

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 13-14TH, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

VOICES (JOHN 10:1-6) FROM BLINDNESS TO SHEEP STEALING

After the blind man is healed, Jesus continues the discussion with the Pharisees and uses an example of sheep following their shepherd.

- "Sheep pen" probably represents first-century Judaism, the "gatekeeper" is John the Baptist or the Spirit, the "Shepherd" is Jesus, and religion apart from Him is the "thief."

A PLACE OF SECURITY

The sheep pen can also represent a relationship with God. In this relationship with the Shepherd, we have safety from "wolves" and "thieves."

- In order to get to the sheep, one would have to go through the gate and cross the watchman who protects it.

BUT WE HAVE TO CHOOSE TO BE IN THE PEN

The sheep hear and recognize the voice of their shepherd and they respond to it by following his direction. It is only in identification with the shepherd that the sheep feel secure.

- **Jesus opens the door and calls, but we must listen. If we listen, He leads, and we begin to know Him more.**

"THEY WILL NEVER FOLLOW A STRANGER"

"Stranger" refers to any religion, thought process, temptation, or anything else that leads us other than Jesus.

- **The true followers of Jesus not only want to follow His instruction but also take steps to weed out misleading and destructive information that can carry us off course.**

"... BUT THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND"

The Pharisees misunderstood because their hearts were set on selfish ambition, not God. **It's all about being able to distinguish voices.**

- **If we're self-centered, constantly distracted, or apathetic when it comes spiritual things, we will misunderstand God and be confused by simple truths.**

PROTECTION (JOHN 10:7-13)

THE GATE

This section would have made the crowd think of Psalm 23. The "thieves" and "robbers" before Jesus were people saying there were other teachings that would lead to God other than a relationship with Him.

- Jesus was targeting **empty religion and false teaching as detractors from God.**

"... TO STEAL, KILL, AND DESTROY"

False teaching and empty religion work in alignment with Satan. They don't bring us closer to God who gives life, freedom, joy, and peace, but only lead us to chaos and destruction.

- **We must truly believe that Jesus wants the best for us, and sin causes temporary and eternal damage.**

THE "HIRED HAND"

Jesus "lays down His life for the sheep," but "hired hand[s]" run away when wolves come near.

- Jesus was willing to die for our salvation and spiritual protection, but **when we put our hope and trust into institutions or people that are in it for themselves, we will be abandoned when opposition arises.**

THE GOOD SHEPHERD (JOHN 10:14-21)

TRUST AND INTIMACY

Five times in eight verses, Jesus reminds us that He was willing to lay down His life for us. This should encourage us to **be vulnerable and intimate with Jesus because we can trust that He and His plans for us are good.**

- **We grow intimacy with Jesus through prayer, study, and obedience.**

GOING BEYOND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Jesus said there are "sheep that are not from this sheep pen." These are the Gentiles (non-Jews) in the world. **God's Kingdom equally invites all races, gender, ethnic, and social standings if they accept the teachings of Christ.**

- The disciples would take the gospel to the world. This is the "greater things" in John 14:12.

SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT

At the heart of the Bible is Jesus' willingness to lay down His life for humanity. He was not forced to do it and had the right to do what He pleased, but in His love, chose to pay the price for our sin and evil.

- **We're not only to accept this, but to model this example in how we love others.**

THERE WERE SOME WHO WERE LISTENING

The more Jesus described Himself and His plan for humanity, the more people were divided and angry. **Jesus and His teachings leave no room for indecision.**

- **We are forced to choose a side and make up our minds as to who we're going to follow: ourselves or Jesus.**

IDENTITY (JOHN 10:22-30)

THE FESTIVAL OF DEDICATION (HANUKKAH)

Some time later, during winter, Jesus came back to Jerusalem. Again, the Pharisees "surround Him" and try to verbally trap Him.

- This festival was also called a Feast of Lights that **pointed to a time when the Messiah would come to the Temple, cast out invaders, and reestablish the Kingdom.**

THEY CHOSE NOT TO BELIEVE

The irony is the most religious people didn't see prophecy being fulfilled right in front of them. The reason for their blindness was their lack of wanting to see. This is a major problem today.

- **Many choose to live in ignorance of God and His Word because it may contradict their plans.**

IDENTITY

So, Jesus defines who the "sheep" are: the ones who choose to hear His voice follow Him. In other words, people who choose to put their identity in Jesus.

- **Above all things, the example of Jesus and the Word of God should steer how we live and make decisions.**

NO ONE CAN TAKE OUR SALVATION FROM US

If we're **truly saved**, we will be obedient to and have a relationship with Jesus. He makes it clear that true followers "continue in [His] word" (8:31).

- **If we're not living according to the Bible, we are not of God and cannot inherit eternal life, but if we're following Christ, nothing can rob us of Heaven.**

"I AND THE FATHER ARE ONE"

There are many verses that establish the deity of Jesus, but v30 may be the most blatant. Jesus wanted no ambiguity as to who He is.

- **If we are to mold our lives to be more like God, we must know who the biblical Jesus is. We have no right to try and recreate the image of Jesus.**

LISTENING (JOHN 10:31-42)

"AGAIN THE JEWS PICKED UP ROCKS..."

It was not Jesus' actions that got Him crucified, it was His words. Several important points come from knowing this:

- **Jesus holds all knowledge because He is God, in Jesus, we have forgiveness of sin, we have help in this life through His Spirit, and we have eternal victory over death.**

"YOU ARE GODS?"

V34-36 can be confusing. Jesus quotes Psalm 82 and Exodus 4 to show that people in authority act as, and are treated like, "gods" because they have power and influence.

- **Though God gives some people authority on earth, the ultimate authority is Jesus Christ, who is God.**

THERE WERE MANY WHO WERE LISTENING

Though Jesus' works backed up His words, the religious leaders still didn't believe, and they tried to "seize Him" again to no avail.

- Jesus then leaves for an area on the other side of the Jordan River where "many believed in Him" because they were searching for the truth.

TRUE SALVATION HAS EVIDENCE

- Jesus makes it clear that real Christians place their identity in Him, live out the Word, love others, and follow His voice. **If we are not producing the principles and fruit of the Spirit, there is a major problem.**
- True salvation also produces an allegiance to Jesus over all things and at any cost.

WE HAVE A CRAFTY ENEMY

- Is it possible that many of us are not truly convinced that sin and spiritual apathy have the destructive power that they do?
- It is so easy to subtly give in to the allure and temptations that surround us, but **we must remember Satan, sin, and apathy come to "steal, kill, and destroy."**

A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- We first need to ask ourselves, what do we truly want? **Do we desire to pursue God and the righteousness that should come with that pursuit?**
- Or are we in it for us? **Are we so shallow and myopic that we only see temporary pleasure and selfish ambition?**

ARE WE POSITIONED TO LISTEN?

- To navigate this life and inherit eternal life, we must listen and respond to Jesus.
- **It is impossible to hear Jesus if we do not intentionally create space for Him to speak.** This means we must **clear out sin, remove distractions**, and make time to be with Him in **prayer, study, and meditation.**