

Lighthouse Bible Church

October 20th, 2013

John 10: 17 – 30 *Scripture reading: Matthew 12: 22 - 32*

‘The Sovereign Power of the Shepherd’

Stand – Read – Pray

We saw last time that Jesus began chapter 10 by using the Shepherd and his sheep illustration to show the Jewish people that He was the Good and True Shepherd and that the Pharisees were the thieves and robbers destroying God’s people through their religion of human achievement.

Jesus gave them a physical illustration of the life of a shepherd and his sheep to show them a deeper spiritual truth that He is the Messiah, He is the Good Shepherd to lead God’s children.

The unbelieving Jews could not understand the spiritual truth behind the physical illustration because of their hard heartedness and rejection of Jesus. As **John 12: 37, 39** said ‘**they did not believe ... so they could not believe**’.

And we left off last time with Jesus telling the Jews in Verse 16 **other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring and they will hear My voice and there will be one flock and one shepherd.**

That, of course, was a reference to the Gentiles, to us, who come to faith in Christ and become one people under the headship of the One Shepherd Jesus Christ at salvation. In **Romans 10: 12** Paul says **for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.**

Galatians 3: 28 says there is neither Jew nor Greek there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all ONE in Christ Jesus.

So we want to pick it up this morning in Verse 17 where Jesus continues to tell the people why He is the Good Shepherd and why He was willing to give His life for the sheep. So let's look at it starting in Verses 17 – 18

Verses 17 – 18: therefore My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.

This is an incredible and true statement by our Lord about His love and obedience to the Father and His power and plan in His death and resurrection. In this statement we get a glimpse of the love and obedience relationship between the Father and the Son. God commanded, in Verse 18, the Son to lay down His life and the Son obeyed in verse 17. In His obedience to lay down His life, He was displaying His love for the Father and the Father for Him.

Might I say this for us today; love and obedience to our Lord are always inseparable. You can't love God without obeying Him, right. Jesus will say later in **John 15: 10 if you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.** He said in **1st John 5: 3 for this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.** Jesus is the greatest example of that kind of love for us to follow.

Isn't that what **1st John 2: 5 – 6 says whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk as Jesus walked.** You see, love without obedience and obedience without love is hypocrisy and foolish.

You know how Jesus expressed His love and obedience to the Father? In the laying down of His life for the sheep, in His self-sacrificing death for us. You see, sacrifice is always the measure of true love, isn't it. **John 3: 16 for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...** Christ's relationship to the Father was a relationship of love that was expressed in self-sacrificing obedience.

That is why **Philippians 2: 7 – 8** says that Jesus **made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became OBEDIENT to the point of death, even the death of the cross.**

Listen to what **Hebrews 13: 20 – 21** says **now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant make you complete in every good work to do His will working in you what is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever, amen.**

You can say or sing 'I love you Lord' all you want, but until that love shows itself in obedience to God, it is not a biblical kind of love at all. And by the way, Jesus did it voluntarily. He said **I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me but I lay it down of Myself. I have the power to lay it down and I have the power to take it up.**

No one took Jesus' life from Him, He gave it up Himself; that was the plan from the beginning. That is what **Revelation 13: 8** says; that **Jesus was slain from the foundation of the world. Luke 24: 25 – 26, Matthew 26: 54** and many other places say that the death of Jesus Christ fulfilled prophecy written long before it would happen.

Remember when Pilate said to Jesus in **John 19: 10** ‘do You not know that I have power and authority to crucify You and I have the power and authority to release You? Do you remember what Jesus said in response to that in **Verse 11** you could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. No one was going to take His life, but as the Good Shepherd, He would give His own life. And by the way He could **take it up again**.

He could raise Himself up from the dead and that is exactly what He would do, right, because He is God. Remember in **John 2: 19** where Jesus said **destroy this temple**, talking about the temple of His body, **and in 3 days** (what) **I will raise it up**. Yet in **Acts 2: 32** and other places it says **This Jesus GOD raised up of which we are all witnesses**. So who raised Him up? Jesus and God are One.

By the way, this Jesus who is the Good Shepherd who laid down His own life for His sheep will take His life up again and then, as **John 6: 39 – 40** says, **will raise up, at the resurrection, every one of those sheep into heaven on the last day**.

So how do these unbelieving Jewish religious leaders take what they have been hearing Jesus say? Look at Verses 19 – 20.

Verses 19 – 21: **Therefore, there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. And many of them said He has a demon and is mad; why do you listen to Him? Others said ‘these are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?**

Again, we see that the words of Jesus become, as Verse 19 says, divisive. You can never remain neutral about Jesus. Either you are for Him or against Him, there is no middle ground. Either you believe who He is or you do not. That division, as we have seen, is carried into relationships, families, jobs and society.

Verse 20 shows one group as saying **He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?** This is the group that thinks that Jesus is crazy, that He is demon possessed. These are the ones that resort to calling Jesus names again because they have no other defense for what He is saying. They don't believe it, they don't want to believe it and they don't want to be confused with the facts. Their hearts have been hardened to the truth just like those in Matthew 12 that we read earlier.

There are those, even today, who continue to blaspheme Jesus by denying that He is God in human form, by denying He is the only way of salvation, by rejecting Jesus and His sacrificial death on the cross for our sins.

Then you have the other group in Verse 21 who say **these are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?**

They say 'these are not the words of a demon possessed man'. They are coming to the same conclusion they did back in Chapter 9 after Jesus healed the blind man and they say in **9: 16 how can a man who is a sinner do such signs** and then the blind man says in **9: 33 if this man weren't from God He could do nothing** like this.

And again, you have two groups of people. One who flat denies Jesus and His words and works that Jesus will leave in their sin of unbelief and you have another group that, at least, acknowledges something supernatural but haven't come to the place of affirming Jesus as Lord and Savior.

And apparently they are all left with their own thoughts about who Jesus is and Jesus ends up leaving for a period of time that takes us to Verse 22 where a period of a couple of months has passed.

Verse 22 now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem and it was winter.

Verse 21 is still at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles or just shortly thereafter around late September or early October. Verse 22 is during the time of the Feast of Dedication which is celebrated in December.

John also says that **it was winter**. That word **winter** is *khimone* which comes from *cheo* which means to pour. In other words it was pouring down rain because it was the rainy season and that is why **Verse 23** says **Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch**. That is the one part of the temple that was enclosed with a roof that would keep Him from being out in the rain or wintery weather.

Notice that John says that it was **the Feast of Dedication**. This was another one of the Feasts that the Jews celebrated although the circumstances bringing about the celebration were devastating and it was not a feast established by God.

This feast or memorial came about as the result of a victory that the Jews had over the Syrian army and their attack on the city of Jerusalem and the temple of God. It was also called the Feast of Lights because people would put lights on in their homes for a period of 8 days to commemorate this memorial event.

This Feast of Lights is celebrated in the middle of December and it is probably better known to us as Hanukkah. It closely corresponds to our Christmas season and the lighting of trees and candles and decorations in our homes today.

Let me share with you how this feast came about. Around 165 BC the Syrian army under the command of a man named Antiochus, attacked Jerusalem. This Antiochus was a very ruthless and self-absorbed, vile and violent man who hated the Jews. As a matter of fact he gave himself the name Ephiaphanes or the great one.

He attacked Jerusalem and killed 80,000 Jews and sent another 100,000 Jews into slavery. He went into the temple of God and destroyed all the articles in it and enacted a law that you could not have a copy of the law or read the law nor could you circumcise any of your male children.

Josephus, an ancient historian, records that if anyone was caught circumcising their child they would be crucified with the child hung around her neck. The temple of God became a place of prostitution and they brought in an idol of the God Zeus and set it up in the temple and demanded worship of it.

By the way, you can read in **Daniel Chapter 11: 31** a little about this and what he calls their as the **abomination of desolation in the holy place**. *Compare to the Anti-Christ.*

They would slaughter pigs on the altar and force the priests to eat them and to bow to the image of Zeus or be killed.

Finally, a small band of Jews lead by a man named Judas Maccabaeus began a revolt against the Syrian oppression and in 165 BC they were able to regain control of Jerusalem and the temple. They cleansed the temple and replaced all the articles of worship and dedicated the temple and called for a yearly celebration by the lighting of lights in the home as a reminder of the cleansing of the temple.

So this is the scene, you have the Jews in the temple celebrating the Feast of Lights and Jesus walks into Solomon's porch and then look what happens in Verse 24.

Verse 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.

They are not asking Him this question because they want to know for sure that that is who He is. He has already told them over and over again who He is and they haven't believed Him yet so what makes us think that they are going to believe Him now? Well, they are not.

They are asking this question in a public place where a lot of people are gathered around as witnesses so that He can tell them **plainly that He is the Christ** and then they can have Him killed for blasphemy. They don't want to know the truth, they don't believe the truth, they don't and can't understand the truth because of their unbelief, they reject Jesus as the Christ, they just want Him dead and we know that because that is what they will do in Verse 31.

Back in John Chapter 5: 18 they already knew who He claimed to be and they wanted to kill Him all the way back there. They don't want to know who He really is, they want Him to make His claim of deity public so they can kill him.

As a matter of fact, after this, Jesus never dialogs with these unbelieving religious leaders. He goes into a private ministry with His close disciples and removes Himself from these Jews as an act of divine judgment on their unbelief. So look what Jesus says in Verse 25.

Verse 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.

Jesus says '**I told you**' who I am and **you don't believe Me**'. Jesus says 'even the works that I have done told you enough about who I am and yet you still don't believe Me.

He had just healed a blind man from birth and they examined that miracle in detail and still did not believe. Jesus feed over 20,000 people with five loaves and 2 fish. He walked on water, He healed someone from 20 miles away. They had all the proof they needed but, again, unbelief is never satisfied and you can't tell unbelief anything to change that. Then Jesus says in Verse 27 'I'll tell you why you don't believe.

Verse 26 – 27: But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me.

He goes back to the Shepherd and the sheep illustration again and says 'you don't believe Me because you are not one of Mine. Listen, in Verse 25 Jesus says 'you don't believe' and in Verse 27 says you can't believe 'because you are not of My sheep, you were not chosen to believe'. You have the human responsibility to believe and the divine sovereignty to allow you to believe.

This is another one of those we see in John where we have the human responsibility of salvation and the divine decree of salvation. The reason they don't believe, from the divine perspective, is because they were not chosen, elected, predestined to believe. The reason they don't believe, from the human perspective, is because they chose not to believe.

Jesus says in Verse 26 you are not one of My chosen ones, you are not one of My sheep, you are not the ones given to Me by My Father as **John 6: 37** said and no one can come to the Jesus unless the Father draws Him, right **John 6: 44**. If you were, Verse 27 says, you would hear by voice and follow Me.

One writer said "There is a divine, sovereign power on the part of God by which He chooses those that come to Christ. At the same time, there is a free responsibility in the mind of man to choose Jesus Christ and if he does not, he is morally responsible". *MacArthur GTY John*

I can't explain it but I can show you one of many verses that show this paradox over and over again. Look at **Acts 2: 22 – 23** *Read*. How can God hold those responsible for what He predetermined to do? I don't know. I just believe it.

Then Jesus says in **Verses 28 - 29:** **and I give them eternal life and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father who has given them to Me, is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of My Fathers hand. I and My Father are One.**

Jesus says that He gives His elect, chosen sheep eternal life and once you have eternal life then **you will never perish**. Just like what Jesus said back in **John 3: 16**. By the way, the place where someone perishes is described as 'outer darkness' 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' 'eternal pain and torment' 'everlasting torment and suffering day and night forever and ever'.

And listen to this, once you are saved and experience eternal life at the moment of salvation so that you will never perish, there is absolutely nothing that can change that. You cannot lose your salvation, you cannot lose your gift of eternal life you can't later perish once you have been chosen for eternal life.

You are in the hands of Christ Verse 28 says and we and Christ are in the hand of God Verse 29 says and that is because God and Christ are One.

Gospel and closing prayer

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Introduction and Review:

John 12: 37, 39, Romans 10: 12, Galatians 3: 28

Verses 17 – 18:

John 15: 10, 1st John 5: 3, 2: 5 – 6, John 3: 16
Philippians 2: 7 – 8, Hebrews 13: 20 – 21
Revelation 13: 8, Luke 24: 25 – 26, John 6: 39-40
Matthew 26: 54, John 19: 10, 2: 19, Acts 2: 32

Verses 19 – 21:

John 9: 16, 33

Verses 22 – 23:

The Feast of Dedication
Daniel 11: 31

Verses 24 – 27:

John 6: 37, 44, Acts 2: 22 – 23

Verses 28 – 29:

John 3: 16

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