**Short Reflection on John 12.44-end**

**44**Then Jesus cried out, “Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. **45**The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me. **46**I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

**47**“If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. **48**There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day. **49**For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. **50**I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.”

**Reflection**

I was told recently that I’m becoming less tolerant, quicker to sound off at all and sundry. This may well be the case – I put it down to the ageing process. I rationalise it by saying that as I get older, time is running out, albeit and hopefully slowly. I feel there is less time to ensure that what I think and feel – which, of course, is so obvious and right – needs to be said and heard. It can be very frustrating when people you come across, even those who you’ve been around for a long time, just don’t seem to get it, and appear to have no sense of urgency to understand.

So it is, that at the beginning of our reading, we are told that Jesus ‘cried out’ (v.44), shouted, to the people he was with. ‘What more do you need?’ Jesus is frustrated with those people who have followed Jesus around and still don’t believe. Time is running out. Jesus is on his final journey to the Cross, his last few days; he’s just made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem to the ‘Hosanna!’ of the people. A few verses before our reading begins, John writes (John 12.37): ‘*Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still wouldn’t believe in him.’* It’s as if they were almost there, but were too frightened to admit it – the all-pervading threatening influence of the Pharisees held them back from publicly acknowledging the deity of Jesus, that Jesus was the true Messiah, the one sent to save them, and to believe.

But here we see a reflection of our own times, and in the joy of Jesus’ message to us and to humanity as a whole, there is also a warning. It gives us food for thought. We’re reminded that it is not our place to judge. It’s God’s place to do that. Jesus reminds us once more that he has come, not to judge or condemn he world, but to save it. He has come to shine God’s light on each of us; it becomes then the responsibility of each person individually to accept or reject that light; to believe or not believe. In a way, we point the finger in on ourselves, become our own judge by the way we respond to Jesus’ invitation. Jesus doesn’t judge. That’s what he says, but there is a judge for anyone who rejects Jesus and does not accept his words: ‘*The one who rejects me and does not receive my word has a judge; on the last day the word that I have spoken will serve as judge …*’ (12.48).

So, as we celebrate the joy of the Risen Christ in his resurrection, what are we to do? It’s really quite straightforward: just as Jesus comes into the world as a light, shining into the darkness, bringing the light and love of God his Father, so also our role is to share that light with others. The reflection of the Church of England’s EasterPilgrim series for yesterday puts it, *[The heart of the Gospel is this:] ‘As in the story [of the woman who anointed Jesus’ feet with her tears and] of the elder brother, God is not seeking our obedience to his commands so much as our love, freely given. God invites us to be his friends. God invites us to be reconciled, one to another, and to love and support each other.’* So, it goes on, pause and ask yourself *‘What are your favourite stories of the effects of forgiveness (either in being reconciled to God or to others). What story would you tell?’* and then suggests that today we might, *‘Do something loving or kind for someone today as a way of sharing Jesus’ love.’* It’s as straightforward as that. Amen.