

THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK

“In those days the Lord said: ‘The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great, and their sin so grave, that I must go down and see whether or not their actions fully correspond to the cry against them that comes to me.

I mean to find out.”

Genesis 18: 20

When I was a seminarian growing up over those ten years there were any number of family difficulties that happened and emerged into the family awareness. Not all were good. There were moments of betrayal, moments of infidelity and sin, moments of rejection, sundered relationships and deep estrangements. I remember my father sharing some of the deeper dimensions of these things with me and telling me that he did so because some day I would be a priest. Because of that I would encounter situations like these and many more. He shared his wisdom and understanding with me so that when I encountered such things later on in my priestly life I would have wisdom and a helpful understanding. My father was right. Many such things and more have I encountered. His task was not to act as judge over what people were doing but to offer help to lead them closer to Our Lord and into the truly moral way of living. The power of the culture to decide what is good and bad, moral and immoral, was very strong. But the culture did not always grasp things in their truth. The culture in which we live does not always embrace what has been taught to us by the living God in and through Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus, in his own words, says that the Son of Man did not come to condemn the world but to save it—from itself and from sin. Because sin destroys and breaks down all that is good. Only God reveals the full moral truth of what is good and bad, of what is true and what is a lie. When young or old men and women, members of the family, cohabit without commitment, does that mean that we should stop loving them? By no means. But it does not also mean that we simply accept what they are doing as if the Lord has not spoken of a better and more moral way to live. However, it is difficult to do that. Love the person always even when what they are doing or the way they are living stands in opposition to what the Lord has revealed.

There is a part of us that wants to be justified in the moral decisions we make in whatever area of our lives we make them. But our wanting God’s word to be different than it is—does not remake God’s word in our own image and likeness. It simply places us at odds with the living word of God. And this is so no matter what the powerful words of each culture proclaim about what is okay and not okay, moral and not moral. And this applies in all the areas of our lives. Even the areas we think are our own most private and personal reserves, including the realm of our sexuality. This feels good, this appears good, this seems good to me, we say. But the feeling and the appearance and seeming do not make that which is not of God suddenly to be “Of God.” Our task as followers of Christ is to submit in obedience to his word, and only that. Perhaps that is why so many have gone away from the faith. They are not interested in hearing a word that does not conform to the words they hold dear in their own hearts, what they themselves believe and the culture supports, to be right or wrong. Have you thought of this? The question of the week.