‘God,’ but a reasonable question to ask is, “What God do you believe in?” This might seem like a non-sensical question to our ears since we’ve been trained that there is only one God, so when we say God we only have one reference. But, who is this God? The one printed on the American dollar bill? “In God we trust.” No. The God of the philosophers? The unmoved mover. No. The ancient gods like Zeus? No. When people say to us, “I believe in God,” it should disturb us not relieve us. James in his letter says the demons make the same confession and shudder! In fact, it is the lack of fear of God in that phrase which indicates they have not discovered the God of scripture — they are not shuddering.

God has a name and a character. God reveals his covenantal name to his people through Moses in Exodus 3:14. When Moses was worried that the Israelite people would not receive him, God revealed his covenant name, YHWH (I AM). He also revealed his character: he saves his people and destroys those who oppress his people, yet he is merciful because through that people he will rescue all the peoples on earth. Now Jesus comes on the scene, Israel’s Messiah who is going to rescue Israel and all other peoples on the earth. He is ‘God with us,’ this has been demonstrated through the miracles and will be demonstrated when he is raised from the dead. One theologian has named God saying, “God is whoever raised Jesus from the dead having first raised Israel from Egypt.” This is why Jesus rebukes Philip for his request to see the Father, Philip has most clearly seen the Father in the person of Jesus.

All of this means our impulse to boil down faith to saying I believe in a generic God is actually the opposite of what needs to happen. That belief and that God is powerless and, in fact, is designed to leave us completely alone and unchanged. But, Jesus is the only one and way to the Father because the Father is in him and he is in the Father. If we want rescue or see others rescued then we must become an atheist to this generic god and embrace the God of Israel through faith in the one who reveals him, Jesus.

**Prayer**

Almighty God, maker of heaven and earth thank you for making us and rescuing us. We do believe in you and we know you are the way. We long to see your face and to be brought into your Father's house. Amen.