

Gospel of John

Session 16

We left off last time with Ch 9 and the story of the man born blind. John uses this story to describe how Jesus is ushering in a new age. The blind man, in John's mind, represents us all in that we are all born "spiritually blind", but when we encounter Jesus we move from a lack of knowing who he is, to the Christological profession – "Lord I believe". At the same time, the Pharisees who have all the advantage of a learned background and life of study, are going in the opposite direction. They cannot see and understand who Jesus is. Or maybe they can but are too threatened by the change God is bringing about through his Son.

Today, we pick it up with ch. 10 – (Read all of chapter 10 Vs. 1-41)

Vs 1-3 – We read that Jesus claims that there is a door that must be passed through. The good shepherd is the one who passes through the door, all others seeking to enter by another way, are thieves and robbers. John's point is that there is only one way to heaven, through our Lord. The gatekeeper (heavenly father) opens the door for the good shepherd.

Vs. 4-5 – describe the intimate relationship between the good shepherd and the sheep. The sheep "hear his voice" calling them each by name and follow him. They know his voice. They will not follow a strangers voice.

Vs. 6 – The Pharisees do not understand (as almost always portrayed in John's gospel).

Vs. 7-10 – Because the Pharisees do not understand, Jesus tells them again who he is. He claims: "I am the door" or in effect – I am the only way into the Kingdom of God. Those who pass through via me, will find pasture. He is the door that leads to salvation.

Vs. 11 – We see Jesus now reference the way that God will accomplish salvation. Jesus says "he will lay down his life for the sheep".

Vs. 12-13 - others who shepherd the sheep are hirelings and they will flee when danger comes, but Jesus will not flee when his life is in danger. He is the good shepherd and he will die for the sheep. Such is the extent of God's love for all of us.

Vs. 14-16 – Jesus, the Good Shepherd, not only knows the sheep intimately, he also knows the Father intimately. Jesus is claiming to be the bridge between humanity and God the Father.

Vs. 17-18 – Reminds us of one of the central themes of John's Gospel. Jesus is the one who is completely in charge and control of how salvation will be accomplished. "I will lay down my life for the sheep". Unlike the passion accounts in the synoptic Gospels, Jesus will not be taken by a mob, or be the victim of political power and authority. Jesus says: "I have the power to lay my life down and the power to take it up again" Salvation is all God's doing. Everyone else surrounding Jesus death are but bit players in God's unfolding drama.

Vs. 19-21 - Shows us the reaction of the Jews. They are once again divided about Jesus. Some say "he has a demon". Others say, "no, can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

Vs 22-39 - We move from the Feast of the Tabernacles to the "Feast of Dedication". The Feast of Dedication commemorated the rededication of the temple in 164 BC after the Maccabean Revolt. Today known as Hanukkah.

Vs. 22 – Jesus is in the temple in the Portico of Solomon, fitting since Solomon was the original builder of the temple.

Vs. 23 – 24 - The Jews challenge him about his identity. “how long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ – tell us plainly”

Vs 25 – Jesus responds – “I have told you, but you do not believe” The works that I do bear witness to me (Read Matthew 11:2-6) “Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him “are you he who is to come, or should we look for another?”. And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense at me”.

Vs. 26 – but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my flock

Vs. 27 – My sheep hear my voice, I know them and they know me.

Vs. 28-30 – I give them eternal life. They will never perish. They will never be lost. They belong to the heavenly Father and no one can snatch them out of his hands.

Vs. 31 – The Jews again pick up stones to stone him to death.

Vs. 32 – Perhaps we see a hint of sarcasm from Jesus when he says: “I have shown you many good works, for which of these do you stone me?”

Vs. 33 – the Jews respond “it is not for your works that we stone you, it is for blasphemy. Because being just a man, you make yourself God”.

Vs. 34-35 – Reference is made to Psalm 82:6 – it reflects that interesting idea that the judges of the Jews were referred to as Gods, because judgement belongs to God – so as sitting acting judges they become referred to “as Gods”.

Vs 36-38 - Jesus once again proclaims that he is not claiming to be the Messiah based on himself, he is doing so based on God the Father. It is God the Father who sent me. I am the incarnate Word of God.

Vs. 39 – they try to arrest Jesus, yet again. But in John’s Gospel any attempt to take Jesus by force is doomed. Jesus simply escapes.

Vs. 40 – Jesus crosses the Jordan River where his cousin John the Baptist carried out his ministry of baptism. He remains there. John tells us that many people came to him and they came to belief in him.

Pick it up next week with chapter 11