

John 10:22-30

The feast of the Dedication was then taking place in Jerusalem. It was winter. And Jesus walked about in the temple area on the Portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around Him and said to Him, “How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.”

Jesus answered them, “I told you and you do not believe. The works I do in My Father’s name testify to Me. But you do not believe, because you are not among My sheep. My sheep hear My voice; I know them and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father’s hand. The Father and I are One.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection Questions

- 1) ***The Context: John 10:22-30*** continues the Good Shepherd discourse from *John 10:1-18*. This discourse results in two major retaliations of the Jewish leaders; **1)** they accuse Him of having a demon (vv. 19-21) and **2)** they reject Him and attempt to stone Him (vv. 31-39). Throughout this passage we will hear the term “the Jews” used, which does not refer to the Jewish people in general but to the Jewish leaders, the Pharisees in particular. The common people find it easier to believe in Jesus. But the more powerful, wealthy or sophisticated people become, the more difficult it is for them to follow Jesus. (too many idols holding them captive to the world).

- 2) This text gives us the context of time and place, ‘winter, feast of the dedication, and Jesus was in the temple.’ The feast of the Dedication (currently known as Chanukah) celebrates the triumph of Judas Maccabeus (a Jew) over Antiochus Epiphanes (a Syrian). Antiochus was trying to convert the Jews to Greek philosophy. When he failed, he attacked Jerusalem, looted the temple and desecrated the altar. Judas Maccabeus and his brothers created an army and freed Jerusalem from the Syrians, cleansed the temple and rededicated the altar. Jesus is teaching under the Portico of the Temple probably because of the weather. This would have been an easier place for His opponents to trap Him. The location here is important because to the Jews, the temple represented God’s house. They do not know yet that Jesus is the New Temple. In what ways can we fall into the same trap; at times associating God’s presence exclusively or more often with a specific place than among His people (in whom Christ dwells)? (the Church teaches that we find the real presence of Christ in the consecrated host and wine, in the person of the priest and in the gathered assembly.)

- 3) ***Verse 24*** tells us that the Jews (Jewish leaders) gathered around Him. The Greek verb ‘ekuklosan’(to gather) really has more of a meaning of ‘surrounded or encircled’. The physical placement of the people gives us an idea of what is about to happen, an interrogation. “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly” This is a hostile challenge placed under the guise of theological curiosity. The Jewish leaders are hoping to bring things to a head here. This is not the first time the topic of Jesus’ Messiahship has been raised in this gospel (see John 7:26, 31, 41-43, 8:25, 53, 9:22). They are trying to corner Him, to trap Him because they are threatened by the claim. In what ways do people still try to trap Jesus in His followers because they are

threatened by the claims that Christ makes? In what ways do we each need to be prepared to face what Jesus faced in His life-time?

- 4) There are some ironies here. The Jewish leaders demand that He tell them *plainly* what He is talking about. When Jesus does answer them *very* plainly, they pick up stones to kill Him. They have requested a clear statement but it is precisely the plain answer that Jesus gives that makes them want Him dead (vs. 31). How is Christ's clear message still today freeing for some and angering for others? Why?
- 5) Jesus does, in fact, answer them 'plainly' but they do not like His answer. Jesus' rejection is foreshadowed in the opening chapter of John's gospel where it states "He came to what was His own, and His own people did not accept Him." (1:10-11). Jesus has already revealed Himself 'plainly' to several people (the Samaritan woman and the man born blind), and those humble people welcome Him as the Messiah, but the Jewish leaders refuse to welcome Him as Messiah. Through His answer Jesus is telling them that the reason they do not recognize Him is because they are not His sheep. When have we received Him as the Samaritan woman or the man born blind? What does it mean to be one of His sheep? (e.g. docility, humility, trust in who He says He is...)
- 6) If we look at John 10:10, we can see that Jesus sees the Jewish leaders neither as sheep nor good shepherds. Instead, Jesus places the Jewish leaders in the category of 'thieves, bandits and hired hands' who come 'only to steal, kill and destroy.' Any thief, bandit or hired hand dislikes and opposes the Good Shepherd because the Good Shepherd will prevent them from carrying out their own personal plans towards the sheep. Jesus continues to reveal Himself 'plainly'. At what point in our lives have we reacted towards Jesus as the Jewish leaders did? When have we of (at various times in our lives) represented each and all of these groups to some extent?
- 7) "The works I do in My Father's Name testify to Me."(vs.25) Jesus is reminding them that they have had plenty of opportunities to believe in Him based on the mighty miracles they have seen Him do in God's Name. Instead they have chosen not only *not* to believe, but to ostracize, threaten and persecute Him. What are some of the attitudes that played into their complete misunderstanding of who He was and their unwillingness to accept Him on His terms? Where do we see those attitudes today and similar fruits of the attitudes get played out today?

8) Jesus promises those who follow Him eternal life. He also promises them that they will never be snatched out of His hand. What specific consolations do these promises bring to your heart, mind and soul? How might these promises affect the boldness with which you proclaim Him to others?