



Hearing, Doing, Living John 10:22-30

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Scripture

²²At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, ²³and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. ²⁴So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." ²⁵Jesus answered, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; ²⁶but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. ²⁷My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. ³⁰The Father and I are one."

Anchor Verse – ²⁷My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.

Background / Story

The good shepherd discourse makes clear the connection between Jesus and the church, church being the people who believe in Christ. This creates clarity about the connection between Jesus as the good shepherd who watches out for and takes care of the church, but also clarity about how we as pastoral and lay leadership in the church are to be models of Jesus as the good shepherd in terms of how we are to "lead the flock".

But this text also gives us a glimpse of how the "flock", the community of believers, is to respond to all that Jesus lays out in this discourse.

There is also special attention to the relationship between Jesus and God and the end of this passage, beginning with verse 29, but that will not be our focus this morning. But it is helpful to note, that the gospel writer John is using this discourse to explain the interrelationship between God and Jesus for the early

centuries of theologians and followers, hence Jesus' words, "I and my Father are one". But because we already have a solid Trinitarian understanding of God, the Father, God, the Son and God, the Holy Spirit, I want to instead focus on the part of this discourse that is about us.

Engaging the Text

²⁷My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.

Jesus is speaking about us as the church. We are those who will still hear His voice, throughout eternity.

From this text we have three assurances that come right from the text today as we are Hearing Christ, Doing for Christ, and Living with Christ.

1. *"I know them, and they follow me."*

That statement could be helpful or not so helpful. How do you feel about being 'known'? This is not the, I can tell the version of the story I want to tell kind of known. This known, like everything known, even the stuff you intend to take to the grave kind of known.

In spite of that, there is tremendous power in being known by Jesus. Being known because you are a child of God, being known because Jesus died for you, being known because you believe and because you believe you have become His sheep.

This is not a false sense being known, like when my husband and I first met, he told me he knew Halle Berry. Come to find out, he was in a club one time in Atlanta and she was in the same club and looked at him as she passed him, so now he knows Halle Berry. Being known by Jesus only comes from being in relationship. This scripture makes clear that even before we showed up, Jesus was in relationship with us.

Isn't it good to know that even though Jesus knows us, still he wants us to follow Him.

2. *"^{28a}I give them eternal life, and they will never perish."*

Because we are believers, if we remain faithful to our belief and live a life according to our belief then we are guaranteed an eternity in heaven with

Jesus. This is an iron clad guarantee that cannot be rescinded, voided, and will not lapse... it is a guarantee.

Believing opens the opportunity for eternal life but remaining faithful and living accordingly is what gets us there. We as United Methodists understand works of mercy and works of piety, that make up the means of grace. All the ways in which we do the inward work and the outward work so that what we do for Christ will represent Christ and not we ourselves.

Following Jesus is not static. It is active and constant work. It is active and activating. But it is not a solo work, for we work together as a community of believers to do all the good we can, wherever we can, with whomever we can. In this pandemic season, that may seem a little hard to do, but we can't use circumstances as an excuse not to do the work. We just have to be creative and innovative in how we do the work.

3. *"^{28b}No one will snatch them out of my hand."* –

Remember we do not do the work alone. From the moment we believe until we reach eternity, Jesus is taking care of us. He is the good shepherd who is always with us, watching over us, protecting us, keeping us. Jesus has got us, and once Jesus has gotten us, we are His.

I don't know about you, but I take great comfort in knowing that Jesus is with me and with you. In my years of doing inner city ministry, in New York, DC and Baltimore, you best believe I needed Jesus. My husband would get flustered with me, for staying at the church too late, or driving people to court appearances or confronting the drug dealers in the neighborhood. Trust me that was not Michelle, doing that. That was Michelle and Jesus.

Conclusion

Jesus is the Good Shepherd and we, who hear His voice are His sheep. And He will watch over us, as we seek to live out the great commandment, to love God, neighbor and ourselves, so we can fulfill the Great commission, to go into all the world to baptize and teach all that He has commanded. And even there in verses of the Great Commission, we are reminded, and I am with you even into the end of the age.

That my friends is how we hear, do and live for Christ.