

What Did Jesus Say, Again? Part I
John 10:22-30
5/12/2019
(Show Title Slide)

When I go to the gym,
And I need to be honest and say I don't make it there
As often as I intend to go to the gym,
When I go to the gym,
When I'm doing my steps on the elliptical machine
I put in my earbuds (headphones) and I like to listen to music

Depending on my mood or what's been happening that day
I might listen to Frank Sinatra
Or a Broadway Musical

Sometimes it might be the band Chicago or Queen

When I listen to those bands, I listen to their
Greatest hits album

Now for those of you who are too young,
An album was round piece of vinyl
That you would play on something called a record player -45

And back then, unlike today with mp3 music files,
There was only so many minutes of music
that could fit on a record

As a result, a Greatest Hits album
Might not have all the hits of any particular band
I have some favorite songs of Chicago or Queen
That didn't fit on their greatest hits album

But most of them are

This morning is the Fourth Sunday of Easter
(Show Post-Resurrection appearances Slide)

In these past few weeks,
Our scripture lessons have told of Jesus' appearances on
Easter morning, and later that evening
And of other post-resurrection appearances

Between now and Pentecost
(When the Holy Spirit comes after Jesus ascended to heaven)
We have something like the greatest messages album of Jesus

To be sure, not all of Jesus' greatest thoughts are here.
Just the ones that fit
in these remaining weeks of the Easter Season
(Show Title Slide)

This year I'm imagining that I'm with the other disciples
And it's after Jesus has appeared to us a couple of times
And we're just sitting together and talking

The disciples now have the perspective of being
on the other side of Jesus' death and resurrection
And they are recalling what Jesus said to them
in the time leading up to Good Friday

And they can see and hear what Jesus said before
with new eyes and new ears
And now it makes sense

In John's Gospel, just before we pick up today's story in John,
We hear Jesus talking about being the Good Shepherd.
(Show Sallman Good Shepherd Slide)

³The guard at the gate opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴Whenever he has gathered all of his sheep, he goes before them and they follow him, because they know his voice. ⁵They won't follow a stranger but will run away because they don't know the stranger's voice."
— John 10:3-5

¹¹"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."
— John 10:11

This last one becomes a whole lot clearer
After Jesus' death and resurrection, right?

Again, there are other memorable quotes from this chapter
But, think of this as having the limitations of a greatest hits album
(Show Title Slide)

When today's lesson starts,
The Jewish opposition is trying to figure Jesus out

On one hand Jesus is teaching with authority
and he is healing people left and right with divine power
On the other hand,
Jesus is not fitting the Jewish Messianic expectations
of a triumphant royal military commander
leading troops in victory into Jerusalem

²⁴The Jewish opposition circled around him and asked, "How long will you test our patience? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."
— John 10:24

Jesus tells that he has tried to tell them.
And even if they don't believe his words,
They should at least be convinced by
the divine miraculous healings that he has done.
And then he pivots to the sheep and shepherd analogy

²⁵Jesus answered, "I have told you, but you don't believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, ²⁶but you don't believe because you don't belong to my sheep. ²⁷My sheep listen to my voice. I know them and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life."
— John 10:25-28

Did you catch that last part?
²⁷My sheep listen to my voice. I know them and they follow me.

Remember that video that the children just saw?

...and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴Whenever he has gathered all of his sheep, he goes before them and they follow him, because they know his voice. ⁵They won't follow a stranger but will run away because they don't know the stranger's voice."

It reminds me of a story I heard
one of the times when I was in the Holy Land
(Shepherd/Butcher story)

So, who are you listening to?
Who are you following?
The good shepherd, or the butcher?

As Jesus put it earlier in the chapter,
(Show Sallman Good Shepherd close up Slide)

⁷So Jesus spoke again, "I assure you that I am the gate of the sheep. ⁸All who came before me were thieves and outlaws, but the sheep didn't listen to them. ⁹I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief enters only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came so that they could have life—indeed, so that they could live life to the fullest."
— John 10:7-10

¹⁰ *I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*
– John 10:10 (NRSV)

Do you want abundant, everlasting, eternal life?

So, who are you listening to?
Who are you following?
The good shepherd, or the butcher?

How can you tell?
How can you know which voice is Jesus' voice,
And which voice is the thief's or the butcher's?

You already know how...

(*Show Title Slide*)

Remember when we talked about
how the early General Rules for the United Societies
that John Wesley developed in the 1700's
can be reframed for us today into Three Simple Rules?
(Actually, we've talked about this many times, huh?)

First, Do no harm.
Second, Do good,
Third, Attend to the ordinances of God

They key to being able to recognize the voice of Jesus
Among the many other voices that surround us today
Is in the third simple rule
Attend to the ordinances of God

The ordinances of God are those things that Gods tells us to do
So that we will come to know and see his grace in our lives.

We, Methodists, call these things our spiritual disciplines
(*Show spiritual disciplines Slide*)

They include things like
Having a daily time of personal prayer and devotions
Worshipping our Lord with others each week (or more often)
Reading and studying the Bible
Receiving Holy Communion (monthly or weekly or more often)
Doing acts of Compassion for others on a regular basis
Christian Conferencing
(which is a fancy way of saying hanging out with other
Christians for mutual support and encouragement)

When we are attentive to our spiritual disciplines,
When we are faithful in attending to the ordinances of God,
It is easy for us to hear and to recognize the voice
Of our good Shepherd
And avoid falling prey to either the thief or the butcher

And here is even better news...

Our Good Shepherd is always here for us
Seeking us out
and waiting for us

Remember what Jesus said about the **lost** sheep in Luke's Gospel?
(*Show Lost Sheep Slide*)

⁴ *"Suppose someone among you had one hundred sheep and lost one of them. Wouldn't he leave the other ninety-nine in the pasture and search for the lost one until he finds it? ⁵ And when he finds it, he is thrilled and places it on his shoulders. ⁶ When he arrives home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Celebrate with me because I've found my lost sheep.' ⁷ In the same way, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who changes both heart and life than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to change their hearts and lives.*

– Luke 15:4-7

Jesus, our Good Shepherd,
loves us and cares for us and waits for us

For me, there have been seasons in my life
when I have not been faithful in the discipline
of having a time of daily personal prayer.
Eventually I figure it out and realize what I've been missing
And whenever I return to Jesus, literally on my knees,
and begin praying the prayer that begins
our daily morning prayer service...
*New every morning is your love, great God of light, and all day
long you are working for good in the world...*
And when I pray those words,
having not prayed them for a long time,
I can actually feel the presence of Jesus with me
and on the back of my neck and down my spine.

Even though I have not been there in prayer,
Jesus, my Good Shepherd,
has been waiting and watching for me

(*Show Jesus as Shepherd Slide*)

Do you want abundant, everlasting, eternal life?

Who are you listening to?
Who are you following?
The good shepherd, or the butcher?

Attend to the ordinances of God,
Our spiritual disciplines
So that we can know the love and the grace of Jesus

²⁴ *The Jewish opposition circled around Jesus and asked,
"How long will you test our patience?
If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."*

– John 10:24

Jesus is calling to you and telling you plainly,
If only you can recognize his voice

Let's end with that morning Prayer of Thanksgiving
Found on the top of page 877 in our hymnals...

What a way to begin each day of your life,
Living out that prayer

(Celebration of Mothers)