

Tell Us Plainly!!

John 10:22-39

Introduction: A brief survey of the church scene should convince us that the Gospel is seldom, if ever preached today. I want us to consider a few reasons why:

First of all it is not widely known in Christianity. Many are born into a Christianity of good works, rituals, membership and religious morality. But God does not accept religion as a kind of balancing of the scales. The problem with balancing sin with good works and religion is that the sin still remains even after religion and good works are performed. The Gospel says that Christ gathered up your sin and was punished for it on your behalf. The Gospel is the only way to be rid of your sin guilt.

Secondly, the Biblical version of the Gospel is unpopular with sinners and religious people, BUT...it is least popular with religious people, because it declares that righteousness is granted to men as a gift from God. When understood it nullifies every religion in the world...including much of Christianity. Why would organized religion teach something that invalidates itself?

Thirdly, Men and women do not like grace, which is the idea that God's favor is undeserved and therefore unmerited. It strikes at our human pride and sense of being basically good. Most men believe that mankind is basically good. The condition of the world has to therefore have some other explanation than the Gospel one. Listen carefully here. The Gospel of Christ does not say that there is no good or value in man. There is much to admire and imitate in humanity. Humans are created in the image of God.

The Gospel asserts that man is hopelessly unable to remove his own sin. He is even less able to reverse the broken condition of his own nature which causes every generation to hate, kill and die. The Gospel of Christ offers the one and only solution to this nature problem....But Again....it through trust in Christ Alone.

So...can't we just explain this to people? I mean...if people don't hear the gospel and if they misunderstand the gospel message, can't we just make it clear to them by careful explanation? If we have better training and understanding then we should be able to persuade the lost to believe in Christ alone!

Well the problem **IS** Christ Alone. Sadly....men do not like Christ. Everyone tends not to like the perfect person....the one who never does anything wrong....because He makes the rest of us look bad. What is that about anyway? It is about our natures. When everyone is equally flawed and imperfect we find coverwe take comfort in the simple statement...."nobody's perfect!"

John 15:18-19 ¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it has **hated Me** before *it hated* you. ¹⁹ "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.

This brings us to a forth reason the Gospel is seldom heard and even less often embraced. It is explained by Jesus Himself in our passage this morning. It is vital knowledge if you care about the souls of men. It is essential to your own worship and love for Jesus Christ. It forms the basis of Biblical prayers for the lost and finally it will give you compassion and love for the lost NOT judgment toward and anger with them. Let's read the passage and then work our way through it.

John 10:22-39 ²² At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; ²³ it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. ²⁴ The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? 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, these testify of Me. ²⁶ "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. ²⁷ "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will 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 the Father's hand. ³⁰ "I and the Father are one." ³¹ The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. ³² Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" ³³ The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out *to be* God." ³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I SAID, YOU ARE GODS '? ³⁵ "If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), ³⁶ do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God '? ³⁷ "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; ³⁸ but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." ³⁹ Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp.

These verses describe the reaction of men to Christ when He is plainly revealed. The Gospel is not about doctrine or a plan of presentation. It is about Jesus Christ. AND...this is the crux of the conflict we see here.

John 10:22-23 ²² At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; ²³ it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon.

We call this feast Hanukkah today. It is not an OT feast, but was instituted in Israel between the Old and New Testament period. John is probably mentioning it only to give a time frame for his entire account of Jesus. It is just a few month now until Passover and the Crucifixion.

John 10:24 ²⁴ The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

This is not the relaxed teaching situation that we might imagine at first glance. These guys [Pharisees and Scribes and the like] are plenty angry. Jesus has claimed in the past few months to be the Manna that came down out of heaven, The water that flowed from the rock in the wilderness, the source and cause of light in the world, The God who spoke to Moses from the burning bush and The one true legitimate Shepherd of Israel. Now look at verse 24 again.

The “**Jews**” were Christ’s arch enemies in Israel. The words “**gathered around**” mean encircled and the work “**plainly**” means publicly. Let’s read it again based on what some of these words mean:

“His enemies encircled Him and were continually saying, “how long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us openly in public.” **John 10:24**

John 10:25 ²⁵ Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe;

Christ’s answer is still another affirmation of His Godhood. This is the perfect time for Jesus to make it clear that He has not intended, by any of His claims to imply that He is the Messiah**BUT**....instead He doubles down on it and says, “I DID TELL YOU PUBLICLY!” The issue is not what I say but what you believe.

John 10:25the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me.

Jesus has done some works that only God could do. Most recently He has healed a man born blind. This is troublesome to the Jews, because as the people themselves observed in **John 9:32**.... Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind.

What Jesus says next is astounding by any measure.

John 10:26-29 ²⁶ "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. ²⁷ "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will 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 the Father's hand.

But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep: Continuing the metaphor, Jesus gives the reason for their unbelief. Jesus is the One True Legitimate Shepherd and as everyone knew....the true sheep of a shepherd recognize the voice of their shepherd when He speaks to them. Jesus explains more...

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me": Non sheep cannot believe because they cannot recognize the voice of the shepherd who offers them food, water, comfort, safety, love and salvation. But Christ’s sheep do believe Him because they recognize the voice of their beloved shepherd.

Application: In order to believe a person has to be able to hear and recognize the voice calling them to follow. Men cannot believe until they can hear and see Christ. The opposite....”Men cannot hear and see Christ until they believe”....is not true. Men must see and hear Jesus before they can believe Him and follow Him.

They need the help of God to believe Him. YOU....needed the gentle, loving saving call of God or you would never had heard and never have believed. In our day this is what the Holy Spirit does for men. Do we need to witness....Absolutely! You and I are the light in the world now. BUT we are reflected light. Don’t offer men morality or prayers or religion or doctrine or membership and let them believe any of that can save them.

Offer them Christ. Don't worry at all about how it comes out. Our job is to offer Christ Alone and it is the Spirit's job to cause any man to apprehend it.

1 Corinthians 2:14 ¹⁴ But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

"My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; The sheep do not chose their shepherd. The sheep are a gift to the Shepherd. AND....they are a gift from the Sovereign God of the Universe....In other words.....The greatest power in the universe has chosen and then given a gift to His Own Son. Who is going to overturn that decision? Who can oppose His will in the matter? Who is the God who selects and gives the sheep to the Good Shepherd? He is greater than all other things!

I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand: The Father gives the sheep to Christ and Christ give eternal life to those sheep. People have asked me if I believe in Eternal Security...What I believe in is The Gift Eternal Life from The Eternal Son to people that the Eternal Father has given to Him. Jesus now tells the Jews why no one can take them out of His hand when He says,

John 10:30 ³⁰ "I and the Father are one."

An outrageous statement. The word "one" is neuter in gender. The Father and I we are one substance one essence or nature. Christ and the Father are two persons, but that is not the issue here at all and so the words are chosen carefully. Jesus says that the God the Jews believe in is the Sovereign God. HE is the God of all power and does whatever He wills to do. "I am just exactly like Him in that Sovereign Greatness and Glory." That is why what the Eternal Father gives to the Eternal Son as a gift cannot be undone or even opposed. I guess I would say that I believe in Eternal Security.

John 10:31 ³¹ The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.

This is now the fourth time that they have tried to kill Him in John. They are not going to rest until they do. But not today...It will be for an day and hour of Christ's choosing, not theirs.

John 5:17-18 ¹⁷ But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." ¹⁸ For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

John 7:1 After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.

John 8:59 ⁵⁹ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

Perhaps you have seen some of the news reel footage of passionate and out of control mobs of people with murderous intent rampaging through the streets of the middle east.

Now imagine that you have insulted the prophet Muhammad and you are surrounded by them. This is the scene in the court of the temple that day. They are a murderous and uncontrolled crowd, but before they can throw the stones, Jesus says....

John 10:32 ³² "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?"

Jesus contends and has for a long time, that He is doing works that they themselves believe only God can do. Their prophets have foretold of the Messiah coming in this way.

Isaiah 29:18-19 ¹⁸ On that day the deaf will hear words of a book, And out of *their* gloom and darkness the eyes of the **blind** will **see**. ¹⁹ The afflicted also will increase their gladness in the LORD, And the needy of mankind will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

They know this is true. Jesus has done more than this. He has literally healed every single person who came to Him. Can you imagine a man who could walk into Marshall Hospital and with a word or touch restore the physical strength and health of every single person there. He has raised the dead and commanded the wind and the waves. He defies gravity and walks on water and turns that same water into wine. When John asked from prison if Jesus was really the Messiah, Jesus cited the works, saying.....

Luke 7:22-23 "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: *the* BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed, and *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised up, *the* POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. ²³ "Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me."

But you see...These self righteous and self justified men did take offence at Christ and for all of the reasons I mentioned above. They never could find anything to accuse Him of. He had an answer for every question they asked and they fancied themselves the smartest people in Israel. He ignored their religion and all the things they did to justify themselves. He loved the sick and the sinner whom they personally despised. He ate with them and brought them to repentance and gave them grace and forgiveness....it was disgusting and they WERE OFFENDED!! They could have cared less what they had seen Him do....THEY WERE OFFENDED!

John 10:33 ³³ The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out *to be* God."

What follows here is a challenge to these Jews from their Scripture.

John 10:34-36 ³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I SAID, YOU ARE GODS '? ³⁵ "If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), ³⁶ do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God '?"

God said that about some unjust judges in Israel. He compares their petty authority and their god complex with His own sovereign call for righteous behavior and justice. Christ's hearers knew this Psalm.

Psalm 82:1-8 A Psalm of Asaph. God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the rulers. ² How long will you judge unjustly And show partiality to the wicked? Selah. ³ Vindicate the weak and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and destitute. ⁴ Rescue the weak and needy; Deliver *them* out of the hand of the wicked. ⁵ They do not know nor do they understand; They walk about in darkness; All the foundations of the earth are shaken. ⁶ I said, "You are gods, And all of you are sons of the Most High. ⁷ "Nevertheless you will die like men And fall like *any* one of the princes." ⁸ Arise, O God, judge the earth! For it is You who possesses all the nations.

Jesus argument is....if these unjust judges can be called gods and you are okay with that what excuse do you give for calling me a blasphemer when the One True God has sent me into the world with signs, confirmations and testimony from Heaven. If you won't believe me how about believing the God you say is your Father.

John 10:37-38 ³⁷ "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; ³⁸ but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

There reaction was predictable. Jesus Sovereign power over creation is displayed still again.

John 10:39 ³⁹ Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp.

CONCLUSION: Jesus appeared in the middle of a people who had been told and believed their entire life that He was coming. The coming of Christ the Messiah into the world was the worst kept secret in Israel and yet...they were unable to recognize Him when He appeared. They could not accept His teaching and the mighty works of God that He did were likewise dismissed.

I want to return to something I said in the opening for just a moment. We said that what Jesus said about Himself in this passage is vital knowledge if you care about the souls of men. Why...because Jesus explains the ultimate reason for the unbelief of men. In our day there are those who say that if the church would just perform miracles and healings that men would flock to Christ and unbelief would vanish. John Ten puts the lie to that assertion. Men did not flock to Christ in belief when He Himself did the miracles. He Himself explains why. They cannot hear my voice. They are not my sheep and only my sheep hear my voice.

We said this knowledge is essential to your own worship and love for Jesus Christ. Why? Because God has set His love on you before the creation of the world and given you to Christ as a possession. You are His sheep and that is why you hear His voice and believe. DO NOT...flatter yourselves. You believe because God has given you hearing. Every morsel of truth you understand should be to you like an ambrosia that the Shepherd feeds you. Study the Scripture and hear the Word and give God glory and LOVE HIM for your hearing, believing, security and hope of heaven.

What Christ taught here teaches us how to pray for the lost. Why? Because they are not just being stubborn and unbelieving. They are deaf to the Word of Christ and blind to the sight of Christ. They are said by Scripture to be dead to Christ.

Ephesians 2:4-6 ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,

Knowing the truth about the condition of our human hearts will give compassion and love for the lost and never condemnation and anger. Don't think for a minute that there is fatalism here like some suggest. It is just the opposite. If God must work in the lives of men for salvation then there is hope, because He is full of mercy and is powerful to save. He can open the spiritual eyes of men and women who are blind from birth. Listen to how Scripture ends this account....

John 10:40-42 ⁴⁰ And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was first baptizing, and He was staying there. ⁴¹ Many came to Him and were saying, "While John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true." ⁴² Many believed in Him there.

Ask for a verdict: So Jesus retreats from Jerusalem. His awesome words and undeniable miracles have done absolutely nothing to touch or persuade the Jews there....But in the wilderness villages it was a different story. They incredibly, respond to the preaching of a dead man, who performed no miracles or signs but instead just sought to shine the light on the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. God describes the process of proclaiming Christ simply. It is something that we can and should do as we move through life. In a nut shell it is any testimony to the greatness and glory of Christ in the hope that God can open the ears of men to hear and believe.

John 1:6-15 ⁶ There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the Light, but *he came* to testify about the Light. ⁹ There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* 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. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'"