

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 14TH, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

VOICES (JOHN 10:1-21)

"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD"

God as the Shepherd over Israel is a common picture in the OT, seen most famously in Psalm 23. That the Messiah would be a Shepherd to Israel was also an expectation of the people. Jesus will now use this imagery to describe His love for, protection of, and self-sacrifice for His sheep.

- **Jesus identifies as our Shepherd.**

BAD INTENTIONS

Not everyone who enters into the sheep pen does so with good intentions. There are those who want to steal (thief) and sometimes do so by violence (robber). Pastors and spiritual leaders were also referred to as shepherds. These men could be good shepherds or bad shepherds if they weren't following God and His Word.

HE CALLS, KNOWS, AND PROTECTS HIS OWN

Jesus, who is the Good Shepherd, brings the sheep into the pen and leads them out, knows His sheep by name, and protects the sheep from enemies inside and outside the pen.

- **We know the voice of our Shepherd and follow Him in obedience which is the simple definition of Christianity: knowing Jesus and following Him.**

THE ONLY GATEWAY TO ABUNDANT LIFE

Not only does Jesus describe Himself as the Shepherd, but He also calls Himself the gate. All the false shepherds until Him and after Him are again called thieves and robbers. They offer the illusion of abundant life but in truth, offer empty lies that lead to despair.

- Life is full of "gates" for us to go through. **Only one gate offers eternal life.**

ABUNDANT LIFE IS NOT ABOUT MATERIAL STUFF

Part of the stealing, killing, and destroying these thieves do is to convince people that life is found in the pleasures of this world through the fulfillment of fleshly desires, which distract people from following their true Shepherd, Jesus.

- **Our culture, and sadly many churches, cry out to people that happiness is found in ourselves rather than in Jesus.**

HIRED HANDS DON'T REALLY CARE

Jesus contrasts Himself with "hired hands," those who seem to care for the people but only care about themselves.

- **All the law was summarized in loving God and loving others. We care about people because our love for Him is seen in loving those who are created in His image.**

THE ULTIMATE EXAMPLE OF THIS KIND OF LOVE

Jesus laid down His life not only for those who believe in Him, but those yet to believe. Not only will He die for His sheep, but He will rise again to share His victory with them over death, Hell, sin, and Satan. And Jesus does this willingly. No one can take His life; He freely gives it.

- **Greater love has no one...**

JESUS IS DIVISIVE

Some thought Jesus' words pointed to Him being demon-possessed, producing mental illness. Others questioned how a demon-possessed man could speak such wise words and heal one born blind.

- **Nothing has changed today. Some want to dismiss Jesus, others want to worship Him. What's our response?**

ASSURANCE (JOHN 10:22-30)

THE FESTIVAL OF DEDICATION (HANUKKAH)

This was an eight-day celebration (also called the Festival of Lights) of the rededication of the Jewish temple in 164 BC. Antiochus IV Epiphanes had turned the Temple into a pagan shrine to Zeus (the Abomination of Desolation). Judas Maccabeus defeated this pagan leader and cleansed and rededicated the Temple to God.

THE QUESTION

Jesus had taught in parables and figurative language. He had also performed miraculous signs. However, the expectations for the Messiah were of a national military leader, not a humble teacher. Thus, the Jewish leaders desire a plain answer.

- **Jesus is God the Son and won't bow to our expectations—we bow to Him!**

THE ANSWER

Jesus has answered their question. And His works give authority and validity to His answer that He is truly the Messiah sent from God. The reason they won't follow Him is their unbelief. They know

Jesus' claims, but they won't believe Him, nor the works He does.

- **We can answer all the questions about Jesus, and people will still reject Him.**

CAN WE LOSE OUR SALVATION?

Those who belong to Jesus hear His voice, are known by Him, and follow Him. And Jesus gives them eternal life (quality), which seems to indicate a life that will never end (quantity). Believers will never perish and can't be snatched out of Jesus' nor His Father's hand.

- **The better question is, are we believing in Jesus alone as our only hope?**

WE PERSEVERE, GOD PRESERVES

We've seen the importance of belief in Jesus and His works in John already (John 3:16-18, 36; 4:41-42, 50; 6:29, 35, 40, 47; 7:38; 9:3-38). No one who stays in unbelief or lives in unbelief can claim salvation.

- **Salvation by grace through faith isn't a product we possess but a relationship we cultivate with God's help until we die.**

FOR US

Jesus and the Father are one! This means when we get Jesus, we get the Father, and when we get the Father, we get Jesus! Not only that, the Father and the Son give us God the Holy Spirit (John 14:15-17) so that the fullness of God dwells in us!

- This is the truth that sustains us: **God the Father, Son, and Spirit are for us!**

TRUTH (JOHN 10:31-42)

CAN WE HANDLE THE TRUTH?

The Jewish leaders know exactly what Jesus is saying and believe He is committing blasphemy by making Himself God. And if Jesus' claims were false, He would be a blasphemer.

- Truth is truth whether we believe it or not. The claims of Jesus supported by His resurrection are true.

FROM THE LESSER TO THE GREATER

A famous way to argue in Jesus' time was, "If this [something lesser] is true, then this [something greater] must certainly be true." Jesus argued that if fallible humans could be called "gods" (Psalm 82) in some sense, then how much more can He be called "God"?

- Jesus never claimed to be anything less than fully God and fully man, God the Son.

THE VERIFICATION OF WORKS

Jesus said that His works (signs) verify His claims to be God the Son. John says he wrote this Gospel and included these signs so that we would believe that Jesus is the Messiah, God the Son (John 20:31).

- Our works verify that we know Jesus and are following Him. **Our works don't save but give evidence we are saved.**

SIGNS OR TESTIMONIES ABOUT THE SIGNS

Some of the Jews saw the signs Jesus performed. Others heard John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus. Whether believing because of what they saw or what they heard, belief brought salvation.

- We have the great privilege of telling people about Jesus and all He's done for them that they may believe, too.

WHOSE VOICE DO WE FOLLOW?

- Lots of voices in our culture call out for our attention and affection.
- Every one of us has a shepherd(s).
- **Does our shepherd provide only short-term pleasure or long-term peace and joy?**
- **The abundant life given by Jesus is secured by an unshakeable truth: His resurrection, which promises eternal life!**

IS OUR BELIEF ACTIVE?

- Do we seek after Jesus every day, or is He a ghost of salvation past?
- **Are we looking to do only the minimum required to be a Christian?**
- Knowing that we have the Holy Spirit living in us, do we **rejoice daily** that God **lives in us, empowers us, and keeps us** so that we **worship Him** every day?

HEAR, KNOW, AND BELIEVE THE TRUTH

- Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life: Are we unashamedly believing and living this?
- **Do our words and actions give enough evidence to verify we follow Jesus?**
- Being salt and light to a world that's darkened by the world, the flesh, and the devil requires **courageous faith, compassionate love, and selfless humility.**