

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Please turn your bibles with me to John 10 –

For the past two weeks we've been looking at Jesus's teaching concerning himself being the good shepherd. In contrast to the Pharisees who are blind thieves and robbers who are not looking out for the good of God's sheep, Jesus is the good shepherd who knows and loves his sheep.

Jesus is the good shepherd who intimately knows his sheep and his sheep know him. They hear his voice and they follow him. Jesus is the good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep. He is the one who possesses the authority to both lay his life down and take up his life again.

And one of the things that we saw at the end of our study last week was that there was division among those that were there listening to Jesus speak.

Some were saying He was insane? That He had a demon? While others, were interpreting the words of Jesus through the works that He's done.

The evidence is clear of who Jesus is.

Our response should lead to belief and trust in Him.

However, we will see in our text this morning that – this is not always the case.

That despite the clear evidence, some choose to reject Jesus.

Let's pray...

[Jhn 10:22-42 NKJV] 22 Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. 23 And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch.

Let's go ahead and pause right here -

John is providing a valuable time stamp for us –

You see, for the past three months on Sunday morning, from Ch 7 until last Sunday's study, all of it took place during the Feast of Tabernacles

-the healing of the blind man,

-the announcements that Jesus made, I am the Light of the World, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink, I am the Door, I am the Good Shepherd

-the conversations that Jesus had with the religious rulers,

-His teachings at the temple

All of this took place around September, October

So there is a three month gap between verse 21 and verse 22

That means we are three months from the Feast of Passover – where Jesus is going to be crucified.

The Feast of Dedication happened in December -

We know this feast as Hanukkah or the Festival of Lights –

And it was a feast that commemorated that Jewish revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes – who profaned the Jewish temple by sacrificing pigs and he forced to the Jews to do bunch of other bad stuff until Judas Maccabaeus assembled a bunch of dudes to revolt against Epiphanes and they ultimately reclaimed the temple and re-purified it.

The menorah was lit – and they only had enough oil for one day but it lasted for 8 days (that is why the celebrate it for 8 days)

Well, in honor of the temple being restored, when the first sacrifice was made to Yahweh, the Feast of Dedication was established.

And following this establishment, the Jews would begin to, once a year, meet in homes and light candles to remember this battle that took place.

They reflected on and celebrated how God delivered them from darkness and oppression and how the temple was restored.

Church, the irony in all this is that Jesus, the great Deliverer and Purifier is walking in the temple, in their midst – yet, they are not able to recognize Him.

Now, I also had you make a note that Jesus walked in Solomon's porch –

Solomon's porch was in the Gentile area of the Temple complex – it had a covering that was held up by giant pillars and we are told by some of the ancient historians that the floors were completely paved – make a note of that...

24 Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

Once again, when John refers to the Jews – he is referring to the religious rulers – the Pharisees

And here John tells us that they surround Jesus –

They are still upset over the announcements that Jesus made during the Feast of the Tabernacles

So, they close in on Him – and they begin to challenge Him.

"We demand an answer now - stop beating around the bush Jesus – are you or are you not the Messiah?"

Remember, the Hebrew word Messiah is translated Christ in the Greek and it means Anointed One.

Are you the Anointed One – the One set a part by God to save us???

The religious rulers knew who Jesus is? Jesus had made it very clear to them –

We saw back in John 8, Jesus said,

(Jn 8:58 NKJV) ...“Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”

The Jews knew exactly what Jesus was saying.

He was claiming to be the “I AM”.

He was claiming to be God.

And they picked up stones to throw at Him because of it.

As we have studied the gospel of John, we have seen that Jesus’ own disciples knew who He is

Andrew in John 1:41 - “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ).

Nathaniel later on in verse 49 - “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

The Samaritan woman – after her encounter with Jesus – she found out who He is

The blind man – he found out who He is and he worshipped

Church, if we are genuinely seeking Jesus Christ – He will reveal Himself to us.

He reveals Himself to others – they just don’t get it.

So why don’t the religious rulers get it?

The problem is that they don’t believe because they won’t believe.

Their problem wasn't their heads, it was their hearts.

They had all the evidence they needed to draw the right conclusion, but when they saw where the evidence was leading, because they didn't want to go there, they blamed their confusion on a lack of clarity in Jesus.

You see church, the religious rulers were expecting another Judas Maccabaeus to lead them and deliver them from Rome.

However, they're looking in the wrong direction.

The Messiah isn't coming as a militant king who will lead the Jews into battle.

He's coming as the Good Shepherd who will lay His life down for his sheep in order to defeat their true greatest enemy, which is sin and death.

So why would they ask Jesus is He is the Christ/ the Messiah?

They either want to hear Jesus plainly dismiss the idea of him being the Messiah so that they can be done with Him or they want to hear Him plainly say, "Yes, I'm the Christ" so that they can kill Him for blasphemy.

25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. 26 "But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.

Jesus is making it clear, their unbelief is not a result of a lack of evidence nor is it a result of an unclear message.

The question that they're asking Jesus is a question rooted in a hard, unbelieving heart.

And their unbelief is a result of the fact that they are not among his sheep.

Jesus said it there in Verse 26, they do not believe because they do not belong to Jesus. The reason for their unbelief is that they do not belong to his flock.

Here is the thing church –

We become His sheep, by believing in Him and we believe Him because we are His sheep

From this side of heaven, all we can see is the truth that we must choose to believe in order to be saved.

From Heaven's side of eternity, we will look back and realize that God had chosen us all along.

Either we are His or we are not.

There is no in between

How do I know if I've been "chosen" by God? How do I know if I'm one of God's "sheep"? By choosing to believe in Jesus.

Well, what if I chose not to believe in Jesus – then you are not His sheep, just like these religious rulers.

27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

Just like the blind man in John 9, God's sheep hear Jesus's call to come to Him in belief, and they respond in obedience.

They know the voice of the Good Shepherd and they follow Him, no matter the cost.

At some point in our lives, we heard the gospel message to come to Jesus in belief, trusting in His death on the cross for salvation – if we responded in believe, then we belong to Him – we are His sheep.

But if we reject the gospel message – we are not His sheep.

We don't hear His voice – therefore, we don't follow Him.

What's the big deal about being part of Jesus' sheepfold.

28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone 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 My Father's hand.

It's only those who belong to Jesus, who hear His call to come and believe and who respond in obedience, they will be given eternal life.

It is not something we can earn by trying to be good or by following a list of do's and don'ts - it is a gift freely given.

[Eph 2:8-9 NKJV] 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

He gave me eternal life church

Not because I am a great person

Not because I am a good person

Not because I am a perfect person

I have eternal life, because He gave it to me

I died for your sins

I took care of your punishment – I took everything upon Me – now I want to give you eternal life.

The hope of the eternal life does not rest on our shoulders.

It rests on the shoulders of Jesus.

And those that have been given eternal life will never perish.

You know what never means – never!!!

No one is able to snatch those who belong to Jesus out of His hand because the Father has given them to Him.

This is an amazing promise church

The unfortunate thing is that many have taken this promise to bring division among the church

Once saved always saved vs one can lose your salvation

The question ought not be whether or not we can lose our salvation.

The question ought to be – Where is our security?

Because verse 27-29 clearly tells us that our security is IN Christ & Christ alone.

Turn to Rom 8

[Rom 8:35-39 NKJV] 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [Shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Jesus loves you.

Let yourself be overwhelmed with it.

It isn't going away.

It is knowing that He loves you that leads to the peace that comes, knowing that He's going to take care of you.

And He has a pretty strong hold on us -

30 "I and [My] Father are one." 31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

This is very important -

Jesus is not claiming to be the same person as the Father.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all three distinct persons.

He is claiming to be of the same "essence" as the Father.

He is claiming to be God.

This is not the first time He has done this!!!

Remember, the Jews surrounded Jesus and asked Him if He was the Messiah –

Here, Jesus takes it up a notch with them and says, "I Am God"

This is a perfect verse to show those people knocking on your door on Saturday morning.

And when you show it to them – I am even going to tell you what their response will be.

They will say, “that Jesus was simply saying that He and the Father were simply “one in purpose”.

The Jews (the religious rulers) clearly understood that Jesus was making Himself equal with God, not just in purpose, but much more than that.

If Jesus was just claiming to be “one in purpose”, He had plenty of opportunities to explain Himself. He’s had plenty of chances to say, “No, no, no, that’s not what I meant”.

There was no misunderstanding regarding Jesus’ claim

The religious rulers wanted clarity – Jesus made it very clear who He is.

Now, previously, as we have been studying the Gospel of John, when the religious rulers would start gathering stones to kill Jesus, Jesus would slip away or blend into the crowd.

This time, He does something different – He challenges them.

Remember, they came to challenge Him – He has turned it around.

Now, here is a question – where did they get the stones – I told you earlier that Solomon's porch was completely paved –

I think the most logical conclusion is that the religious rulers showed up with the stones because that was their intentions from the beginning.

32 Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?"

"You guys want to stone Me – give Me the reason you want to stone Me"

Is it because I healed the blind man?

Is it because I healed the lame man?

Is it because I healed Centurion's son?

Is it because I fed the multitude in the wilderness?

Is it because I turned water into wine and restored joy to the wedding banquet?

Why do you want to kill Me?

You see church, not a single action performed by Jesus gives validation to their unbelief.

33 The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."

After being challenged, the religious rulers acknowledge that Jesus' works were good.

However, they accuse Him of blasphemy.

They're saying that Jesus is guilty of robbing God of the honor that is due to Him by making himself God.

The amazing thing about their response is that the opposite is true

[Phi 2:5-7 NKJV] 5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, [and] coming in the likeness of men.

So, the reality is that Jesus is God and God became man. But, they religious rulers are claiming that Jesus is man who is claiming to be God.

34 Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods" '?

35 "If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), 36 "do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"

In order to understand these 3 verses, we have to look at them in context –

Remember, Jesus challenged the religious rulers on to why they wanted to kill Him and they said because He claimed to be God.

So Jesus challenges them again –

At this time, He references Psalm 82:6

Now, in order to understand Psalm 82:6 – you need to read that in context.

So in Psalm 82, God called these men, these judges as gods – “Elohim”

They were given this label because in their office as judges they determined the fate of other men.

We see the same term used in Exodus 21 and 22

Now, getting back to Psalm 82 –

The problem was that some of the judges became unjust judges

The Scripture Jesus quotes also makes it clear that these judges or “gods” will die just like every other man.

So the point that Jesus is making is – if God called these unjust judges the title “gods” because of their office, why do you consider it blasphemy that I call Myself the ‘Son of God’ in light of the testimony of Me and My works?”

If God can place the title ‘god’ on a created being, someone lesser than Him, then why can God not do the same for the One who He’s set apart (The Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ) and sent into the world?

The Jewish leaders didn't have a problem with the language of Psalm 82, calling human judges "elohim". So why do they have a problem when the real "God-in-human-flesh" shows up and calls Himself "God"?

37 "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38 "but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father [is] in Me, and I in Him."

By the way, this is the last conversation Jesus is going to have with the religious rulers until they arrest Him.

So Jesus knows that time is running out.

He knows that this is it –

He's not going to return to Jerusalem for 3 months - until Palm Sunday

So He continues to offer the invitation to come and believe

Church, this is a picture of grace –

Jesus continues to love and offer hope to those who are seeking to kill him.

What a remarkable picture of loving your enemies!

If Jesus continues to extend love, grace, and hope to those who are holding stones, ready to kill him, then we can extend love, grace, and hope to those who wrong us.

So he says, "Stop & think clearly about the miracles I've done.

If they aren't of God, then it's right for you to dismiss Me.

But, if they are, then what does that say about Me?"

39 Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.

40 And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was

baptizing at first, and there He stayed. 41 Then many came to Him and said,

"John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true." 42 And many believed in Him there.

Once again the religious rulers rejected Jesus, they attempted to arrest Him and Jesus fled an area where He knew that people were going to be receptive of His message.

In Jerusalem, in the Temple, the place where people went to meet God – they want to kill Him

Out in the boonies – they are believing.

What's the difference between the two –

Those near the temple are religious – they don't want to seek God – all they care about is their religious system.

Those that were out beyond the Jordan – they came looking for Jesus

And when you go looking for Jesus, guess what? You will find Him

That is what the bible says –

[Jer 29:13 NKJV] 13 And you will seek Me and find [Me], when you search for Me with all your heart.

He goes back to the area where we found John the Baptist in John 1 –

John was dead by then – as he was beheaded by Herod

John did no miracles.

He was just a preacher, pointing people to Christ.

He was simply a voice of one crying out in the wilderness, “Make straight the way of the Lord.”

Even after John is gone, people are still coming to Jesus.

these people are remembering the words he’s proclaimed... and they’re seeing Jesus face to face... and they’re now making the connection. “Everything John said about this man was true. And many believed in him there.”

Jesus called John the greatest man that ever lived. Matt 11:11

And all he did was tell people about Jesus.

I wonder if that isn’t a good example for us to follow.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Are you His sheep?

If you are His sheep, He gives you eternal life

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

