

Daily Discipleship

John 10:22-30

Prayers of Discipleship *To Hear the Voice of the Good Shepherd*

Focus Question: *What does it mean to listen to Jesus?*

word of life

“My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.” John 10:27-28 (NRSV)

Read John 10:22-30

The Fourth Sunday of Easter has long been called “Good Shepherd Sunday”. Typically, Psalm 23 is read or sung. As we savor the mystery and joy of the resurrection of Jesus, we are reminded of Jesus as savior, but also as shepherd.

1. *What do you know about sheep?*
2. *What does it mean to be a “good shepherd”?*

John is quite detailed in his description of Jesus in the temple during the festival of the Dedication, Hanukkah. The Jews gather around him to discuss his identity. They want a clear, precise, concise, and direct answer concerning his identity. Is he the Messiah or not? This is not the first time for the Jews to try to sort out his identity.

On previous occasions, Jesus has talked with them and backed up his words with actions. He has given sight to the blind, healed the sick, fed thousands, and proclaimed good news; but they cannot grasp his identity,

3. *What seems to be blocking the Jews from understanding Jesus as the Messiah?*
4. *Why do others more easily grasp the identity of Jesus?*

Since Jesus has already answered their questions, he speaks directly to them. “I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep.” (John 10:25-26)

5. *How does one become part of the flock of Jesus?*
6. *Why would someone choose not to belong?*

Jesus describes what it means to belong to his own flock. His sheep know his voice and choose to follow. But Jesus is not the only voice vying for attention and listeners. His call may go unheeded as people chase after other shepherds. It is one thing to listen, but it is something else to listen and respond accordingly. This raises the question about listening skills and discerning. The Jews might have heard his words, but they did not respond with any kind of commitment or action. Jesus extends his call and voice, expecting people to follow him.

7. *How do we make sure we listen to the true and good shepherd of Jesus?*
8. *What does it mean to be known by Jesus?*

Jesus promises eternal life and safety, saying “No one will snatch them out of my hand.” (John 10:28) These are significant and desirable promises made by Jesus. They might serve as motivation for all who listen to really try to grasp the words of the one whom they question. Jesus makes these claims because he is one with God. Their unity cannot be denied. This connection to God only strengthens his claims and promises.

9. *How might the crowd have responded?*
10. *How do the words of Jesus carry more strength because of his unity with God?*

word *among us*

It is not unusual for tennis fans to applaud after a good point in a tennis game. At a junior tennis match, it was noted one parent had a unique rhythm in his clapping as he clapped for his son's good point. It was obvious to the crowd that the father wanted his son to hear his encouragement through his unique style of applause.

1. *How might that feel for a young tennis player to hear the rhythm of his father's clapping and realize his presence in the crowd?*
2. *How might the father feel, knowing he was able to add extra support and encouragement to his son?*

The congregation gathered for their annual spring picnic on the lawn of the church. Laughter filled the air as people waited in line for their food. Over the noise of the crowd, a child's shrill scream was heard followed by the sound of wailing. A young woman left her plate of food and quickly dashed to the scene. She looked back and said, "I recognize that cry. That's my child."

3. *How does a parent learn the cry of his or her child?*
4. *At what point does a child recognize the voice of a parent?*
5. *Any ideas why teenagers sometimes lose that ability to hear their parent's voice?*

Jesus is confident that his sheep hear his voice and respond. His voice must be unique enough to be clearly heard by all who listen, but there is the dilemma. What if a person is not in a relationship with Jesus? How would a person recognize the voice of the shepherd? Would it not be the voice of a stranger? Hopefully, those who grew up in church have the advantage of learning to listen to Jesus through Word and Sacrament.

Take a few minutes to reflect on those people in your life who taught you about prayer and listening to Jesus. Ponder their lives. Recall their stories about how and when they learned to listen to Jesus. Consider the patterns and rhythms in their own prayer life.

6. *Who are some of the people who taught you to listen to Jesus?*
7. *What have they taught you about prayer?*
8. *When it comes to listening to Jesus, what is important to know?*
9. *How confident are you to hear Jesus?*
10. *How might you increase your listening skills towards Jesus?*

Learning to listen to Jesus is a life-long process. Listening to Jesus serves as an anchor in this world. Hopefully, you are blessed by those in your life who take prayer seriously and encourage your prayer life to flourish. If not, seek out those who can nurture your prayer life. And also, take advantage of opportunities to encourage others in their prayer life and discernment skills.

11. *Who have you instructed on listening to Jesus?*
12. *What prevents you from doing more of this type of instruction?*
13. *How might you set aside this coming week for listening to Jesus?*

Prayer

Good shepherd, thank you for calling, caring, and extending eternal life. Open our spirits and hearts, so we might hear you. Amen

Dig Deeper:

Psalm 23

last word

Find a pastoral, serene setting and be open to listen to the good shepherd.



Daily Discipleship

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