

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

JOHN 10.19-33



T. M. Moore

A Scriptorium Study

And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,

He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Gospel of John: John 10.19-33
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Introduction to *John 10.19-33*

At the Feast of Dedication, Jesus becomes entangled in a debate with certain detractors, religious leaders who challenge His claims and are seeking to trip Him up in His words.

Jesus has been quite clear in identifying Himself as the Messiah, although He has not said so directly. His enemies know this is what He intends, but they need to get Him to say it outright. Then they'll have grounds to destroy Him.

Jesus points to His works as evidence that He is Who He claims to be. Then He goes a step further, and insists that He is One with the Father. That's a claim too far for His enemies, who take up stones to kill Him, right there in the streets.

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1 Accounting for Jesus

Read and meditate on John 10.19-21.

You cannot simply dismiss Jesus. He really lived. He really did the things recorded. He really made the claims attributed to Him. So what shall we make of Him? Liar? Lunatic? Lord?

¹⁹And those who heard Him say these things became divided. ²⁰Many said, "He is insane, or has a demon. Why pay any heed to what He says?" ²¹Yet others said, "Indeed, these words are not the words of someone who is demon filled. Are demons able to bring healing to a blind man?"

- John 10.19-21

Reflect

1. It is impossible to deny the historicity of Jesus. He lived, taught, did good works, and made extraordinary claims about Himself. Thousands of manuscripts and other evidence (extra-Biblical writings, archaeological findings, cultural artifacts) testify to the *fact* of Jesus' existence. How do your unbelieving friends explain Jesus? Since they cannot deny that He lived, what do they say about Him? Ask a few of them. Just ask, don't argue. See what you can learn. Complete this prayer: *Lord, it is important that unbelievers be clear about Who You are, so...*

2. Nor can there be any mistaking the claims that Jesus made. There is more supporting manuscript evidence for Jesus' words and claims than for any other episode, person, or event in ancient history. Summarize the claims Jesus made for Himself, as we have seen them thus far in the Gospel of John. Pray those claims back to Jesus: *Lord Jesus, You are...*

3. As in Jesus' day, those who hear His claims must deal with them. This will often result in people being divided, some saying one thing, some another: "He was mistaken." "He was a deceiver." "He was insane." What do your unbelieving friends make of Jesus' claims? How do they account for them? Ask some of them, again, just to find out what they think. *Lord, give me courage and grace to broach this subject with the unbelievers in my Personal Mission Field. Today, let me...*

4. The only reason people today can deny the *works* of Jesus is that we live in a day in which things spiritual and supernatural are largely pooh-poohed. Again, the manuscript evidence, and other supporting historical data, are overwhelming in reporting the works of Jesus as we have them in the Bible. How do your unbelieving friends account for His works? And for what His works suggest about His claims? Ask a few of them. You're just asking questions, seeking to understand their views. Don't argue or try to correct them. Just see what you can find out. *I want to understand my lost friends and neighbors, Lord, and I cannot do that without...*

5. Jesus' witness to Himself and His works provoked division in His day. Jesus is a divisive subject in every age, and ours is no exception. But just because people don't see Jesus the way we do, or understand what He claimed, or agree with the Bible about His works, does this mean we should avoid talking with them about Jesus? Explain. What are some ways you might begin a conversation about Jesus? Bring together into one the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

“Because he spoke as one greater than human beings, they said he had a devil... They had said this many times. ‘Others said, “These are not the words of one who has a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?”’ Since they could not silence their opponents by words, they now brought proof from his works. ‘Certainly neither are the words those of one that has a devil, and yet if you are not persuaded by the words, be persuaded by the works.’ ... Our Lord, having already given proof of who he was by his works, holds his peace because they were unworthy of an answer... Indeed, as they disagreed among themselves, an answer was unnecessary. Their opposition only brought out, for our imitation, our Lord’s gentleness and long suffering.” *John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

The *facts* of Jesus’ existence, works, teachings, and claims provide us with much to talk about with our unbelieving friends. Why is it important that we try to learn what they think about these facts?

Closing Prayer

The fool has said in his heart,
“*There is no God.*”
They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity;
There is none who does good.
God looks down from heaven upon the children of men,
To see if there are *any* who understand, who seek God.
Every one of them has turned aside;
They have together become corrupt;
There is none who does good,
No, not one.
Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge,
Who eat up my people as they eat bread,
And do not call upon God?
There they are in great fear
Where no fear was,
For God has scattered the bones of him who encamps against you;
You have put *them* to shame,
Because God has despised them.
Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion!
When God brings back the captivity of His people,
Let Jacob rejoice *and* Israel be glad.

Psalm 53

Psalm 53 (*Leoni: The God of Abraham Praise*)

The fool says in his heart, “There is no God at all!”
Corrupt are they in whole and part, unjust and small.
Not one of them does good; God sees their wicked ways.
None understands the Word of God, or gives Him praise.

Have all these wicked men no knowledge of God’s grace?
The Church they hate with passion and seek not God’s face.
Lord, strike their hearts with fear, where fear was not before.
And scatter all who camp so near Your holy door.

The wicked flee in shame; their ways our God rejects.
Renew Your people in Your Name with great effects.
Let great rejoicing sound once we renewed have been,
And let salvation’s Word resound from us again!

2 Plain Enough

Read and meditate on John 10.22-24.

How many ways did Jesus have to say that He is the Christ? He had been plain enough in all His claims. It's not that these people didn't *hear* Him, it's that they refused to *believe* what they heard.

²²Later on,
in winter in Jerusalem, and on
the Feast of Dedication, ²³Jesus walked
in Solomon's porch, and as He walked, He talked
with ²⁴many people who surrounded Him
and asked Him, "Will You keep us ever in
suspense and doubt? If You are Christ, say so,
and tell us plainly."

- John 10.22-24

Reflect

1. The Feast of Dedication is held in December, and it commemorates the purging and renewing of the temple after foreigners had been driven out of Jerusalem. John's is the only mention of this feast in the gospels. Do you suppose he saw some significance in this feast, and in Jesus being in the temple at this time? Did he want us to make some connection between Jesus and this feast? Explain. Complete this prayer: *Lord, I am a temple of Your Spirit. Renew me today in...*

2. Jesus had previously made a connection between the temple and Himself (Jn. 2). Coming to Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication was not required, as with the Passover, for instance. But Jesus was there anyway. Was He inviting a connection by coming to this feast and walking around in the temple? Does this say something about the importance of *symbolic* acts in Jesus' mind? What symbolic acts do Christians practice in our day? Does Jesus regard these as important? Explain. *Thank You, Lord, that You have given us the symbols of baptism and the Supper. Help me to make the best use of these by...*

3. The people following Jesus around insisted that He was keeping them in doubt about His identity (v. 24)? Was that so? Was Jesus being sufficiently clear and plain about Who He is? If so, why were these people still "in doubt"? *I know, Lord, that You are the Christ, and You have called me to...*

4. That they said, "If You are the Christ..." suggests they understood Jesus quite well. In fact, there is nothing suggesting mere *possibility* in their question. In the Greek, the question is posed, not in the subjunctive mood ("if You *might be* the Christ") but in the indicative mood ("since You *are* the Christ"). What's the difference? Were these people merely baiting Jesus? What were they seeking? *Lord, some people will acknowledge Your claims and understand clearly Who You are, but that doesn't mean they will believe. My responsibility is...*

5. For some people, Jesus' claims will never be *convincing*, though it is important that we make those claims *clear*. It's not our job to *convince* or *persuade* people that Jesus is the Christ. It's our job to *follow* and *proclaim* Him as such. But then, how do people ever come to *believe* in Jesus like we do? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote from questions 1-4.

Summary

"It was winter,' and they were chilled because they were slow to approach that divine fire. For to approach is to believe: the one who believes, approaches; the one who denies, moves away. The soul is not moved by the feet but by the affections. They had become icy cold to the sweetness of loving him, and they burned with the desire of doing him an injury. They were far away, while there beside him." *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

Is there a sense in which our lives should be symbols of the redeeming, saving, and transforming work of Jesus Christ? Explain.

Closing Prayer

I waited patiently for the LORD;
And He inclined to me,
And heard my cry.
He also brought me up out of a horrible pit,
Out of the miry clay,
And set my feet upon a rock,
And established my steps.
He has put a new song in my mouth—
Praise to our God;
Many will see *it* and fear,
And will trust in the LORD.

Psalm 40.1-3

Psalm 40.1-5 (*Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth*)

I waited patiently for God; He inclined and heard my cry,
Lifted me up above the sod, set me on a Rock on high!
New songs in my mouth He gave; may He through me many save!

Blessed are all who trust in You, turning both from lies and pride.
Countless wonders, Lord, You do, and Your thoughts with us abide.
Lord, Your worth who can declare? None with You can e'er compare.

3 Words and Deeds

Read and meditate on John 10.25-27.

Jesus reminds us that our witness to Him is one of both words and deeds. And even when these are as clear and obvious as can be, many will refuse to believe. Those who believe, follow.

²⁵Jesus said, "I told you, yet you still do not believe. I do the works My Father gives me, and to you they give clear witness of Me. ²⁶You do not believe in them or Me, for you are not My sheep, as I said to you. ²⁷My sheep hear My voice; I know My sheep, and they keep near to Me, and follow Me."

- John 10.25-27

Reflect

1. Emily Dickinson wrote, "Tell all the truth, but tell it slant/Success in circuit lies..." The people insisted that Jesus "tell" them "plainly" if He was the Christ. Jesus says, "I told you..." But had Jesus used that term to refer to Himself? Had He been telling the truth "slant" to this point? Did He consider that to have been sufficient? Explain. Complete this prayer: *Help me to be plain and clear in my witness for You, Lord. Today, give me the opportunity to...*

2. Even though He'd told them – in so many ways – that He was the Christ, they did not believe. Would it have made any difference to these people if He'd just come right out and said, "I am the Christ"? Why or why not? Why do you suppose it's so hard for some people to believe in Jesus? *Give me grace and patience, Lord, so that I my witness for You...*

3. It wasn't just by His words that Jesus claimed to be Messiah. His works also bore witness to Him (v. 25). How did the works of Jesus in Jerusalem show Him to be the Christ? How would you explain the relationship between words and deeds in your calling to be a witness for Jesus (Acts 1.8)? *Lord, let my life and my words faithfully point others to You. Keep me from...*

4. Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice..." He also said, "you shall be witnesses to Me..." (Acts 1.8). Jesus said that His sheep *hear* His voice and *follow* Him. If you hear Jesus' voice, calling you to be His witnesses, what will it look like as you follow Him day by day? *Today, Lord, as I go out into my Personal Mission Field, help me to...*

5. Those who are not Jesus' sheep may "hear" His voice, but they do not really *hear* it, because they do not follow Him. This is because they *hear*, but they do not *believe*. To *believe* is to *hear* and to *follow*. If we are not *following* Jesus by our words and deeds, what can we conclude? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

Summary

"What is the voice of the shepherd? 'And that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name throughout all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.' There is the voice of the shepherd. Recognize it and follow if you are a sheep." *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

Are you one of the Lord's sheep? How do you know? How does *He* know?

Closing Prayer

The LORD *is* my shepherd;
I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You *are* with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD
Forever.

Psalm 23

Psalm 23 (*Taladh Chriosda: Song of the Christ Child*)

The Lord my Shepherd is, and I
Shall not want; He makes me lie
In green pastures, leads me by
Refreshing waters, still.

Restore my soul, Lord, day by day;
Lead me in Your righteous way
For Your Name's sake, Lord, I pray,
According to Your will.

And though through death's dark vale I go,
I no fear of evil show,
For Your rod and staff, I know,
Shall guard and comfort still.

A table You before me spread
In the midst of those I dread,
And with oil anoint my head;
My cup You over fill.

Thus goodness e'er shall follow me;
Mercy all my path shall see;
Your house shall my dwelling be,
Forever after still.

4 One with the Father

Read and meditate on John 10.29, 30.

Rather than answer their demand that He plainly identify Himself as the Christ, Jesus continued to make that claim in “slanted” ways. He declared Himself to be the Giver of eternal life and of one being and essence with God the Father.

28 “I give to them eternal life; their lives will never end, and no one from My hand can snatch them. 29 And My Father, He Who gave them to Me, than all others is the greatest; none can from My Father’s hand remove them. 30 I am One with God the Father.”

- John 10.29, 30

Reflect

1. Jesus said He gives His sheep eternal life. How would you explain “eternal life” to an unbelieving friend? Complete this prayer: *I thank You, Lord Jesus, for the gift of eternal life, because...*
2. The shepherds of our Lord’s flocks must know their sheep, lead them, lay down their lives for them, defend them, and bring other sheep into the fold. Is there also a sense in which the shepherds of local churches should be working to give more of eternal life to the people entrusted to their care? Explain. *I want to grow each day into more the life You have given Me, Lord. Today, help me to...*
3. Eternal life, once given and received, can never be lost. Jesus Who gives life keeps us in it, and no one or nothing can wrest us from His grasp. So how do we explain people who once identified as believers but now no longer even believe in God? How does John advise us to think about this in 1 John 2.18, 19? Or the writer of Hebrews in Hebrews 6.1-9? *Thank You, Lord, that You keep me in the grace by which You saved me. Help me to grow in that grace today by...*
4. Jesus dropped a bombshell on His hearers in verse 30. First, let’s note that the NKJV is a bit misleading by adding *My* in the translation. The proper translation is not “*My* Father” but “the Father.” What difference does this make? Why would this be an even more astonishing claim than “*My* Father”? *Your Father is now my Father, Lord Jesus, because...*
5. In the Greek language of the New Testament, it is usually not necessary to include the state-of-being verb (is, am, are, was, were, etc.). It’s simply implied. Most translations add it, but put it in *italics* to indicate it’s not actually in the original text (cf. *is* in v. 38). However, when the Greek *does* supply the state-of-being verb – as in verse 30, *esmen* or “we are” – it makes an emphatic point. Why is this important here in verse 30? Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

Summary

“The Son, born from everlasting of the Father, God from God, does not have equality with the Father by growth but by birth. But the Father is not God from the Son; the Son is God from the Father. Therefore in begetting the Son, the Father ‘gave’ him to be God, in begetting he gave him to be coeternal with himself, in begetting he gave him to be his equal. This is that which is ‘greater than all.’ ... That which the Father gave him, that is, to be his Word, to be his only begotten Son, to be the brightness of his light. This is what is ‘greater than all.’ This is why no one is able to take his sheep out of his hand, any more than from his Father’s hand.” *Augustine 354-430 AD*)

We are safe and secure in the hands of Jesus and our Father. Nothing can rob us of the gift of eternal life. But we must continue to “work out our salvation” and grow into Christ and His great gift. How would you describe the state of that endeavor in your life at this time?

Closing Prayer

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
You who lead Joseph like a flock;
You who dwell *between* the cherubim, shine forth!
Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
Stir up Your strength,
And come *and* save us!
Restore us, O God;
Cause Your face to shine,
And we shall be saved!

Psalm 80.1-3

Psalm 80.1-3, 17, 19 (*St. Theodulph: All Glory, Laud, and Honor*)

O God of grace, restore us, and shine on us Your face!
O save us, Lord, work for us; renew us by Your grace!
Give ear, O gracious Savior, Who leads us as Your flock:
Stir up Your pow’r and favor, our King and Lord and Rock!

5 Stone Him!

Read and meditate on John 10.31, 32.

Why were these people so determined *not* to believe? Are we any different?

³¹Then they took up stones to kill Him. ³²Jesus answered, "I have shown you many good works from My Father. For which one of these do you stone Me?"

- John 10.31, 32

Reflect

1. These people had seen Jesus' miraculous and gracious works. Yet the moment He tried to explain them by making Himself equal to God, they were ready to stone Him. Why? Complete the following prayer: *Lord, help me to understand why people are reluctant to believe, so that in my witness for You I can...*

2. It didn't matter that Jesus had done "many good works." He was a threat to their *status quo*, and especially to the privileged and comfortable position of the leaders (cf. Jn. 11.45-48). Does Jesus ever threaten your *status quo*, or your comfort and convenience? Explain. *Lord, it's all too easy to rationalize away my unbelief and disobedience. Help me to...*

3. Why couldn't these people simply have said, "Well, that's just your opinion?" Why was it so important that they "kill Him"? What's the emotional difference between these two responses? Should we expect either or both as we bear witness to Christ (cf. Acts 17.32-34)? Explain. *Give me boldness, Lord, to be Your witness, even when...*

4. Jesus is standing in front of people who have stones in their hands, are glaring menacingly at Him, and doubtless shouting, shrieking, throwing dust in the air and other sorts of displays. Does He flinch? Back down? No, He challenges them to *think* about what they're doing and why! How does this counsel us as witnesses for Jesus? *Lord, help me to keep my cool as I bear witness, and to help others...*

5. Jesus seems to be making more enemies than followers. At least, His enemies are more verbal, confrontational, threatening, and determined, while His followers seem to be interested only in whatever He might be able to do for them next. Does this have any parallel in our day? Explain. Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

Summary

"When he says, 'I and my Father are one' in essence [unum], he shows that there are two, whom he puts on an equality and unites in one. He therefore adds to this very statement, that he had 'shown them many good works from the Father,' for none of which did he deserve to be stoned." *Tertullian (155-250 AD)*

People haven't changed much since Jesus' day. He provokes a variety of responses, and we can expect to encounter them all as we are faithful in our witness for the Lord. How can believers help and encourage one another in their witness?

Closing Prayer

Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands!
Serve the LORD with gladness;
Come before His presence with singing.
Know that the LORD, He *is* God;

It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.
Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,
And into His courts with praise.
Be thankful to Him, *and* bless His name.
For the LORD *is* good;
His mercy *is* everlasting,
And His truth *endures* to all generations.

Psalm 100

Psalm 100 (*Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

Shout to the Lord with joy, O earth!
With gladness serve His matchless worth!
Before Him sing with joyful words,
And know that God alone is Lord!

He made us all, and not our hands –
His people, we before Him stand.
A faithful Shepherd, He will keep
And for us as His own sheep.

Enter His gates with thanks and praise;
Extol His Name through all your days!
Give thanks to Him, and bless His Name!
His praise forevermore proclaim!

God is the Lord, so good and kind;
His love we evermore may find.
His faithfulness is ever sure;
To every age it shall endure!

6 What He Said

Read and meditate on John 10.33.

In one sense, these Jews had it right. Doing good works does not on its own give one the right to claim to be one with the Father. That's why, as we have seen, Jesus did not rely *only* on good works to justify His claims. He also pointed to the Scriptures – Abraham, Moses, the Law, and the prophets.

³³*They said,*
“For no good work do we stone You; instead,
because of blasphemy. You are a Man,
but You insist that You are God.”

- John 10.33

Reflect

1. Christians are called to do good works, as Jesus and all the apostles taught. Doing good works does not justify any claim we might like to make about being the Messiah. However, since they are expected of us (Eph. 2.8-10; Matt. 5.13-16; 7.20), what purpose do they serve? Complete the following brief prayer: *I know You have saved me for good works, Lord, and I want to fulfill that expectation. Today I will have many opportunities for...*

2. I suspect that one objection to Jesus' claims ran along this line: “He did good works, so He thinks He's the Messiah? *I'm* not the Messiah, but I try to be a good person. Does He mean to suggest that I don't do any good works? That none of the works I do each day qualify as *good* works? Who is He to suggest I don't do good works, or I'm not good?” What about this? Can unbelievers do good works? Can you give any examples? How is it possible for unbelievers to do good works (cf. Matt. 5.43-46)? Does that mean that they are *good*? Was Jesus saying to these Jews that their works were not good? *None* of them? *I'm sure people can do works which are good, but this is only because of the grace You extend to them, Lord. I should be more aware of any good works I see in others, so that...*

3. Ultimately, Jesus' good works were not the issue. What Jesus *claimed* – that was the problem. The Jews insisted that He blasphemed. What does it mean to blaspheme? How did those who objected to Jesus' claim understand what it means to blaspheme? Why did they consider Jesus' claim to be blasphemous? Did this say as much about their understanding of God as of their perception of Jesus? Did they hold as a basic assumption about God that He could not become a Man? Explain. *Lord, many people today have faulty ideas about You and what You can or should do. Help me to listen well, so that I can...*

4. The Jews reasoned, “No one who is a man can be God. God cannot be both God and a man.” Jesus' claim was blasphemous because, in the mind of His detractors, it dragged God down from His holiness and polluted Him with man's finiteness and sinfulness. There is a certain *logic* to this view, but the *logic* was wrong. Why? Is unbelief *logical* to unbelievers? But that make their reasoning it right? Explain. *Lord, I really need to understand the way my unbelieving friends think, so that...*

5. Here we can see the wisdom of Jesus' standing His ground and teasing out a bit more perspective from His detractors (v. 32). In the next few verses, Jesus will take their view of God and hoist them on Scripture and their own petard. He will expose the folly of their reasoning, and show it to be out of line with the teaching of Scripture. How can we use questions to help our unbelieving friends explain their objections to Jesus? Why should we do so? Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

Summary

“But since they did not know the divine nature, they crucified [what they saw as] the human nature. Or didn't you hear them say, ‘We are not stoning you because of a good work but because of blasphemy, since you,

who are a man, make yourself God.' Through these words they show that they recognized the nature that they saw but had absolutely no knowledge of the invisible nature. If they had known that nature, however, 'they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.'" *Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD)*

These exchanges between Jesus and His detractors are very important. We need to study them carefully, both to observe the way Jesus' enemies think, and to see how Jesus used their arguments to His advantage. We are called to be witnesses for Christ, and we must be ready to engage the unbelievers of our day in similar ways. If we are not willing to learn from Jesus about our call to be witnesses, what can we expect?

Closing Prayer

The LORD reigns;
Let the earth rejoice;
Let the multitude of isles be glad!
Clouds and darkness surround Him;
Righteousness and justice *are* the foundation of His throne.
A fire goes before Him,
And burns up His enemies round about.
His lightnings light the world;
The earth sees and trembles.
The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD,
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
The heavens declare His righteousness,
And all the peoples see His glory.
Let all be put to shame who serve carved images,
Who boast of idols.
Worship Him, all *you* gods.
Zion hears and is glad,
And the daughters of Judah rejoice
Because of Your judgments, O LORD.
For You, LORD, *are* most high above all the earth;
You are exalted far above all gods.
You who love the LORD, hate evil!
He preserves the souls of His saints;
He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked.

Psalm 97.1-10

Psalm 97.1, 6, 9-12 (*Darvall: Rejoice, the Lord is King!*)

Rejoice, the Lord is King! O earth, lift up your voice;
Be glad, you islands, shout and sing: Rejoice! Rejoice!
Beyond, above all gods and nations be exalted, God of love!

The heav'ns above declare His glorious righteousness;
And tribes and peoples everywhere His Name confess.
Beyond, above all gods and nations be exalted, God of love!

All you who love the Lord, despise sin's wicked ways!
Praise Him Who guides us by His Word through all our days.
Beyond, above all gods and nations be exalted, God of love!

7 Man and God

Read and meditate on John 10.19-33.

The Jews at last blurt out their objection to Jesus' claims. They clearly understood what He was saying when He took upon Himself the mantle of Good Shepherd. God had said that He would come to shepherd His flock, and now here was Jesus, claiming to be that one (cf. Ezek. 34.11-31). There was no mistaking Jesus' claim, and they hated Him for it.

¹⁹And those who heard Him say these things became divided. ²⁰Many said, "He is insane, or has a demon. Why pay any heed to what He says?" ²¹Yet others said, "Indeed, these words are not the words of someone who is demon filled. Are demons able to bring healing to a blind man?"

²²Later on, in winter in Jerusalem, and on the Feast of Dedication, ²³Jesus walked in Solomon's porch, and as He walked, He talked with ²⁴many people who surrounded Him and asked Him, "Will You keep us ever in suspense and doubt? If You are Christ, say so, and tell us plainly." ²⁵Jesus said, "I told you, yet you still do not believe. I do the works My Father gives me, and to you they give clear witness of Me. ²⁶You do not believe in them or Me, for you are not My sheep, as I said to you. ²⁷My sheep hear My voice; I know My sheep, and they keep near to Me, and follow Me. ²⁸I give to them eternal life; their lives will never end, and no one from My hand can snatch them. ²⁹And My Father, He Who gave them to Me, than all others is the greatest; none can from My Father's hand remove them. ³⁰I am One with God the Father." ³¹Then they took up stones to kill Him. ³²Jesus answered, "I have shown you many good works from My Father. For which one of these do you stone Me?" ³³They said, "For no good work do we stone You; instead, because of blasphemy. You are a Man, but You insist that You are God."

- John 10.1-18

Reflect

1. Not everyone who hears the Good News about the Good Shepherd will readily welcome and believe it. Jesus created divisions among people wherever He went. He did not shy away from controversy or from challenging and upsetting settled convictions and worldviews. What should we learn from Jesus' example about our own witness for Him? Complete this prayer: *Lord, help me to be faithful as Your witness, even when...*

2. We also see that Jesus was open to questions – even hostile questions, questions designed to put Him on the spot and, if possible, trip Him up. What kind of questions might you anticipate, as you share the Good News with people in your Personal Mission Field? *Lord, give me grace when questions come, and help me to...*

3. Even though people got angry at Jesus – angry enough to stone Him – He tried to make them think through their responses (vv. 31, 32). Why is this a good idea? How might you do the same? *Let me not cover when people get upset or angry over my witness for You, Lord. Instead, help me...*

4. Jesus was careful to keep His teaching and works within the framework of the will of the Father (cf. vv. 25, 29, 30, 32, and beyond our passage, 36, 38). Meditate on Hebrews 1.1-3a. Jesus came to *manifest* or *express* the Father by His words and works. He pointed *beyond* Himself to the Father, because He had come to be the *Way* to the Father (Jn. 14.9). In our witness for Christ, we must always remember that we're not trying to get people to come to church, nor even merely to come to Jesus. We want them to come to God the Father, and Jesus is the Way. How should keeping this in mind affect the content of our witness? *Father, thank You for sending Jesus so that I can know You and have eternal life. Help me, as I live and proclaim my witness to Jesus, to always...*

5. Review John 10.1-33. From Jesus' teaching, what impression are you getting about what it means to be one of His sheep? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

“Our Savior and Lord in his relation to the Father and God of the universe is not one flesh or one spirit but something higher than flesh and spirit, namely, one God. The appropriate word when human beings are joined to one another is flesh. The appropriate word when a righteous person is joined to Christ is spirit. But the word when Christ is united to the Father is not flesh or spirit but more honorable than these—God. This then is the sense in which we should understand I and the Father are one.” *Origen of Alexandria (185-254 AD)*

Jesus is our Shepherd Who leads us to the Father. To know Jesus and the Father is eternal life (Jn. 17.3). In our witness for Jesus, can we leave out the Father? About being reconciled to God the Father? About becoming sons and daughters of God the Father (Jn. 1.12)? Explain.

Closing Prayer

Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.
O my soul, you have said to the LORD,
“You are my Lord,
My goodness is nothing apart from You.”
...I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel;
My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.
I have set the LORD always before me;
Because *He is* at my right hand I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;
My flesh also will rest in hope.
For You will not leave my soul in Sheol,
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.
You will show me the path of life;
In Your presence *is* fullness of joy;
At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 16.1, 2, 7-11

Psalm 16.1, 2, 7-11 (*All to Christ: Jesus Paid It All*)

Preserve me, O my God; I refuge seek in You.

You alone are all my good, my Lord and Savior true!
Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand;
Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

I bless Your Name, O Lord; my mind instructs each night.
You teach me by Your Word, and guide me in the right.
Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand;
Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

You are ever with me, Lord; in You I shall not fall.
But rejoicing in Your Word, I abide within Your call.
Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand;
Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

Soon Your glory I shall see, for as Jesus rose again,
You will come to gather me to my home with You in heav'n.
Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand;
Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

The Gospel of John: John 10.19-33

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. Why were His enemies so determined to get Jesus to declare Himself the Messiah?
2. Jesus pointed to His works as evidence of Who He was. What works did He have in mind, and what did these suggest about Jesus' origins and power?
3. What did Jesus mean by saying that He and the Father are One? Why is it important that we keep this in mind as we are bearing witness to Jesus?
4. Should we expect people today to become upset with us as we bear witness to the Lord? Explain.
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from John 10.19-33? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

Items for prayer:

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