

Life in His Name – Part 26
Do You Believe? – John 10:22-42
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Sept. 10th, 2023

Intro:

- Our passage for this morning ties into our passage from last week, where Jesus declares Himself to be the owner of the sheep, the Gate for the sheep, the Good Shepherd over the sheep, the One who has authority to lay His life down for the sheep and to take it up again. The One who gives life abundantly.
- These are substantial and divisive claims. They are either true or they are not. And Jesus is either God or possessed by the devil himself. Those hearing Him at that time were divided and debating this as our passage last week ended with: (Pew Bible page 922)

John 10:19-21 NIV

The Jews who heard these words were again divided. 20 Many of them said, “He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?” 21 But others said, “These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

- John, the author of this Gospel, continues to hit the nail on the head over and over and over again to get us to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing in Him, we may have life in His name (John 20:31). He is doing that again in our passage for today pointing us to the teaching, actions, and claims of Christ, and forcing us to decide on who we say that Jesus is.
- John the Apostle fast forwards a couple of months from the last teaching in chapter ten to another scene that happens around the Festival of Dedication (which is Hanukkah).

John 10:22-24 NIV

Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon’s Colonnade. 24 The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.”

- This was not a group of “seekers” or those who were ready to worship Jesus. These were people who were hostile to Jesus. They had already made up their minds about who Jesus was, and they wanted Him to tell them plainly that He was the Messiah so they could kill Him. They were not a bunch of people with tambourines in their pockets ready to worship Him. They were “packing heat,” having stones in their pockets ready to kill Him.
- This is the scene, and this is the scenario. There are a few things from His answer in this context that you need to recognize.

Jesus has His sheep.

John 10:25-26 NIV

Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father’s name testify about me, 26 but you do not believe because you are not my sheep.”

- Some people are Jesus’s sheep, and some people aren’t. Those who hear the words of Jesus and believe are His sheep. Those who look at the works of Jesus that testify about Him and believe, they are His sheep. Some people will not believe what Jesus says about Himself, regardless of what He says. Some people will not believe that His works testify that He is the Christ, the Son of God. No matter how loud the voice of Jesus speaks, some people will not listen and will not believe. No matter how much evidence is presented, they will refuse to believe. No matter what He does, they will refuse to believe. Why is this the case? Because they are not His sheep. How do we know that they are not His sheep? Because they do not believe. But Jesus said:

John 10:27-28 NIV

“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.”

- Jesus has sheep. And His sheep listen to Him. He knows His sheep, and His sheep follow Him. So how do you know if you are one of Jesus’s sheep? Do you listen to His voice? Do you follow Jesus? Do you do what He says, go where He leads? Does He know you?
- What does Jesus do for His sheep? He gives them eternal life. They will never perish, and no one will take them from His hands. Your salvation is dependent upon and connected to the Good Shepherd. He will not fail you. He will hold you fast. Cling to Him, depend on Him, and follow Him. No one and no thing will snatch you out of His hand.

Jesus and the Father are one.

John 10:29-30 NIV

“My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. 30 I and the Father are one.”

- Jesus said that God the Father has given My people to Me, and He is greater than all. No one will take them out of His hand. He and I are One. Jesus was claiming divinity. He was claiming to be God, once again. They are one in substance, one in purpose, very God of very God (see the Nicene Creed). If people are in Jesus’s hand, they are in the Father’s hand, and no one can snatch them out. He claimed to be God. And this claim was not lost on the Jews.

John 10:31-33 NIV

Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, 32 but Jesus said to them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?” 33 “We are not stoning you for any good work,” they replied, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.”

- They were wrong, and they were right. Jesus was not a “mere man,” but He did claim to be God. Many people in His day took issue with this because they did not believe. Many people since then have taken issue with this. Billions of people in fact. Orthodox Jews reject this. Islam rejects this. Hinduism rejects this. Buddhism rejects this. “Spiritual people” reject this. And of course, agnostics and atheists reject this.
- People believe many things about Jesus, that He was a “good teacher, enlightened one, great example,” etc. But He said that He was God. The creator, the author, the judge, the redeemer, the savior, the Lord. The sovereign. The greater temple, the greater prophet, the greater king. The great “I AM.” He said He was way more than what people claim Him to be.
- C.S. Lewis, the famed atheist Oxford professor turned Christian, dealt deeply with this issue, and this is what he concluded:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. . . Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God.

Lewis, C. S., Mere Christianity, London: Collins, 1952, pp. 54–56. (In all editions, this is Bk. II, Ch. 3, “The Shocking Alternative.”)

- Where are you when it comes to Jesus? If you are undecided, deal with the facts and make a decision. If you believe that He is indeed God, then where are you with Him? Is He still at your margin or is He your middle? Are you honoring Him for who He is? Are you known to Him, are you listening for His voice, are you following Him? Or do you believe He is God and don't have time to listen to Him? What are you doing?
- Returning again to the passage, they were ready to kill Him, so Jesus then turned them back to scripture to defend His case.

Jesus is the Son of God.

John 10:34-36 NIV

Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I have said you are “gods””? 35 If he called them ‘gods,’ to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be set aside— 36 what about the one whom the Father set

apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'?

- Jesus was quoting from Psalm 82:6

Ps 82:6 ESV

I said, "You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you."

- This verse is pointing to the children of Israel, those "to whom the word of God came," the gathered tribes about Mount Sinai. They were now carriers of God's word, which made them little "gods" because they had the word of the "sons of the Most High (see also Exod. 4:22-23). So if God the Father called those with the word of God "gods" and "sons of God" how much more is Jesus, "*whom the Father set apart as His very own and sent into the world?*" Jesus was saying, if He set you apart, He set me apart more. If He gave you the word of God, I am the Word of God. And if you are 'sons of god' I am much more, I am The Son of God (which John testifies as the Word that has been made flesh (See John 1:1-5;14) The Jews should not have been surprised by Him saying this, because this is who He is. As they set apart the temple for special purpose, God set Jesus apart for an even more special purpose.
- Then Jesus points again to the works that He has been doing as evidence that He was telling the truth about Himself.

John 10:37-38 NIV

"Do not believe me unless I do the works of my Father. 38 But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."

- Jesus was pointing back to all the things that He had been doing that only God could do, knowing the past, knowing the future, turning water into wine, clearing the temple courts, teaching with authority to the authorities, reading hearts, changing minds, forgiving sins, healing with a word, healing long term disabilities, feeding 5,000, walking on water, healing people born blind, and soon He would raise the dead and more.
- They would not believe even knowing and beholding the evidence.

John 10:39 NIV

Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.

- Haters are going to hate. And God does as He does. They were not going to do to Him what they were not allowed to do at that time. He would indeed die, but in an intentional way for a specific purpose – to become sin to take away sin for all those who believe in Him.

Conclusion

John 10:40-42 NIV

Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing in the early days. There he stayed, 41 and many people came to him. They said, “Though John never performed a sign, all that John said about this man was true.” 42 And in that place many believed in Jesus.

- It is interesting that this entire section (John 1-10) starts and ends with the testimony of John the Baptist. “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). “The one who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me” (30). “This is God’s Chosen One” (34).
- All these people were going to Jesus and believed in Him. They believed John, that all that He had said about Jesus was true, even though they did not see a sign.
- Make up your mind about Jesus, put your faith in Him. Believe He is the Christ, the Son of God, and He is worthy of all your praise, allegiance, and honor. He is worthy, and He will hold you fast.
- Closing invitation and prayer.