

May 8, 2022 Easter 4C

John 10:22-30

The Choice of Faith

John 10:22-30 Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, <sup>23</sup> and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. <sup>24</sup> The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."<sup>25</sup> Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, <sup>26</sup> but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. <sup>27</sup> My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.<sup>30</sup> I and the Father are one."

Intro: A university student was seen with a large "K" printed on his T- shirt. When someone asked him what the "K" stood for, he said, "Confused." "But," the questioner replied, "you don't spell "confused" with a "K." The student answered, "You don't know how confused I am."

Life can be confusing—choices (college, career, marriage, car, church, daycare), problems (people don't behave or react the way we expect them to, someone is upset and we don't know why, the problem is bigger than us and we don't know what to do).

For a follower of Jesus, things can be either more confusing or less, depending on you look it. You could see it as "on top of deciding what is right, what is best in the short term, what is best in the long run, what is most profitable, what is most expedient, now I have to figure out what does God want." Or you could see it as "all that matters is what God wants." In which case it is still confusing.

The Text: Jews in Temple are confused. "*How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.*" [Literal slang translation = "how long will you mess with our souls?"] They're confused. They are hearing and seeing one thing and it is not fitting with what they want to believe. Notice Jesus doesn't do what they ask. He doesn't tell them plainly. It wouldn't have made a difference. It wasn't a matter of what Jesus was revealing to them or how He was revealing it. It was matter of them not wanting to believe what Jesus was revealing to them.

And it is really not that different for us. If there are times we are confused (and there are), it is not normally God's fault. Normally we are confused for one of three or so reasons:

Why do we get confused?

1. **We want more revealed than God is willing to reveal.** We want total clarity. God wants total trust. We want to walk by sight. God wants us walking by faith.

*Prov 4:18 The path of the righteous is like the morning sun shining ever brighter till the full light of day.*

2. **We are not looking for God's revelation in the place where God is revealing himself.** Be in the Word. If you aren't reading your Bible, no wonder you are confused.

*Psalm 119:105 "Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path."*

3. **We are just not ready or willing to hear what God is saying.** We want to go our own way and do our own thing.

It is not God's fault, but we do these things and we wind up confused. And confusion isn't usually alone. It comes with feelings of being lost, afraid, abandoned, alone. We want someone to come find us, to call to us, to embrace us, to carry us. **What we really need in the midst of our confusion is not clarity or answers, but a Shepherd.**

Look at what we have: A Shepherd. Listen to what He says:

*John 10:27-28 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.*

The Shepherd comes into the confusion with one thing—His voice.

And that is enough.

And this is a good thing. When everything is clear, one thing we don't need is a shepherd. And that gets us into trouble. In confusion, we need someone to lead us out, to show us the way, to accompany us. That's what our Shepherd does.

That is what the cross was/is about. The Shepherd became one of the sheep, so He could make us His sheep.

Conclusion: A "do it yourself" catalog firm received the following letter from one of its customers: "I built a birdhouse according to your stupid plans, and not only is it much too big, it keeps blowing out of the tree. Signed, Unhappy. The firm replied: "Dear Unhappy, We're sorry about the mix-up. We accidentally sent you a sailboat blueprint. But if you think you are unhappy, you should read the letter from the guy who came in last in the yacht club regatta."

We are going to do stuff like that. We are sheep, after all. There is a reason God didn't call us his chimpanzees or dolphins or some other intelligent life form. He called us sheep for a reason. Sheep are totally dependent upon a shepherd. And then he called Himself our Shepherd.