

WHITE NOISE

"LEARNING AN UNFAMILIAR LANGUAGE"

JOHN 10:22-30

This Week's Core Competency

Salvation by Grace – I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by his grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*

"Where are you?"

Those words are repeated daily, ad infinitum, in phone conversations around the globe. Before the advent of the mobile phone, you most often knew the location of the person you were dialing. There was a time when an area code actually meant something. I recently took a call with a Colorado area code from a friend who lives in Texas, but was calling me from Alabama.

Advancements in mobile technology have allowed us to roam freely while talking with others. Untethered from land lines and phone booths, we rarely worry about long distance charges or about having enough pocket change for a payphone call.

This freedom is expansive. Today there are an estimated 5 billion cell phone users globally using over 7 billion active devices, with 1.75 billion of these being smartphones, capable of internet functionality. That means there are more active cell phones in the world than people.

As free as we may feel telephonically, we all know that our phone is only as good as our network. You may have the greatest device on the

I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another.

– Ezekiel 34:22

market, but if you have a faulty or limited network, your apps and calling plan are often rendered useless. "Whose are you?" is a more important question than "Where are you?" when it comes to phone network selection.

When Jesus walked the earth, a time sans cell phones and satellites, networks were also of vital concern. Before things were digital or even analog, people connected around social and religious identities. These relational networks provided protection, purpose and prestige. For Israel, the Temple was the hub and command center for all things Jewish. To have a connection to the Temple was to have a connection to God. To be disconnected from the Temple was a sign of disfavor; a sign of being "out of network." To be "in" the Temple of Jerusalem was a great place to be in Jesus' day.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus is recorded as visiting the Temple a number of times, and on one occasion was accosted by a group of Jews wanting to know if Jesus was the Messiah, the restorer of "the network," the nation, the Temple and all that was involved with the children of Abraham.

Jesus had an answer, but it was not typical. Even though the questioners had superior hardware and infrastructure in Temple Judaism, Jesus challenged the legitimacy of their "network." Using the accessible imagery of sheep and shepherds, Jesus said "you are not my sheep." He went on further to state that His connection was to God the Father, who was "greater than all." Not to be in Jesus' flock was to not be in God's fold. With God, there is no competing network. "Whose are you?" again trumps "Where are you?"

Are you in God's flock? Are you Jesus' sheep? Are you in His network? Can you hear Him now? How do you know?

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God’s word to put yourself in touch with him.

John 10:22-30

22 Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter,²³ and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's Colonnade. 24 The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

25 Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for 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 can 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."

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Underline words in 10:22-23 that show the time and place of this encounter.
- * Circle words that identify the main characters in this account found in 10:23-24.
- * Double underline the word describing how Jesus' hearers approached him.
- * Draw a box around words that indicate frustration and/or sarcasm in 10:24.
- * Number the two answers Jesus gives in 10:25.
- * Double underline the cause of unbelief (10:26).
- * Draw arrows linking the activity of "my sheep" (10:27).
- * Number the things Jesus and His Father do for the sheep (10:27-29).
- * Box the word "snatch" in 10:28-29.
- * Draw line connecting "hand: in 10:29 with similar word in 10:28
- * Double underline the word "one" in 10:30

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. What does the setting (time and place) of this account (10:22) contribute to your understanding of what Jesus had to say to those gathered?
2. What did those gathered want to know?
3. How did the Jews approach Jesus and what was the tone of their question?
4. What evidence did Jesus provide to the question he was asked (10:25)?
5. Why did they not believe?
6. What are the identity markers of His sheep (10:27)?
7. What are the benefits of being His sheep (10:28-29)?
8. How does someone become one of Jesus' sheep?
9. What is the point of "no one will snatch them"?
10. How did those listening to Jesus interpret His statement found in 10:30 (see 10:31-33)?

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

The Gospel of John is full of festival. John records Jesus attending Jewish festivals and Sabbaths numerous times. These festivals and Sabbaths are mentioned over 40 times in John's Gospel. Much of the imagery in John is connected with the imagery of these festivals.

In John 2 the festivity of a wedding sets the stage for the transformation of purification/foot washing water into joyful wine. Passover and its theme of cleansing is mirrored by Jesus cleansing the Temple at Passover (John 2). Sabbath and its limitations showcase the unlimited power of Jesus (John 5). Passover and its connection to bread, exodus and manna in the wilderness all illumine Jesus' claim to be the Bread of Life (John 6). The Feast of Tabernacles, replete with the remembrance of the chosen people of God living in tents in the wilderness when Moses receives the Law, is used by Jesus to declare that his teaching is from God just as the Law was given to Moses by God (John 7). The Feast of Dedication, otherwise known as the Feast of Lights or Hanukkah, is the setting for Jesus stating he is the Light of the World (John 8) and giving sight to the man born blind (John 9). This feast was in remembrance to the rededication of the Temple by Judas Maccabeus in 164B.C.

"In the first century, it [Hanukkah] was celebrated for eight days in Jerusalem (recalling eight miraculous days when Judas' supply of oil burned in the temple). Hanukkah thus became the season that asked hard questions about failed leadership and false shepherds. How did the temple leadership lose its way during the Greek period? Where were the shepherds? What must shepherds do today? During the week when Jesus gave his good shepherd sermon, synagogues were reading prophetic critiques of leadership." (Gary Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John*, 288) Some have even suggested that the texts used in synagogues during the Festival of Dedication may have been taken from the shepherd passages of Ezekiel 34. Consider the similarity of Ezekiel 34 to Jesus' words in John 10.

Concerning shepherds of the flock God warns:

(Eze 34:2-4) Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? 3 You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock.

Concerning the sheep themselves God warns:

(Eze 34:20-24) Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. 21 Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, 22 I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another. 23 I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. 24 I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the Lord have spoken.

Jesus used this same "bad shepherd/bad sheep" imagery in his teaching (John 10:1-21) and in his answer (John 10:22-30). He claimed to be this messianic Shepherd (Eze. 34:23) with a unique connection to God (Eze. 34:24) when He stated that no one would be able to take his sheep away, because His sheep were God the Father's sheep (John 10:28-29).

The Jews questioning Jesus in John 10 had Messiah and the restoration of Israel's glory foremost in their minds. They wanted a clear statement from Jesus whether He was that Messiah and if, like Judas Maccabeus, he would "hammer" their oppressors and rededicate the Temple to its former glory.

Jesus saw the rededication of God's people and the restoration of their connection to the Good Shepherd as the true meaning of the Feast of Dedication. Jesus was declaring that through His teaching and His miraculous works that He was building a rededicated flock. He said in no uncertain terms that His present hearers were not of this flock (John 10:26). They were not of this flock because they did not believe, did not listen and did not follow Him. To Jesus, dedication of a place was not as important as dedication of a people to God.

Jesus then lit one of the most brilliant torches of truth. He stated, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). You can almost hear His questioners gasp. John tells us they picked up stones to stone Him for making such an exalted claim (John 10:31). Where they found stones inside the temple is not explained, but their attempt at striking Jesus down quickly for such a statement shows to which flock they truly belonged. This reaction is supporting evidence of Jesus' assessment made in John 10:26.

To whose flock do you belong? Is religious devotion and dedication something you make towards a church,

a building, a denomination or tradition? Or is your dedication to a Shepherd who speaks to you, knows you and to whom you give your life and love (John 10:27)? Another way to ask this question is "What do you trust to give you eternal life?" Is eternal life something you earn, something you acquire through good deeds, or something you gain through observing rites and traditions? Or is eternal life something given to you, something you cannot earn, something that must come from God? Ultimately, who do you say that Jesus is? Is He a teacher, a

restorer of morality and religious activity? Or is He something more?

You are not in God's flock unless you believe that Jesus is your eternal shepherd. Jesus cannot be your Shepherd unless He is your God.

If you are in His flock, you are His sheep by believing in Him. How well are you following Him? Maybe we all need to hold a feast of rededication to Him.

The Message of the Passage

Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior of God's flock. He cares for His followers like a shepherd. Believe on Him as your Shepherd for eternal life. You are not God's sheep unless you rely on Jesus as your saving and shepherding God.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 "living questions" to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your answers to the following living questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v.22 **Feast of Dedication** "The eight-day Feast of Dedication, now called "Chanukah" (or Hanukkah), the Feast of Lights, was not one of the feasts prescribed in the Mosaic Law. The Jews instituted it during the inter-testamental period.... This feast commemorated the purification and rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabeus ("Judas the Hammer") on the twenty-fifth of Chislev (modern late December and early January), 164 B.C. The Syrian invader Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) had profaned the temple, three years earlier, by replacing the brazen altar with a pagan one, on which he offered a pig as a sacrifice to Jupiter. Antiochus attempted to Hellenize Judea, but the Jewish patriot Judas Maccabeus was able to lead a guerilla revolt that has borne his name ever since. After three years he defeated the Syrians and liberated the Jews" (Thomas Constable, *Notes on John*, 184-5).

v. 24 **gathered** A sense of urgency and even perhaps entrapment. "Crowded around Him. The act of encirclement may indicate a determination to get an answer. They hemmed Him in (cf. Phillips: 'The Jews closed in on Him')" (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 518).

v. 24 **suspense** As translated in the NIV, or "How long are you going to annoy us?" "If the latter [annoy] is the question, 'the Jews' are clearly antagonistic; if the former [suspense], 'the Jews' may not be adversaries, but those who would like the question of his status cleared up once and for all. In the context of what follows the former meaning is far more likely. This suggests that the Jews are not seeing for clarity in order to worship him without restraint; rather they want to obtain from him an unambiguous statement that would provide an adequate basis for their attack" (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 392).

v. 24 **plainly** "represents Greek 'parrhesia' which has been used three times in chapter 7 to denote Jesus' speaking out publically (verse 4,13,26). But the authorities would not have been any more inclined to believe in him as the Messiah if he had made the claim 'plainly.' If his works and teaching did not convey their proper message, no words from him would have been any more convincing" (F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, 230).

v. 25 **believe** "The key word in the book [of John] is the verb "believe" (Gr. pisteuo), which appears 98 times. The noun form of the word (Gr. pistis, "faith") does not occur at all. This phenomenon shows that John wanted to emphasize the importance of active, vital trust in Jesus" (Constable, 3).

v. 26 **my sheep** "What then can explain the obtuseness of so many hearers? It is that they do not belong to Jesus' sheep. It is not just that his own sheep do hear his voice, that he knows them, and that they follow him, but that those who are not his sheep do not hear his voice, that he does not know them, and that therefore they do not follow him. Neither Jesus nor John means to reduce the moral responsibility of the opponents in the slightest. That they are not Jesus' sheep does not excuse them, it indicts them" (Carson, 393).

v. 28 **eternal life** "Eternal life is His gift. It is often emphasized that the important thing about eternal life is its quality rather than its quantity. It is life of a certain kind, and not simply life that goes on for ever. While there is truth in this, yet we should not overlook the point that in fact eternal life does not end. It is this aspect that is prominent here. Those to whom Christ gives the gift will 'never perish.'...It is one of the precious things about the Christian faith that our continuance in eternal life depends not on our feeble hold on Christ, but on His firm grip on us" (Morris, 521).

v. 28-29 **snatch** To forcibly carry away, steal or take with force. Used of wolves in 10:12. "Jesus had promised this security in Galilee (6:37, 39). No wolf, no thief, no bandit, no hireling, not demon, not even the devil can pluck the sheep out of my hand. Cf. Col. 3:3 (Your life is hid together with Christ in God)" (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 168).

v. 30 **one** "I and the Father' preserves the separate individuality of the two Persons in the godhead; the neuter pronoun 'one' asserts unity of nature or equality (cf. 1 Cor. 3:8). The Jews were quick to apprehend this statement and reacted by preparing to stone Jesus for blasphemy because he, a man, had asserted that he was one with God. For them Jesus' language did not mean simply agreement of thought or purpose but carried a metaphysical implication of deity. The Father and the Son functioned as one" (Merrill C. Tenney, *Expositors Bible Commentary*, Vol 9, 112).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Sometime before their first birthday dolphins develop a distinct "whistle". Each dolphin has a unique sound which functions as its signature. Dolphins can identify each other by these high-pitched sounds. Just like we recognize the voice of someone we know in a crowd, dolphins will remember other dolphins by this sound. Research was done on Allie and Bailey, two dolphins that had been together at a facility when they were young. Twenty years later, the sound of Allie's whistle was recorded and played back to Bailey. Though separated for many years, Bailey recognized and responded to the sound of Allie's whistle. As I was reading this article I was reminded of our Savior's voice. Those of us who belong to Him know His voice. We recognize it. He is our Good Shepherd and we are His sheep. What a comfort it is to know that once we belong to Him nothing can snatch us out of his hand. Play this fun game to illustrate this principle to your children. Take turns blindfolding them and have them cross a room or the front yard by listening to your voice. Instruct them to listen carefully and follow your instructions. Reward them when they successfully make it to the finish. Remind them that when we listen to Jesus voice He will always lead us in the way we should go.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Ge 12:1-10

1. Why did Jesus say the Jews did not believe?
2. What did Jesus call those who follow Him?
3. What can snatch you from the Father's hand?

What Do You Think

1. What are some ways we can hear Jesus speaking to us?
2. How does it feel to know that nothing can separate you from God once you belong to Him?

What R U Going To Do

Just like Jesus' voice brings joy to us, our voices can bring joy to loved ones who are far away. Make a phone call this week to someone who lives in another city. They will be so happy to hear from you! Tell them what you are learning this week about listening to Jesus.

MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Salvation by Grace - I believe that I become a child of God through faith in Jesus, not because of anything I do.

Memory Verse

Hebrews 1:1 - *In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways...*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC ____ and Verse _____. Family completed **Say** _____ **Think** _____ **Do** _____

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians*

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.