

4th Sunday of Easter
“The plain, comforting Good Shepherd’s voice speaks to you!”
John 10:23-30
May 11, 2025
Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 4th Sunday of Easter Sunday is from John 10:23-30

“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.”

It was a cold day in the temple on Solomon’s porch. It was winter time during the feast of dedication. This was a feast commemorating the victory of Judas Maccabeus in 167 BC over Antiochus Epiphanes the Greek Seleucid king who had set up an altar to Zeus in the temple. The 8 day festival was held to celebrate the rededication of the temple, from which also came the legend of the olive oil not running out for 8 days until more could be made. It is also come to be known as Hannakuh, the festival of lights.

On this cold day, Jesus made Himself available to the people in the temple and was soon surrounded by cold unbelieving hearts. Jesus was surrounded and asked to speak plainly about who He was. He was asked to tell them if He was the Christ.

What was Jesus response? “I told you and you did not believe.” Jesus did not keep anyone in doubt.

Many times He told them exactly who He was and where He came from. In John 6 we hear Jesus speaking to the Jewish leaders saying:

“This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. 40 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

41 The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, “I am the bread which came down from heaven.” 42 And they said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, ‘I have come down from heaven’?”

John tells us in the first chapter:

“He came to His own and His own did not receive Him”, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Plain talk. Jesus came to His own. He showed them through His miracles, His works...many times... that He was the Christ Yet, their hardened hearts did not receive Him and wanted nothing more than to destroy the Good Shepherd. A person is either a sheep by the will of God, or is a goat with a hardened heart – lost and condemned for eternity.

Jesus’ works in His Father’s name bear witness that He is the Christ. In fact, in the previous chapter, Jesus healed a blind man. Jesus’ disciples asked Him, **“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”**

3 Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. 4 I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

And then Jesus healed him ... on the Sabbath. He made some clay with His saliva and put it on his eyes and told him to go wash in the pool of Siloam. He came back seeing. Everyone knew that this man was blind from birth. There was no mistaking him.

The parents were questioned by the Jewish leaders. Yes, he is our son. But they said that they didn't know how it happened and that they should ask the son.

“His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

Jesus' work spoke plainly to these cold hearts surrounding Him. They knew that He was the Christ, but they refused to believe...so hardened in their unbelief.

But, the man to whom Jesus gave sight to gave a bold witness.

“30 The man answered and said to them, “Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! 31 Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. 32 Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. 33 If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.”

And so he was cast out by the Jewish leaders, but not by Jesus.

“Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, “Do you believe in the Son of God?”

36 He answered and said, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?”

37 And Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.”

38 Then he said, “Lord, I believe!” And he worshiped Him.

Not only was he granted physical sight, but more importantly spiritual sight to see Jesus as the Son of God, believe in Him and become one of His sheep.

39 And Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.”

Some of the Pharisees heard Him say this and asked. **“Are we blind also?”**

41 Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains.

That’s the plain truth. If one thinks he can see by worshipping any god but Jesus, he is blind and sadly his sin remains. There is no way to remove sin but through the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sins of the world.

This is Jesus’ greatest work – that He willingly went to the cross and died for all sinners, including you and me. And He rose again to show that He alone has power to give everlasting life and raise up His sheep on the last day.

You who hear Jesus’ voice and believe in Him that He is the Christ have great news. For Jesus calls you His sheep. You have been given to Jesus by the Father. It was all God’s work to make you His sheep. You couldn’t do it. No one can.

And as His sheep, Jesus promises you that you will never perish. Nothing can take you from Jesus’ loving grip. For He and the Father are one. There is no stronger hand in this world. No one can snatch you away.

And He lovingly feeds you, His sheep, with His Word and Sacraments to keep you strong in your belief. Jesus gives you His very body and blood to eat and drink for the forgiveness of your sins and the assurance that you are His.

Now, we go forth bearing witness of the True Light, Jesus, the Son of God, just like the blind man who saw and believed in Jesus. For your blindness has been taken away and you follow the Good Shepherd. And you tell the world plainly what you have seen and believed by the power of the Holy Spirit... that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God... the Savior of the world!

Amen

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)