

# John 10:22-42

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Date: 17 March 2024

Preacher: Paul Levy

[ 0 : 00 ] Bible's open to John 10. John 10 verses 22 to 42.

! John 10 verses 22.

It was winter and Jesus is walking around the edge of the temple in the colonnade of Solomon. It stretches around the perimeter of the temple. It would be very busy, particularly at festival time. That's where this argument takes place. And the argument is about what lies right at the heart of John's Gospel. That is Jesus' identity. So do you remember what John's purpose is in writing this Gospel?

We've talked about it many times, haven't we? You can see Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, but they're not written in this book. But John says these are written for the express purpose that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you might have life in his name.

[ 1 : 42 ] And so the central question, right at the heart of John's Gospel, is Jesus' identity, who he is, and faith in him. And that is what this argument is all about.

We don't know actually if voices were raised, but if you look at verse 31, it certainly seems it's about to get violent. His Jewish opponents pick up bricks. They pick up stones to stone him.

Verse 39, they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. And at the very end of this passage, Jesus gets out of Jerusalem very wisely, where people are trying to kill him, and he crosses over to the River Jordan.

And verse 42, many people believed in him there. And what I want to do is very quickly go through the passage, and then kind of step back and see what issues are at stake.

The argument kicks off in verse 24. The Jews gathered round him, they said to him, How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.

[ 2 : 42 ] We're nearly halfway through John's Gospel. For nine and a half chapters, Jesus has been teaching about himself and the miracles. And they still think his identity is a bit of a mystery.

As recently as verse 14 of chapter 10, Jesus said, I am the good shepherd, I know my own and my own know me. So Jesus' response to them, to ask and tell us plainly, Jesus says in verse 25, I told you, and you don't believe.

The works that I do in my Father's name, bear witness about me. Not only have I told you on numerous occasions who I am, but all my works, by which he means his miracles, surely they're a big clue as to who I am.

You see, it's not that you haven't had the question answered, or that my identity has been hidden, it's just you haven't liked what you've heard. And you haven't liked what you've seen.

I've just told you, I am the good shepherd. My sheep know me and I know them. And the only reason that you're still asking this question is because you're not my sheep.

[ 3 : 55 ] You're not one of my people. You're not one of the people that God, my Father, has given to me to belong to me forever. Look at verse 28. I give them eternal life.

And they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. But then he says, I'm not the only one who's keeping them safe. My Father who's given them to me is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hands.

Jesus is saying, he and I, my Father and I, work so closely together in looking after the sheep, the only conclusion that you can come to is verse 30, I and the Father are one.

Is that plain enough for you? The temperature rises, verse 31, the Jews pick up stones again to stone him. They did it in verse, in chapter 8, and Jesus gives them the slip then, and he does again. He deflects that anger, he avoids getting stoned. Jesus tries a different tactic. He asks the question, verse 32, I've shown you many good works, beautiful works, from the Father, for which of them are

you going to stone me?

[ 5 : 08 ] Those stones which you've got in your hands, for which of my many miracles are you going to kill me for? Maybe it's the healing of the man of his blindness in chapter 9.

Maybe it's for feeding 5,000 people in the wilderness in chapter 6. Maybe it's for healing a man who's been paralyzed for 38 years, chapter 5, or bringing a boy back from the verge of death, chapter 5.

Those terrible things I've done. Take your pick. Which of the beautiful things that I have done deserve death, Jesus asks. Verse 33, the Jews answer him, it is not for a good work that we're going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.

Can you see that the plainness of what Jesus said in verse 30 has been understood? They had registered, they'd got what Jesus was saying, even if they hadn't liked it or accepted it, they understood it.

The next bit is a little bit complicated, but basically Jesus says, let me give you two reasons why you shouldn't stone me for equating myself with God, for claiming to be equal with God. The first reason is that the Bible itself calls humans both gods and his sons.

[ 6 : 27 ] Seems strange to us. The Bible calls humans both gods and his sons. It may seem strange to us, especially the first bit, but Jesus quotes Psalm 82 to back that up.

See, he says, if you want to stone me for blasphemy, for calling myself God's son, if you want to be consistent, you have to accuse God himself of blasphemy because he called other humans his sons.

And I guess that's a bit of a problem for you, for you to accuse God of blasphemy. He then gives them a second reason not to stone him. If you have a problem with me and me a man calling himself God, well, I'm undeniably doing the things that only God could do.

So again, the only conclusion that you could come to is at the end of verse 38, that the Father is in me and I am in the Father. Again, they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands.

That's the argument. They are the contentious issues of John chapter 10. And what I want to do in the rest of our time is dig just into the imagery that Jesus uses in verse 14.

[ 7 : 41 ] And so there's three points. My sheep is point number one. Not my sheep is point number two. And then the shepherd is point number three. First, his sheep.

There are five hallmarks of people who are his sheep. That's very helpful for us tonight. There are five marks of every sheep that belongs to Jesus who have him as their shepherd.

The first mark of being one of Jesus' sheep is verse 27. They listen to my voice. It's not that they just can hear, but they listen.

They listen to him. Being one of Jesus' sheep means that you listen to his authoritative voice in Scripture.

First of all, they listen to him. The second mark of his sheep of Jesus is that they're known by him. Verse 27. My sheep hear my voice and I know them.

[ 8 : 51 ] I think that's really important for you and I to grasp about Christianity. Christianity is about, listen to this, knowing Jesus and more importantly, being known by him.

Christianity is a two-way relationship. We know him and he knows us as those who belong to him.

The third mark of one of Jesus' sheep, they hear my voice, I know them and they follow me. So when they hear Jesus speak with authority in their lives and when they see where Jesus is leading them and what he's calling them to in their lives, they follow him.

They obey him because he is their shepherd. Their obedience is patchy, to say the least.

Sometimes the sheep are willfully disobedient.

But we still remain his sheep after all because over all, sheep who belong to Jesus want to do what he says in their lives because they trust him.

[ 10 : 09 ] They trust that he is their good shepherd. Their good shepherd who has laid down his life for them and so they follow him. And that is how fourthly he is able to give them eternal life.

Verse 28, I give them eternal life and they shall perish and no one will be able to snatch them out of my hands. Because Jesus died and rose again defeating death, he can give his sheep eternal life.

Eternal life that only he has to give. All humans have souls which are immortal. but only his sheep have eternal life.

Not just eternal existence. They have eternal life as a gift. And that means that they, his sheep, they and they alone will never perish.

The fifth mark of Jesus' sheep is that those sheep are given, are not only given the gift of eternal life. But they themselves are a gift given by God the Father to God the Son.

[ 11 : 22 ] Just look with me what Jesus says in verse 28. It's not only that they are given eternal life, but they themselves, the sheep, are a gift given by God the Father to God the Son.

Look at how Jesus puts it in verse 28. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. And no one will snatch them out of my hand. It's wonderful. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all.

And no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. And we know, don't we, we talk about the gift that goes on giving. We say that expression, don't we?

But here, you have a giver who never quite lets go of the gift. Can you see that? the Father gives to Jesus the sheep to keep safe as their good shepherd forever.

But safe as they are in Jesus' hands, it's as if they never really leave the Father's hands in the first place. He is the giver who never, quite, never quite lets go of the sheep.

[ 12 : 34 ] How about that for security? When you go home tonight, most of us on our doors before we go to bed will have two locks on our front door. Two locks on the front door, why?

Why isn't one lock enough? Two locks to keep you safe. In our homes, there will be a double security. Well, the sheep who belong to Jesus have this same thing forever, double security.

His hand wrapped around them for all eternity. And the Father's hand doing the same thing. So before you go to bed tonight, before you go up the stairs, remember that when you double lock the door tonight, there's this beautiful picture, there's this double security.

You are in Jesus' hands, you're in the Father's hands. And so his sheep hear him, know him, follow him.

He gives them eternal life and he gives them to Jesus to keep safe forever. Do you recognize yourself as one of those sheep? Does that resonate with you?

[ 13 : 40 ] If you do, there are five reasons there, aren't there, for you to thank Jesus that he is your good shepherd. But if you don't, if you don't recognize yourself tonight as one of Jesus' sheep, you might recognize yourself in the group he describes next.

Secondly, not his sheep. And it's clear from the way that Jesus is speaking that people who are not his sheep are the opposite of those who are.

It's very simple. So, they don't listen to him and they don't know him and they are not known by him as belonging to him.

They don't follow him. They don't want to do what he tells them to do. It's just not interesting, it's not relevant for them, it's not that they're necessarily ignorant of him.

And the people who Jesus first said these words to, they had seen exactly the same thing as the sheep had seen. They had heard exactly the same thing as what the sheep had heard from him.

[ 14 : 51 ] but they just didn't believe what they'd seen and heard from Jesus. And so the question is why not? And the answer to that question is the surprise of the passage.

The question, the answer to that question is not what we expect, it's not what we want to hear.

Have a look at verse 25. Jesus answered them, I told you and you do not believe the works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me.

You have heard, you have seen, what everyone else has seen and heard. But verse 26, what's the reason? You do not believe because you are not among my sheep.

Jesus does not say what we would be a whole lot more comfortable with. He doesn't say you don't believe you are not one of my sheep.

you don't believe you are not one of my sheep. He says because you are not one of my sheep, you don't believe. Being a sheep or not determines whether you believe or not.

[ 16 : 05 ] Does that make sense? You're looking at me a little bit puzzled. Does it? Let me just repeat it. Okay. He doesn't say you don't believe you are not one of my sheep.

He says because you are not one of my sheep, you don't believe. Being a sheep or not is what determines whether you believe or not.

Not the other way around, which begs the question, how does someone become one of his sheep? if you have to be one in the first place to believe in him, and the answer to that question is implied in John chapter 10, but I think it's clearer maybe in John chapter 6.

Do you remember that? Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. He changes the metaphor. He's using a different picture there to explain his identity. I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me

shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

So coming to Jesus, believing in Jesus, they are the same thing. And then John 6 verse 38 says, all that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

[17:16] And then verse 44, no one can come to me unless the Father draws them, and I will raise them up on the last day. So how do you come to Jesus?

How do you believe in Jesus? Well first, the Father has to draw you to him. Switch back to the shepherd and the sheep analogy.

The Father has to make you one of his sheep. And if he does that to you, if he draws you to Jesus and makes you one of his sheep, then you will come to him, you will believe in him, you will listen to his voice, and you will know him and you will be secured in his hands forever.

But if he doesn't do that for you, you won't be any of those things. No one can come to me unless the Father draws them.

Now we like to think of it being the other way around because that puts us in charge, doesn't it? it puts us in control, whether we choose to believe in Jesus or not, whether or not we come to him.

[18:33] The way Jesus puts it in John 6 and in our passage today, John 10, puts the Father in charge. He is in control of who believes in Jesus or not, of who is a sheep or not, and instinctively when we hear that, we don't like it.

But it gets worse if you come back to John 10. if not being his sheep is the opposite of being one of his sheep, not only do we not listen to him and are not known by him and not follow him, we are not given to him by the Father.

And we are not given eternal life. We are not safe in his hands and the Father's hands forever. We will exist forever beyond this body and life on this earth but not in a way that you could call life in any way.

What Jesus calls it here, he calls it perishing. That's how you will exist. And so again, let me say tonight, if you recognise yourself as not being one of Jesus' sheep, sheep, that may well offend you, mightn't it?

And that might well provoke you. Why can't you be the one who decides whether or not you are one of his sheep? And if you can't be the one, then why do you seem to be responsible for that?

[20:08] Facing the prospect of eternal perishing rather than eternal life. And if that is something that troubles you or confuses you or irritates you, please, please, ask a question of me or one of the elders afterwards.

But can I also say this? If you recognise yourself as not one of Jesus' sheep tonight, and your main reaction as you recognise that, it makes you really sad, because you would actually rather like to be one of his sheep.

You would really like to be one of his sheep. has it ever occurred to you that that in itself might be the clearest indicator that you've had that the father is right now through the words of John 10, as God's word is preached, it is drawing you.

He is drawing you. He is drawing you to his son. He is making you into something that you are not yet, but may well be by becoming one of his sheep.

The sheep, not his sheep, and then finally the shepherd. Again, there are five things that he says one himself, and all of them are massive.

[21:30] First of all, Jesus performs miracles. It's one of the things that Jesus is well known for doing, isn't it? But the fact is, he still did them. He healed a blind man, a paralyzed man.

He fed 5,000 people in the next chapter. He will actually raise a dead man back to life. And those arguing with him in this passage don't dispute that he did any of those things.

They don't say you never did those things, you can't do them. They just don't like his assertion that he can only do it because God the Father is doing it through him.

The miracles of Jesus, what do you make of them? What conclusion do they bring you to about him?

The second thing that Jesus says about himself is that he and the Father are one. Verse 30, we've seen it already, I and the Father are one.

[22:32] And there's something very similar at the end of verse 38, the Father is in me and I in the Father. that is the only conclusion Jesus says that you should come to about his miracles.

Not that he and the Father are the same person, but they are about the same thing. He and the Father are on the same page. They are eternally synchronised and united in their purpose and

intention.

That is a huge claim for anyone to make about God. I and the Father are one. And that is why they actually want to kill him.

Which means that for today all those who object and there's lots of ways, different ways to object to that claim, they are wrong if Jesus is right.

If he and the Father are one, totally united in purpose and in intention. And so that means Muslims are wrong about Allah if Jesus is right.

[ 23 : 42 ] It means that atheists are wrong about God's existence because there was once a human being who walked this earth in history 2000 years ago whose existence was fully attested who did what only God can do.

It means Buddhists are wrong and Hindus are wrong if Jesus is right. He and the Father are one. He is ruling out all other alternatives.

The third thing is he is God's Son. He is not the same person as the Father. He is the Son of God the Father.

But he is just as much God as the Father. the fourth thing he is the good shepherd. Sheep need a shepherd to thrive and survive.

In fact all sheep need a shepherd regardless of how robust and self sufficient they are regardless of whether they believe in the existence of a shepherd. They need one.

[ 24 : 54 ] And how good it is to know that the shepherd that God the Father has provided is a good shepherd. one who lays down his life for the sheep. And the fifth thing the last thing Jesus says about himself is he is the giver of eternal life.

Because he voluntarily laid down his life he was able to take it up again. Have a look at verse 18. Jesus says no one takes it from me but I lay it down of my own accord.

I have authority to lay it down and I have the authority to take it up again. Because Jesus had the authority to take up his life again authority over death he has through that victory eternal life to give. His resurrection is not just good news for him it is good news for others only because he is generous to share with others what he himself has.

verse 28 I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand my father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of the father's hand!

[ 26 : 16 ] Jesus gives us eternal life it's not that he gives us our own private personalized existence but he draws us into his eternal life life to the full which makes him not just a good shepherd or the good shepherd but makes him the best shepherd that anyone can have and that leaves us with this one question doesn't it from John 10 is he your good shepherd are you one of his sheep or not let's pray some Thank you.