



Sunday, June 21, 2026

John 10:22-42

Many of you are aware that we've been walking through John chapter 10 over the past few weeks. And one of the major themes being developed out of Mark John 10 is the theme of control. That theme started in the previous chapter with the blind man learning to let go of his control and trust Jesus. Then as we enter into chapter 10 the imagery of the Shepherd reminds us that God is our Good Shepherd and that when we let go of our control and submit ourselves to His good care, then He is the One that will lead us to life and life more abundantly.

We've been reminded of David's portrayal of the good Shepherd in Psalm 23, where we see that life has its fair share of ups and downs. That yes, there will be seasons where we find ourselves beside still waters and in green grassy meadows, but there will also be seasons where we're forced to walk through the valley of the shadow of death. But through it all, the Lord - as our good Shepherd - protects us with His rod and leads us and guides us with His staff.

Why? Well, isn't it obvious? Because he loves you. He loves you with a love that is so deep that He even puts Himself on the line by laying Himself down as the last line of defense between you and evil. And if we trust Him and believe Him for salvation in our eternity is secured in Him and in Him alone.

Now, as we step into the rest of John 10, we see Jesus face-to-face with the religious leaders of the day, who yet again, try to accuse Him of blasphemy and stone Him. But it's not Jesus time yet. And so He masterfully turns the entire conversation on its head. What follows is not simply a debate about theology or a discussion about difficult passages in the Old Testament. Rather, the rest of this chapter showcases just how unwilling these religious leaders were to surrender control.

So, if you have your Bibles with you this morning, I'd like to invite you to turn with me to John chapter 10 where we will be reading from verse 22-42. If you are able to stand, I'd also like to invite you to stand for the reading of the word of God:

John 10:22-42

‘22 Then the Festival of Dedication took place in Jerusalem, and it was winter. 23 Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon’s Colonnade. 24 The Jews surrounded him and asked, “How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.”

25 “I did tell you and you don’t believe,” Jesus answered them. “The works that I do in my Father’s name testify about me. 26 But you don’t believe because you are not of my sheep. 27 My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. 30 I and the Father are one.”

31 Again the Jews picked up rocks to stone him.

32 Jesus replied, “I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these works are you stoning me?”

33 “We aren’t stoning you for a good work,” the Jews answered, “but for blasphemy, because you—being a man—make yourself God.”

34 Jesus answered them, “Isn’t it written in your law, I said, you are gods? 35 If he called those to whom the word of God came ‘gods’—and the Scripture cannot be broken— 36 do you say, ‘You are blaspheming’ to the one the Father set apart and sent into the world, because I said: I am the Son of God? 37 If I am not doing my Father’s works, don’t believe me. 38 But if I am doing them and you don’t believe me, believe the works. This way you will know and understand[h] that the Father is in me and I in the Father.” 39 Then they were trying again to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.

40 So he departed again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing earlier, and he remained there. 41 Many came to him and said, “John never did a sign, but everything John said about this man was true.” 42 And many believed in him there.

One thing we’ve learned as we’ve worked through John’s Gospel is that context matters. And what do we see in the beginning of our reading this morning? John makes it very clear that the season in which we are now entering into is referred to as the Festival of Dedication and it was winter and Jesus is now walking in the temple in Solomon’s colonnade.

Now here's what's really interesting. There isn't much information in the Bible about the Festival of Dedication. In fact, this is the only place in the entire Bible where it is referenced.

Now the introduction of this feast is very interesting to say the least because it basically happened during the silent years. What are the silent years you may be asking yourself? Historically, there is a gap between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament called the Intertestamental period. That gap was approximately 400 years in duration and was a season where no new Scripture was written and no prophets were raised up to speak on God's behalf. From a biblical perspective, it was a season of prophetic silence - hence the term, the Silent Years. Yet although God was not speaking through prophets, He was still at work behind the scenes of history.

And so, during that time, at the end of the Old Testament, the Persian Empire controlled the land of Israel. However, in 333 BC, the Persians were defeated by Alexander the Great, and so the region came under Greek control.

But the Jews mounted a rebellion and after several years of fighting, what was known as the Maccabean rebellion, successfully recaptured Jerusalem and reclaimed the Temple. They cleansed it from the pagan defilement and began restoring it for the worship of the Lord.

And, an important part of their worship was the menorah. This was a lampstand that burned consecrated olive oil and symbolized the presence of God among His people. Once lit, it was to remain burning continually as the priests regularly replenished the oil.

According to Jewish legend and tradition, during the restoration of the Temple only one vial of consecrated oil was found which would have only provided enough oil to keep the lamp burning for about a day. According to the purification requirements of the Law, it would take 8 days to prepare new consecrated oil. And so miraculously, the lamp stayed lit for the entire 8 day period until the new consecrated oil was prepared.

And so - naturally - to the people there that day, it was much more than a miracle of oil. It was a reminder that despite the many years of oppression and persecution, God's presence had not abandoned His people - and His light continued to shine.

Which is why the Feast of Dedication was established - to commemorate this miraculous event, by embracing an eight day celebration which included many light-filled ceremonies. And what's really interesting, is that this celebration is still observed by Jewish people today but now more recogniz-

ably known as the Festival of Lights - or simply Hanukkah.

So when John gives us the context of this Festival of Dedication, he does so because he wants us to understand the setting.

This is a festival centered around God's light, God's presence, and God's faithfulness to His people. It is a celebration that reminds the Jewish people that even in seasons of darkness, God's light continues to shine.

And it is during this very festival that Jesus now walks into the Temple. Which means the irony could not be greater. During a celebration of God's light, the Light of the World is standing right in front of them but they don't see Him. The very Word of God that has become flesh and dwells among them, is now acting as a light unto their path yet they're more blind than the blind man of Chapter 9.

And so, instead of acknowledging this, we read in verse 24 that the people are back to their same old questions and now ask: 'If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.' At first glance, it sounds like a sincere question. It sounds as though they are genuinely seeking the truth and simply want Jesus to give them a straight answer.

But Jesus knows their hearts, and He knows that this is not the case. In fact, His response is striking. He says:

John 10:25

'I did tell you, and you don't believe.'

In other words, Jesus is making it clear that the problem is not a lack of revelation. The problem is their lack of belief. If they had truly been looking, they would have already seen who He is.

To the woman at the well, Jesus already said plainly, 'I am He.' He has referred to God as His Father on numerous occasions. He has said, 'I am the Light of the World,' and has even offered living water that never runs dry. And even most recently, He has called Himself the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep, the door of entry into abundant life, and the only One with the authority to access it.

So the issue is not that Jesus has failed to reveal Himself. The issue is that they refuse to believe

what He has already been showing them. That's what this is really all about.

And so naturally, this raises a question. If Jesus has already made it clear who He is, then what are they actually trying to accomplish by getting Him to say it plainly and publicly? Think about it, if they already know what He is claiming, why press Him for another answer?

And again, this is where the context of the Feast of Dedication comes into play. This festival celebrated the moment when the Jewish people resisted oppression and won their freedom.

Centuries later, the Jewish people now find themselves under oppression again! This time it's the Romans. And many were longing for a Messiah who would ride into battle, defeat the Roman forces, and restore their freedom.

So when they say, 'If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly,' there's strategy behind that statement. They're putting public pressure on Jesus during an event that celebrated victory over their oppressors, surrounded by people who were already longing for deliverance from the Romans. And they know that how Jesus responds to this question will very likely determine whether the crowd follows Him or not.

So, if Jesus says, 'I am the Messiah,' but then refuses to do what they expect the Messiah to do - by overthrowing Rome - then they can point to Him and say, 'See? He can't be the Messiah,' and the crowds would agree.

But if Jesus explains the true nature of His mission - that He came not to conquer Rome, but to conquer sin; not merely to save Israel, but the whole world - then they can accuse Him of blasphemy and apprehend Him according to the Law.

Either way, they believe they have Him trapped. But Jesus refuses to play by their rules.

Notice that He doesn't give them the simple answer they are demanding. Instead, He points them back to the evidence that has been standing before them the entire time. His words. His miracles. His works.

But then He goes on to say that they don't believe because they are not His sheep. Sure, they hear the words coming out of His mouth but they're not registering. Sheep recognize the voice of their shepherd and respond with trust. That's the defining characteristic of a sheep. So therefore, by

definition, they are not His sheep because they do not trust Him. But Jesus doesn't stop there. He now makes the claim that He gives His sheep eternal life, and that He gets His authority to do so from His Father and that He and His Father are one - thus equating Himself with God as God, now standing before them in the flesh.

And so naturally, they view this language, in addition to all the other things that Jesus had said over the past few months as blasphemy, and according to the law, they had every right to pick up stones and start stoning him, which is exactly what they do.

So it's at this point in the story that Jesus has a decision to make. He's literally stuck between a rock and a hard place, lol. In all seriousness, though it's not His time to die and He knows that so He can't let them kill Him. However, He also knows that according to the law they have every right in their eyes to stone Him because of their perceived blasphemy. So Jesus has to figure out something incredible here to get them to drop the stones.

But this is not new territory for Jesus. A few chapters ago we saw Him masterfully write in the sand and respond to His accusers with the famous statement, 'Let he who is without sin, cast the first stone.' His accusers immediately dropped their stones and turned away.

So watch now, how Jesus again, masterfully evades capture through His words.

Specifically, Jesus says to them in:

John 10:34-36

'34 Jesus answered them, "Isn't it written in your law,^[f] I said, you are gods?^[g] 35 If he called those to whom the word of God came 'gods'—and the Scripture cannot be broken— 36 do you say, 'You are blaspheming' to the one the Father set apart and sent into the world, because I said: I am the Son of God?'

Which - no matter how you read it - is a very confusing statement. Especially when Jesus says:

John 10:34

'Isn't it written in your law, I said, you are gods?'

The term 'law' here is the Greek word 'nomos.' While we often think of the Law as referring to the first five books of the Bible, John's Gospel sometimes uses the term more broadly to refer to the

Old Testament Scriptures as a whole.

So when Jesus says, 'Isn't it written in your law,' He is really saying, 'Isn't it written in your Scriptures?'

Now, the next statement is where things become more challenging as Jesus now says, 'Isn't it written in your Scriptures that I said, you are gods.'

So before we get into this, we need to understand that Jesus is using this section to refute their accusation of blasphemy for Jesus saying I am the son of God. So it may be helpful to picture a bit of a courtroom scene happening here.

And when Jesus uses this argument, he's actually pulling this line from Psalm 82 word for word in order to show His accusers that because precedent for this kind of language already exists in Scripture, their argument is not as fail-safe as they think.

Psalm 82 says this:

Psalm 82:6-7

'I said, "You are gods;
you are all sons of the Most High.
7 However, you will die like humans
and fall like any other ruler."

Now, there are different views on the 'gods' that God is speaking to in Psalm 82. Some believe He is speaking to human rulers or judges. Others believe He is speaking to what is often referred to as the Divine Council - spiritual beings who are being held accountable by God for how they exercised their authority. At any rate, the specific term being used is Elohim. While it is most often used of Jehovah God, it can also be used in Scripture for spiritual beings, false gods, and even human rulers or judges depending on the context. The point being that these are beings that have a certain level of authority given to them by Jehovah, God.

The relationship to Jehovah isn't the point right now, it's the language that is being used when God says that they are '...all sons of the Most High.' This is significant because it shows that specific language involving 'sons of God' is already present within the Scriptures themselves. And that matters because according to verse 36, the very accusation being brought against Jesus is tied to His claim

to be the Son of God.

Do you see what Jesus is doing here?

He is exposing the weakness of their accusation. They have just accused Him of blasphemy because of His claim to be the Son of God. Yet instead of immediately defending Himself, Jesus points them to a passage where God Himself has already referred to other beings as sons.

This shows precedent. And raises an important question: If God Himself refers to other beings as sons, and now Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of God, then whether they believe His claim or not, their accusation of blasphemy would rightfully be called into question and is not as clear-cut as they originally thought.

So, before they can condemn Jesus for calling Himself the Son of God, they must first explain why language that already appears in their own Scriptures only becomes blasphemous when applied to Jesus.

And this is where the argument takes an unexpected turn.

Jesus could have left it there, but by pressing in, we can see His deep love for His accusers. He wants them to be His sheep. And so it's almost as if He reasons with them by saying, that even if they can't bring themselves to believe His words then at least believe His works. Do you hear His patience with them? They're holding rocks, arms raised, and He's still pleading with them to repent and believe.

John 10:38b

'...believe the works. This way you will know and understand that the Father is in me and I in the Father.'"

This is grace. Jesus is pointing them to the evidence that has been standing before them the entire time. The blind have received their sight. The lame have walked. Lives have been transformed. These works testify that the Father is with Him and that everything He has been saying is true.

But how do they respond?

John 10:39

'Then they were trying again to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.'

They hated, rejected, and attacked Him. They treated the Good Shepherd as if He were the predator. Why? Because they were blind. And unlike the blind man of Chapter 9, they were unwilling to see. Their spiritual pride had taken control. They had already decided who Jesus was and were unwilling to consider any evidence that challenged their conclusion.

And the irony is that those who claimed to be the spiritual authorities of the day, simply could not... would not...recognize the true authority of Heaven standing right in front of them.

And so at the end of the day, this really is all about control isn't it? And what is the root of control? Pride.

Men, in light of it being Father's Day today, can I speak to you for a moment?

One of the greatest dangers we face is not weakness. It is pride.

It is becoming so convinced that we are right...so determined to stay in control, that we stop listening when God is trying to speak.

As men, we often feel that we have to be in control. We assume that if we're going to lead our families well, we need to lead from a place of control.

But Jesus teaches the exact opposite.

According to Him, the greatest leaders are first the greatest followers.

Real leadership begins when we stop trying to control everything and start surrendering ourselves to the leadership of the Good Shepherd.

Are there areas of our lives where we've already made up our minds but need to be willing to let Jesus challenge us?

Are there habits we need to surrender?

Attitudes that need to be addressed?

Wounds that should be brought into the light?

Relationships we know need to change?

Because ultimately the difference between the blind man in chapter 9 and the religious leaders in chapter 10 wasn't knowledge or position.

It was humility.

One was willing to be led.

The other was determined to stay in control.

Men, if we're going to lead our families well, it begins by first being willing to follow. The greatest fathers are not the men who have all the answers.

They are the men who recognize the voice of the Shepherd and are willing to follow wherever He leads.

Closing blessing:

May the Lord Bless you and Keep you

May He cause His face to Shine upon you

May He be gracious towards you

Lifting up His countenance before you

And may He give you peace

In Jesus name, Amen.

Josh Hageman

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