

John 10:22-30 I and the Father are one

INTRODUCTION

The last time we were in John we covered chapter 10 verses 1 through 21 in which Jesus compared himself to a Good Shepherd. Jesus as the Good Shepherd presents Himself as the gatekeeper. The only way of becoming one of His flock is through Jesus. We also read about some false shepherds who claim to lead people into truth, but they did not go through Jesus. They climbed over the wall of the sheep fold pen and pretended to own the sheep. But they did not know Jesus (the owner of the sheep), nor did they have the well being of the flock in mind. These are many of the Jewish Religious leaders who supposedly love God but fleece His people and hate His Son.

Today we call them false teachers and heretics. From the Arianism repackaged as Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses who deny the deity of Jesus Christ; to the Pelagianism of liberal churches who deny the sinfulness of people and construct a false gospel of salvation by good works....false teachers....false shepherds are not difficult to locate. In our text for today there is a transition. Jesus is heading for a temple for another Feast. Let's read the account.

READING THE TEXT

22 At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. 24 So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered them, **"I told you, and you do not believe.**

The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, 26 but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one.”

PREACHING THE TEXT

²² **At that time the Feast of Dedication** took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, ²³ and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon.

THE FEAST OF DEDICATION

The Feast of Dedication is the most popular Jewish Feast today despite the fact that it was not mandated by God and you will not find a single reference to the Feast of Dedication in The Old Testament. Here is how the Feast of Dedication began.

In 167 BC the Syrian Antiochus Epiphanes overran Jerusalem and polluted the temple, setting up a pagan altar to the Roman gods in Israel's temple. Early in 164 Antiochus desecrated the temple by sacrificing a pig on the Jewish altar while erecting a statue of the false god Zeus. This fulfilled one of Daniel's prophecies about one who would come and desecrate the holy place forbidding worship.

Antiochus enforced brutal repression. He outlawed possession of any part of the Hebrew Scriptures and enforced the ban with a death sentence.

In this brutal environment the Jews formed a hidden army of guerilla fighters who would execute sneak attacks on occupying Roman soldiers. Eventually under the leadership of Judas Maccabaeus (aka Judas The Hammer) the hidden army grew strong enough to overthrow the oppressive Roman army.

Judas The Hammer and his band of warriors recaptured the temple and rededicated it to God in December of 164 BC. The Jewish people celebrated the **rededication of the temple for eight days**, and it was decreed that a similar eight-day Feast of Dedication should be held every year. This feast of Dedication came to be known as **Hanukkah**. You can read more about these important events in 1st and 2nd Maccabees. The Maccabees are history books that became part of the Apocrypha.

This Feast of Dedication was also called the Feast of Lights, because of the lighting of lamps and candles in Jewish homes to celebrate the Feast.

WINTER IN THE TEMPLE COLONNADE

John's comment that It was winter is probably in anticipation of the fact that Jesus was in the temple area walking in **Solomon's Colonnade on the eastern side of the temple**— i.e. the cold weather drove him to walk and teach in **Solomon's porch** which had walls that blocked the wind.

²⁴ So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

THE JEWS GATHERED AROUND HIM

Have you ever been in a situation in which you were being **singled out in a crowd**? Perhaps you were a Vikings fan in Lambeau Field. Or you

were the only one who did not go along with a stupid idea. Whatever the case we have all felt what it is like to have people gather around us and gang up on us. Jesus, being the Son of God had no fear.

HOW LONG WILL YOU ANNOY US?

They gathered around Jesus and in a mocking tone ask; ***“How long will you keep us in suspense.”***

TELL US PLAINLY

They wanted Jesus to speak in such a way that He would be officially on the record. If Jesus spoke on the record in a Jewish setting such as the temple it would be like putting someone on the witness stand in our culture.

²⁵ **Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe.**

Jesus told them in various ways that He was the Messiah. The first way Jesus made it clear that He was the Messiah was through the statements He made in His public ministry.

In **John 5:18** The Jews planned on killing Him because Jesus claimed after healing a lame man that He was equal with God.

In **John 6** Jesus claimed to be the bread that came down from heaven.

In **John 8** Jesus said this in response to the Jews who were confused when Jesus claimed to know Abraham;

John 8:58

^{58...} **Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”** ⁵⁹ So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

The reason they picked up stones to kill Jesus was that by using the term “I Am” Jesus was claiming the title of God. This title “I AM” is the way God identified Himself to Moses when God sent Him to lead His people out of slavery.

So in many settings and with various forms of speech Jesus made it clear to those who were listening that He was the Messiah. He was the Savior. He was God’s Son come in the flesh. But the second way that He identified Himself is by His works.

(John 10:25 continued) **The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me,**

One of the signs of a prophet sent by God is that they could do miracles. I’m not talking about bonking someone on the head and making them fall over. I’m talking about raising the dead or calling down lightning from heaven to burn up an offering. I’m talking about parting the Red Sea and making water come out of a rock in the middle of a desert.

When Jesus comes healing lame people and creating new eyes for the blind and casting out demons He has shown the sign of a prophet. In other words, His works prove that He speaks for God. In **Verse 26** Jesus reminded them of the way they responded to His miraculous works. You saw my works, I showed that I come with God’s blessing...

²⁶ but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

BELIEVING AND BELONGING

It is not just that His sheep know the voice of Jesus and follow Him. It is that Jesus also knows them. Imagine a Shepherd counting his sheep.

Each one is precious to him and the good shepherd would regularly look carefully and make sure that each one is accounted for. That is what Jesus does for each one of us whom have been given the faith to believe Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd for salvation.

What's more the Pharisees and religious leaders can not believe because they do not belong to The Good Shepherd. They do not have the voice of the Shepherd speaking to them, reaffirming them and directing them. They do not have the necessary equipment to believe and follow. If you are a believer you have the equipment available so that you can understand the scriptures and hear the voice of the Living God. That equipment is the Holy Spirit who moves into the soul and spirit of those sheep purchased by The Good Shepherd. If you do not have the Holy Spirit then you are not sealed by God and you do not belong to Him. And you also can not possibly hear and understand.

ANALOGY - SPEAKING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

What would happen if you went to China without Xiaoyan. Your are in a foreign country and no one around you in that area speaks English. Suddenly someone approaches you and begins teaching you profound truths. It does you no good because you do not have the equipment to hear the speaker.

The unbelieving Jews do not have the equipment to hear His voice. Now Jesus goes on to describe those who belong to Him. About those who have the faith to believe and follow Jesus; He says....

²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

JESUS GIVES LIFE

The first clause in this sentence states that it is Jesus the Good Shepherd who gives eternal life. It is not a priest that gives life. It is not your own works that give life. It is not being a basically good person. It is not a committee that votes for you to have life. If you want eternal life you must work that out with God's Son.

THEY WILL NEVER PERISH

The second clause states that those who have been given life from The Son will never perish.

STORY: MY GREATEST FEAR When I about 10 or 11 years old I used to have terrible panic attacks whenever I thought about death. I did not know the Lord. I was confused by occult philosophy taught in my home. I remember being way back on a country road that had almost no traffic and I found myself frozen in fear looking 15 or 20 times before crossing the street. I was terrified of dying because I was not certain of what would happen. The idea of simply disappearing was almost as bad as the notion of hell. -----end story-----

The truth of eternal life is so precious I can't even describe what a joy it is that my fear is gone. I have eternal life. The only question is whether God will keep me here or promote me to the home office in glory.

If you have extreme fear of death, today would be a good day to ask God to give you the faith to believe. It would be a great day to receive and follow Jesus Christ God's Son. Not only can He give you life, He can put faith in your heart so that you know beyond doubt that you belong to Him

and will live forever. He will give you the equipment you need to hear and believe and fear not.

NO ONE CAN STEAL THEM

The last clause deals with the power of God's Son to save you. Your salvation does not rest on your power to grab ahold of Jesus. Your salvation rests on the power of God's Son to hold fast to you. Salvation is dependent on the grip strength of the Son of God. And if that is not enough assurance of salvation John goes on to say.

²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

So not only is salvation about the grip strength of God's Son, but then the picture Jesus paints is that He is grasping your soul in His hand. And then around the hand of Jesus is the additional hand of His Father holding you fast.

The idea of snatching something out of another's hand is like a purse snatcher who runs by and grabs what is precious to you and runs away. Not only is the Son grasping you tightly the Father is doing the same.

Romans 8 speaks about those who go through persecution for the name of Jesus Christ. Paul wants to assure you that even if circumstances are kicking your butt God is in control. He is working all things together for your good. And you are always in the grip of His grace.

Romans 8:37-39

³⁷ ... in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor

height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The last thing Jesus says in this scene is about His relationship to The Father. There is no question among Jews that The Father is God. Jesus said to His detractors;

³⁰ I and the Father are one.”

The Jews in the beginning of the scene ask Jesus to speak plainly. So He does. He claims that God The Father shares His Divine nature with His Son Jesus Christ.

TAKING IT HOME

1. Has God given you the equipment to believe that Jesus Christ is Lord?
2. Are you trusting someone or something other than Jesus to give eternal life?
3. What does it do to your faith to know that your salvation and your well being have little to do with you and much to do with the grip strength of The Father and His Son?
4. How will you respond to Jesus Christ, the only way to The Father?