

29. January 2025

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN  
“Seeking God's glory”

Jn 7:14-24

*About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. The Jews marveled at it, saying, “How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?” So Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me; if any man’s will is to do his will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. He who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but he who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood. Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?” The people answered, “You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?” Jesus answered them, “I did one deed, and you all marvel at it. Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man upon the sabbath. If on the sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the sabbath I made a man’s whole body well? Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”*

The Jews were struck by the Lord's knowledge of Holy Scripture. Like so many other things, they could not explain it to them, because Jesus did not speak like the other scribes. The Gospel of Luke tells us that the people *‘were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority.’* (Lk 4:32).

The Lord used the question about the origin of His knowledge to tell them that, like His authority, His teaching came from the Heavenly Father, in Whose Name He acted. So it is not surprising that many have been touched by the words of Jesus.

Certainly we have had similar experiences: when a preacher proclaims the Word with an authority that goes beyond scriptural knowledge and scholarship, and comes from an intimate union with God, his teaching touches us and speaks to us deeply. Even the apostles, who were simple people, proclaimed the Lord with authority. Even the members of the Sanhedrin, who had had them arrested, were astonished: *‘Now when*

*they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they wondered; and they recognized that they had been with Jesus.’ (Acts 4:13).*

Indeed, if someone speaks the truth, his authority comes from this truth, which calls for man's response, for he was created for truth. To consciously close oneself to the truth is to plunge into deep darkness and blindness. Jesus tells us very convincingly: *‘if any man’s will is to do his will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority’.*

Therefore, there is a condition for accepting Jesus' teaching. Whoever sincerely seeks God and wants to do His will, will recognise the authority with which He speaks. Since His words undoubtedly come from the Father, and no one but the Son of God could convey them to us in that way, man is faced with a decision. Jesus fulfils all the conditions for us to trust Him and listen to Him, because He seeks only the glory of the Father. He never tires of telling His interlocutors again and again where His words and deeds come from.

This is not necessarily the case with the people to whom the Word of God has been entrusted. In fact, Jesus reproaches the Pharisees and scribes on several occasions that they do not seek God's glory, but their own honour. This may be a key to explain why sometimes preaching does not reach people's hearts so easily, especially when it is infected by modernist ideas. In this case, the glory of God is not sought, but one's own opinions are proclaimed, perhaps sometimes to please men, not to cause scandal, etc. If this is the case, then the inner union with the One who sends us to proclaim the Word of God is not strong enough, and thus the authority that only God can confer is not manifested. Consequently, the Lord cannot move the hearts of the hearers.

The words Jesus uses in this context are important: *‘He who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but he who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.’*

Let's turn it upside down! Indeed, it is a great injustice if we abuse for our own honour the religious contents entrusted to us by God and belonging to Him. Probably the Antichrist and His false prophet, who are to manifest themselves at the End Times, will act in this way, and this will be one of the identifying characteristics of these enemies of God.

Jesus points out once again that the healing of the paralytic on the Sabbath was the work of God and was fully in line with what the Jews themselves did on the Sabbath:

*“You circumcise a man upon the sabbath. If on the sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the sabbath I made a man's whole body well?”* And He concludes His discourse to the Jews with a serious exhortation, *‘Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.’*