

The world did not recognize him

John 1:1-10

March 13, 2011

The world did not recognize him.

This was the word! The word by which God spoke everything that is into existence! This was the word! The source of light and of life! But the world did not recognize him. The world did not recognize Jesus.

Why not? Why did the world, or so much of the world anyway, fail to recognize who he was, fail to recognize from whom he had come? Why were the men and women of the world into which he came blind to what he had to show them and deaf to what he had to tell them?

Maybe they didn't recognize him because they didn't notice him. Maybe they were too preoccupied with their own affairs, with work and with family, with houses and neighbors, with doing all they could to make ends meet and keep the Romans (and the Pharisees) off their backs, with doing all they could to protect what wealth and freedom they did have and to win whatever freedom and wealth they wanted to have. Maybe they didn't recognize him because they weren't really looking.

Or maybe they didn't recognize him because they were looking for somebody else. Maybe they already had a pretty clear idea of what they thought God would say to them, of what they thought they wanted God to do for them, of what they thought God expected of them, and what Jesus said and what Jesus did just didn't fit. Maybe they didn't recognize him because they were looking for somebody else.

Or maybe they didn't recognize him because they didn't care to look for anybody else. Maybe they preferred to take responsibility for their own lives, to solve their own problems, to make their own way as best they could through the minefield of disappointment and danger and betrayal and loss that is this world. Maybe they would rather lose it all on their own, than gain everything, everything that matters, even life itself, with somebody else's help. Maybe they didn't recognize him because they didn't think they needed anybody else.

Or maybe they didn't recognize him because they didn't want to. Because if they did recognize him, because if they did listen to him, then they would have to change. Maybe they didn't recognize him because they didn't want to.

The world did not recognize him. Do we?

Or are we too preoccupied with the cares and worries and desires of this life, this life we already have, whatever it's worth?

The world did not recognize him. Do we?

Or are we looking for somebody else, expecting somebody else, somebody who will make our lives easier not harder, somebody who will steer us around trouble instead of leading us through it, somebody who will punish our enemies instead of asking us to love them?

The world did not recognize him. Do we?

Or have we convinced ourselves we don't need anybody else? Is it just too hard for us to give up control?

The world did not recognize him. Do we?

Or do we refuse to recognize him, because if we did, if we really did, we would have to change?

Open our eyes, Lord! We want to see Jesus!

That's our theme for Lent: "Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus." Sunday by Sunday, we will consider some of the many things that keep us from recognizing Jesus, that blind us to who Jesus is and to what he is doing.

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus!

Do you want to see Jesus? For real?