

24. April 2024

## The Light of the Son of God

Jn 12:44-50

*Jesus declared publicly: Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in the one who sent me, and whoever sees me, sees the one who sent me. I have come into the world as light, to prevent anyone who believes in me from staying in the dark any more. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them faithfully, it is not I who shall judge such a person, since I have come not to judge the world, but to save the world: anyone who rejects me and refuses my words has his judge already: the word itself that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day. For I have not spoken of my own accord; but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and what to speak, and I know that his commands mean eternal life. And therefore what the Father has told me is what I speak.*

How can it be interpreted that whoever rejects and refuses the words of the Lord “*has his judge already*”? In this context, Jesus emphasises that He is the one sent by the Father and that He only says what He has commanded Him.

Perhaps we can understand these words more easily if we consider the Word of the Lord as a special grace that is given to us, men, to give us light on God Himself, to instruct us, to strengthen us and also to prepare us for the spiritual battle that we all have to face. His Word is, above all, the truth, since God Himself is the Word, as faith teaches us (cf. Jn 1:1).

Now, if someone hears the word and would be able to accept it, but culpably does not do so, then he is opposing the truth. Also when someone simply hears the word but does not put it into practice, the purpose for which God spoke it cannot be fulfilled, for His words are life.

Since man is responsible for his actions and omissions, this word accompanies him throughout his life. It is, so to speak, raised above him - not as a threat, but as an invitation to place oneself under the Word. God, in His infinite goodness, will try again and again to bring man to accept and put His word into practice. However, if he resists,

he will be measured according to this word, and perhaps also compared to other people who did accept and follow the word of the Lord.

Jesus came to bring light into the world, as He said; indeed, He Himself is the light (cf. Jn 8:12). Whoever rejects faith cannot receive the grace of this light and thus remains in darkness and ignorance.

We should not relativise these essential words of the Lord, even if we do not necessarily have to conclude that then the only option for those who do not accept the word would be eternal damnation, as a contrast to the eternal life that Jesus offers. We do not know how God will ultimately judge such a situation!

Nor do we need to go that far with our thoughts. But we can become aware of what a life without the enlightenment of faith means. Existential questions remain unanswered, the true meaning of life is not discovered, countless errors can occur, man lacks the strength to resist temptations and is often at the mercy of the inclinations of his fallen nature....

Even in the case of people of good will, whose lives are not dominated by sin, if they do not have faith, they lack that dimension and the joy of knowing that we are close to God, the communion among the faithful and with the heavenly Church, among many other aspects...

The Word of the Lord is the light, and in it everything is discerned. Jesus makes it clear to us, and this is how His word judges. His intention is to save us, but it is up to man whether he accepts His word or not.

Perhaps we, the faithful, are not always aware of what a great grace it is to be able to know His word and to be guided by it. It may seem natural to us, just as it was natural for the son who remained in his father's house to do his father's will (cf. Lk 15:29). But precisely this parable of the prodigal son reveals to us God's great joy when a lost son returns home and changes his life (v. 31-32). What a joy it would be for the Lord if people would accept His word and live in His grace! How much He could then grant them!

We can try to give God that joy and help people to discover their true happiness. At least we can do so by our prayer and by our witness.