



Daily Reflections

April 24, 2018

Scripture

John 10: 22-30

The feast of the Dedication was taking place in Jerusalem.

It was winter.

And Jesus walked about in the temple area on the Portico of Solomon.

So the Jews gathered around him and said to him,

"How long are you going to keep us in suspense?

If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

Jesus answered them, "I told you and you do not believe.

The works I do in my Father's name testify to me.

But you do not believe, because you are not among my sheep.

My sheep hear my voice;

I know them, and they follow me.

I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.

No one can take them out of my hand.

My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all,

and no one can take them out of the Father's hand.

The Father and I are one."

Our Scripture Reflection

John makes a point of telling us that this scene happened during the Feast of the Dedication or Hanukkah (in contrast to his narration of Jesus' earlier visit to Jerusalem where John simply says that "there was a festival of the Jews" [5:1] when Jesus went to that city). Hanukkah celebrated the historical

deliverance of Israel under Judas Maccabeus, and its observance likely sparked afresh the hope that a new deliverer would come for Israel. So, while the question to Jesus about whether he was the Messiah may have been put forward largely with the purpose of exposing him as a fraud, there may have also been a back-of-the-mind hope that maybe he really was the Messiah, as well as some back-of-the-mind fear that, if he was indeed the Messiah, what did that mean for these leaders of Israel who were opposing him?

Food for your Journey

The question translated "How long will you keep us in suspense?" is a Greek idiom that literally means "How long will take away our breath?" In Greek, of course, the same word -- psyche -- is used for both "breath" and "spirit."

We can understand this expression, therefore, in both senses. Sitting in a movie theater, watching an on-the-edge-of-your-seat thriller, we may feel like the action on the screen is causing us to hold our breaths in anticipation of whatever's going to jump out at us next. In the more theological sense of "spirit," our anxious anticipation of whatever God's doing next can cause us to feel like our very souls are immobilized for a time.

Feelings of suspense are certainly lacking in most of us today, as we contemplate the identity of Jesus as Messiah. On this side of the resurrection, his messiahship too often seems an established fact, a ho-hum reality we take for granted.

What if we sought to put ourselves in the shoes (or sandals) of the people of Jesus' day, those who urgently wanted -- no, needed -- to know what made this Galilean seem so different from anyone else they'd ever met?

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, You are Lord and God of all. Our world needs You desperately because it is filled with darkness and confusion. Through my words and actions this day, help me to make You known to all the people I encounter. May they acknowledge You as their Lord. Amen