

prayer or worship group should, based on this outstanding picture of shepherds and their sheep, be people who know and are themselves in relationship with Jesus and who genuinely wish to travel 24/7 alongside the sheep for which they are responsible. Their job is to protect the sheep, to nurture the sheep and to lead the sheep to the best pasture. Wow! What a privilege, but equally what a responsibility!

2.4 Conclusion

- Jesus' plea to the religious leaders then and to us today is:
 1. Will you believe in my **deeds**? *'The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me.'* (John 10:25)
 2. Will you believe in my **words**? *'I did tell you, but you do not believe.'* (John 10:25)
- Clearly the religious leaders are not convinced but what about us?

3. Questions to consider at home

3.1 *'The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me.'* (John 10:25) What were these miracles? Why were the religious authorities and others not convinced by these miracles?

How do you respond to these miracles?

3.2 *'I am the gate for the sheep'* (10:7), *'I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture'* (10:9). *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.'* (10:11) *"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish'* (10:27) Why are these four claims so explosive?

3.3 What was the job of a Shepherd like in Biblical times and how might we personally, or as a church become better shepherds?

3.4 What is more important our **words** or our **deeds**?

Matthew Street - 27th November 2022



The St J's Group

John 10:22-42 - 'I give them eternal life'

Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these talk notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

1. Talk Passage – John 10:22-42

22 Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, **23** and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. **24** The Jews who were there gathered round him, saying, 'How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.'**25** Jesus answered, 'I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, **26** but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. **27** My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. **28** I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. **29** My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. **30** I and the Father are one.'**31** Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, **32** but Jesus said to them, 'I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?'**33** 'We are not stoning you for any good work,' they replied, 'but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.'**34** Jesus answered them, 'Is it not written in your Law, "I have said you are 'gods'"? **35** If he called them "gods", to whom the word of God came – and Scripture cannot be set aside – **36** what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, "I am God's Son"? **37** Do not believe me unless I do the works of my Father. **38** But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.'**39** Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.**40** Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptising in the early days. There he stayed, **41** and many people came to him. They said, 'Though John never performed a sign, all that John said about this man was true.'**42** And in that place many believed in Jesus.

2. Talk Notes

2.1 Introduction

- Have you ever been in that position when someone comes up to you at a drinks party and draws your attention to someone on the other side of the room and tells you that this person is a well known pop singer. You look at the person in question, who is clearly out of their context and you are not sure whether to believe what you are being told.
- For many years based on hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament the Jewish people were looking forward to the arrival of an "anointed one" or "Messiah". The Jews believed that this "anointed one" or "Messiah" would "deliver" or "save" all the Jewish people, bringing them to paradise or heaven. These Old Testament prophecies also stated that this "anointed one" or "Messiah" would save the rest of mankind "through the Jews."
- *"How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."* (John 10:24) the religious leaders ask Jesus. Again and again reports have been coming back to the religious leaders, that Jesus is this "anointed one". Like us at our drinks party they have been watching Jesus and following him but they are just not sure whether to believe what they are seeing with their eyes and being told by other people. So ironically on this *'Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem'* which commemorated the cleansing of the temple under Judas Maccabeus in 165 B.C. after Antiochus Epiphanes had defiled it by sacrificing a pig on the altar of burnt offering, the religious leaders catch up with Jesus and confront him directly.

- Like the religious leaders then, maybe you want to ask the same question “who are you Jesus?”
- Jesus responds to the religious leaders then and to us today by saying two things:
 - i) Will you believe in my **deeds**? *‘The miracles I do in my Father’s name speak for me.’* (John 10:25)
 - ii) Will you believe in my **words**? *‘I did tell you, but you do not believe.’* (John 10:25)
- We can come to one of three conclusions about Jesus:
 - i) That Jesus is a fictitious character that exists in the Bible, created by the Gospel writers to be an exemplar or model for how we should lead our lives.
 - ii) That Jesus was a historical character who walked this earth and happened to be a great prophet, teacher and healer.
 - iii) We can believe in Jesus’ deeds and his words and come to that outrageous conclusion that Jesus and the Father were one: *‘I and the Father are one.’* (John 10:30)

2.2 Deeds

- Surely my actions speak louder than my words says Jesus: *‘The miracles I do in my Father’s name speak for me.’* (John 10:25) If you do not believe what I say, then who other than God himself could be doing the things that I am doing. Prior to this meeting Jesus has performed six amazing miracles that all point towards his divinity. He has:
 - Changed water into wine (2:1-11),
 - Healed the nobleman’s son while miles away from the sick person, without seeing or laying hands on him (4:46-54),
 - Healed the man by the Pool of Bethesda who had been there 38 years, clearly suffering from a chronic condition (5:1-14),
 - Fed 5,000 men, not to mention the women and children, from five small barley loaves and two small fish (6:1-14),
 - Walked on water (6:16-21),
- Just prior to this meeting in Solomon’s Colonnade he has given sight to a man blind from birth: (9:1-7) The blind man tells the religious leaders: *“The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”* John 9:11.
- Do we believe that Jesus’ deeds prove his divinity? Or do we react like the people then. In response to Jesus’ healing of the blind man from birth three groups appear:
 - i) Out of **ignorance** the healed man’s friends and neighbours find it difficult to believe he has been healed because there was a common belief in Jewish culture that calamity or suffering was the result of some great sin. The Disciples ask Jesus: *“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”* John 9:1
 - ii) Out of **fear**, The man’s parents keep quiet for fear of retribution from the religious leaders despite knowing that their son has been blind from birth and can now see.
 - iii) Out of **religious indignation**. The religious leaders are appalled that Jesus has performed this miracle on the Sabbath. The Pharisees had made a long list of specific do and don’ts regarding the Sabbath. Picking up some mud and moulding it in your hands was considered work, which was forbidden on the Sabbath, as was healing which was also considered to be work. The Sabbath was strictly meant to be a day of rest.
 - How often out of **ignorance, fear** or **religious indignation** have we potentially missed a new move of God in our own lives or the life of our church. Are we constantly evaluating what we see God doing today against what we see him doing in the Bible? Are we in fear of the modern day religious leaders? Like the religious leaders then, are we more concerned about religion, the rules, than we are about relationship?

2.3 Words

- Jesus must have been exasperated with the religious leaders, and maybe with some of us. How many times do I need to demonstrate and tell you that *‘I am God’s Son’* (John 10:36). Prior to this meeting in Solomon’s Colonnade on the Feast of Dedication Jesus has told them and us the following:
 - *‘I am the bread of life’* (John 6:35),
 - *‘the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does.’* (John 5:19-2)
 - *‘For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.’* (John 5:21)
 - *‘the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son’* (John 5:22)
 - *‘I am the light of the world’* (John 8:12),
 - *‘If you knew me, you would know my Father also.’* (John 8:19)
 - On this Feast of Dedication Jesus refers back to what he has already told the religious leaders earlier by using an amazing picture of something that his audience would immediately recognise and that is of the Shepherd, *‘I am the good shepherd* (John 10:11) and his Sheepfold *‘I am the gate for the sheep’* (10:7), *‘I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture’* (10:9).
 - Jesus goes on to tell the religious leaders that: *‘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 can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.* (John 10:27-32)
 - Immediately Jesus starts using the language of sheep and sheepfolds the religious authorities would have known that Jesus was referring to the Jewish nation or Kingdom and to them its shepherds.
- ### 2.3.1 The Gate and the Sheepfold
- Every Jew knew that only God was the gate or gate keeper to the Kingdom, so if Jesus was claiming to be the gate or the gate keeper then he was claiming yet again to be none other than God himself - God with human flesh on. He was also claiming that there was *only one* gate to the Kingdom and *only one* gate keeper.
 - Many people today hate the idea that *only* Jesus is the way into the Kingdom. They believe that there are multiple ways to God and that all these ways are equally valid.
- ### 2.3.2 Shepherds
- The role of a Shepherd in biblical times was to look after a flock of sheep, 24/7. This meant that the Shepherd and the sheep knew each other very well. *‘My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.* (John 10:27) The Shepherd would know his sheep individually often by name and they would respond, when called, to his voice: *‘My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.* (John 10:27). Often at night the sheep would be protected in a sheepfold and the Shepherd would stand guard on the entrance. As the seasons changed it was the Shepherd’s responsibility to lead his flock to the best pastures. In the dry summer months this could often mean staying for months at a time in isolated areas, far from the Shepherd’s home. Hence, herding sheep was an independent and responsible job; indeed, in view of the threat of wild beasts and robbers, it could even be dangerous.
 - What a wonderful picture we gain hear of what Jesus does and came to do.
 - But of course Jesus models for us his modern day disciples what we should be doing for others. A modern day shepherd, whether the leader of a church, a home or community group, a men or women’s group, a youth or children’s group, a bible study group, a