



John 10:22-31
Why You Aren't Listening

22 Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter.

23 And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch.

24 Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.

26 "But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.

27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

30 "I and My Father are one."

31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

Children, this might amaze you, but there are many ways that a parent can tell that you aren't actually listening to them without you having to tell them "I'm not listening to you." First there's the glazed look, that says *"Hello, my body is standing in front of you, but I'm not home right now. I'm off in a world far-far away from this lecture that I don't want hear."* Or there's the full on rebellious look, lower lip is out, arms are folded, eyebrows are furrowed. There you may be processing the words, and even responding, but everything you are hearing is just wrong and mentally everything you are hearing is being systematically shredded. We could talk about others like the famous wounded sulk and so on. But in all of those cases what is being said isn't being heard. And the impediment isn't that something is wrong with your ears, or that the information isn't clear or accurate, the problem in all of those cases is a heart problem. Why aren't they listening? Because that heart is in a state of rebellion and it does not want to hear. And something is going to have to change that heart before that information will ever get through.

Now I point that out, because it is not just a key to why children often don't listen to lectures, it also a key to why men don't hear the gospel. There too, the problem is not with their ears, it's in their hearts. That is the problem with the Jews who are confronting Christ in these verses.

The setting of this confrontation is once again the Temple. John tells us that it is winter and even tells us when in the winter. He says that it was at the time of the feast of the dedication. You're forgiven if you don't know which feast that is incidentally, because it's not a feast that we find in the bible. We know this feast better as – Hanukkah, or the festival of lights which began on 25th of Chisleu or Nov-Dec in our calendar. Hannukah commemorates the rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabeus in 165 BC after its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes. Against all odds Jerusalem had been recaptured from the Seleucids and the worship of God's people had been restored. Here obviously in the midst of the Roman occupation, it stood as symbol of the hope that God would again deliver his people.

Jesus is not teaching here but merely walking in Solomon's porch, a long colonnade with a roof that would have provided some shelter from the winter weather, he is surrounded once again by the Jews, meaning once again the religious leaders, scribes, Pharisees, probably some representatives of the Sadducees as well. They ask So who do you say you are? Tell us *are you the Messiah?*

Now, they are right that the critical question with Jesus is and always will be "who are you?" Is He or is He not the true Messiah? ***"The question of the Person of Jesus dominates the section. It becomes clear that men must recognize Jesus as standing in such a relation to the Father as none other ever did or reject Him entirely."*** – Morris

Now *honestly* seeking the answer to that question is Jesus the Savior, the Messiah, is not wrong, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." Nicodemus, for instance, had been sincerely seeking that seeking the answer to that question. The problem is that so few men honestly seek for the answer. These men are not. They are looking for ammunition to use against Jesus *"Tell us Plainly, so we can reject you and put you on trial"*.

As a number of commentators point out, the Hebrew expression "How long do You keep us in doubt" is actually an idiomatic expression closer to ***"How long will you plague us?"***

Jesus tells them, I've already told you, but you won't accept the answer. What I've said testifies to who I am, and my works, the miracles I have done in the name of the Father, bear witness to the fact that I am the Messiah. If I wasn't I couldn't do them. The evidence is all there in front of you. It's not that you don't understand, or that you haven't yet received enough information or seen enough miracles. The problem is that You do not and will not believe. I've told you but you aren't listening.

But why don't they believe? Well its not because they aren't members of the covenant community, its not because they didn't have the sign of the covenant, its not because they didn't go to church, its not because they don't have access to the word of God, and its not because they aren't smart enough, they are all no doubt of above average intelligence. It is because they are not His Sheep, they are not the ones who hear His voice, they are not the Sheep Jesus lays down his life for. They are not those whom the Father has chosen and given to His Son. That is why their hearts are hardened against Him and why they won't hear what He has to say.

Jesus says to them, you see my Sheep know who I am, they know that I am the Messiah and because of that they follow me and they hear me eagerly. We've already seen that in **John 6:67-69** ***"Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. "Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."***

Now how was it that Peter had come to know that, did He figure it out Himself? Did he come to faith and then his eyes were opened? No Jesus explains point blank that the source of Peter's faith wasn't Peter:

Matthew 16:15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

Jesus knows all of His Sheep by name, or more accurately HE has always known them, and calls them all one by one by name and no matter where they are, if they are tax-collector taking tolls at the gate of the city they follow, if they are fisherman mending their nets they follow, if they are 4 days dead and lying in their tomb when he calls them by name they get up and follow. If they are driving to work in Maryland one day, they still hear his voice, and they follow. That voice resonates in a heart that has been made alive and most willing, it says *that is the voice of my master, I must go to Him*. Have you heard that voice? If you have not, you may have been born into a Christian family, but you are not yet one of His Sheep.

But Jesus if we follow, what will you give us? Before all we could obtain for ourselves was the wages of sin, what will you give us Master?

Jesus tells you. "I will give you Eternal Life", it is an Abundant Life that does not End, As John Newton put it of our time in Heaven, when we've been there ten thousand years bright shining as the son, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we've first begun!

But Jesus what if we should fall away and stop following? He answers you, "you shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch you out of My hand."

Nothing can separate the Sheep from Christ: *Romans 8:33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.*

34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Death may kill us, but it shall not take us from Him! Our continuance in salvation, does not depend upon our feeble hold on Christ but on his firm grip on us! Praise God for that, because if we could fall we would fall.

What then of those who professed to be Sheep, who said they were His followers who turn back and walk with Him no more? If they turn back and walk with him no more, it proves they never were really his Sheep, but were those plants that sprang up quickly but lacked a root and quickly turned away: ***1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.***

But if I backslide and fall into sin, does that mean I was never really a follower of Christ?

“That a righteous man may fall, is evident; and as evident it is, that he cannot fall finally; for though he fall seven times in a day, as often does he rise again, Prov. 24:16. and this, because the " Lord upholdeth him with his hand," Psal. 37: 24. and again, the " Lord upholdeth all that fall," Psal. 145: 14. that is, either he stays them when they are falling, or so orders and limits the matter, that they fall not into mischief, as others do; and to be sure he will set them on their feet again. The absolute promise cannot be nullified or made uncertain by cautionary words elsewhere delivered. It cannot, therefore be meant of a total and final falling away, which the scripture current expressly runs against.” – Elisha Coles

But Jesus how can I be sure of this? How can you make these sweeping statements? “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.” How can a man give you an iron-clad assurance of salvation? I may be able to promise you something, but if I don’t have the power to fulfill it, then the promise is worthless. Similarly, even if I do have the power to fulfill my promise, when I die, I can no longer fulfill it and the promise expires.

Only God could keep these promises, and that is who is making them. Jesus is able to make those promises not because He is man striving to do the will of God the Father, but because He is God, the Son, who always does the will of His Father. He and the Father are one

“They had asked Jesus for a plain assertion of His Messiahship, and they got more than they had bargained for.” – Morris

Their response is to take up stones once again to stone Him for blasphemy. And so ends Jesus’ public ministry to the Jews and His last offer of salvation to them, in a real sense this is the final answer of the religious leaders, and a final rejection of all Jesus stands for, and all that He offers.

1) Regarding His works/Miracles- Ryle points out to those who would sneer at the idea of miracles the number of times Christ Himself brings them forward as evidence to His Messiahship. To doubt them is inevitably to doubt Christ.

2) Do you hear the voice of Christ? Do you follow Him? Some make a claim to being Christians but they do not *follow Christ*. They are willing to accept Christ as Savior, but not as Lord.

If you will not follow it is because you are not yet his. His Sheep follow Him.

If you do not hear his voice if you will not follow. You may be saying ah it is because there is not enough evidence! Or if I only heard better sermons in a better setting! Was that the problem of these Jews?

No the problem is the heart, that is why you aren’t listening – The word tells me that, but I’ve seen what Christ is talking about ““But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you” in the way people listen to sermons.

Finally Christian remember what we are following for – “Christ "gives" his people "eternal life." He bestows on them freely a right and title to heaven, pardoning their many sins, and clothing them with a perfect righteousness. Money, and health, and worldly prosperity He often wisely withholds from them. But He never fails to give them grace, peace, and glory”. - Ryle