

“Hear Them”
Shepherding Series 2/8
July 7, 2013

John 10:22-39

22 At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. 24 So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; 26 but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. 27 My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. 30 The Father and I are one." 31 The Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus replied, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?" 33 The Jews answered, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God." 34 Jesus answered, "Is it not written in your law, "I said, you are gods'? 35 If those to whom the word of God came were called "gods"—and the scripture cannot be annulled— 36 can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, "I am God's Son'? 37 If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. 38 But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." 39 Then they tried to arrest him again, but he escaped from their hands.

Hear them, is the second attribute of a Shepherd in our Shepherding series. Last week as you might remember we discussed Showing Up and this week we are discussing Hearing. Take note of our theme because even though I am giving this series to really emphasize the renewed Shepherding Ministry at HMCC each of these attributes and understandings can be important in our own walks with Jesus Christ. Remember we are all Shepherds, Sheep, and Shepherding at various points in our faith journeys.

I ask that we take a moment to watch this video. Called “It is not about the Nail”. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4EDhdAHRog>

Just listen, it is a difficult, hard, concept especially when the answer is so obvious as in the case of this video. I mean we all know if she just took the nail out all her complaints would be solved. But as the video expresses her complaints were the surface level issue, her deeper need was to be heard by her friend.

To truly hear a person, listen to what they are saying, and actually respond to them for what they are saying is not a normal human reaction. It takes conscious effort to listen. I mean there are reasons we have listening workshops through our jobs and trainings. Instead of truly hearing a person we are much more inclined to give advice, or solve the other persons issues as we see them. We sometimes do not even really hear what is being said because we are so busy reacting to the beginning, or the last phrase so we can appropriately respond. I know I catch myself doing this a lot, especially in an argument or ‘fun’ discussion and debate.

Even in our scripture today we see how Jesus is saying things that make sense to us readers and acknowledged outsiders but the leaders are not truly listening to what they are hearing. I mean in this instance the Jews were prepared to take up stones to stone Jesus for his apparently blasphemous, at least to their ears words. To the Jews all they heard was Jesus saying “The Father and I are one.”

We can almost sympathize with the Jews because we know. We know how it is, it goes in one ear out the other we think we are hearing one thing and yet that is not what is being said at all. So what do we miss when we do not honestly listen, what assumptions do we make, what harm can we cause to others by not genuinely hearing them. How much do we miss by not listening to another?

I know societally we have almost lost this ability to hear people. Instead of a phone call we send off an email or a text. We prefer an image or reading out directions over someone explaining. Listening in general is being lost as a method of communication. And yet we still beg for people to hear us, to listen, to comprehend the said and the unsaid of what is coming out of our mouths.

The said and the unsaid, the verbal and non-verbal words. A little bit of a crazy concept because in reality we are saying a lot whether something is coming out of our mouths or whether we are silent we are still saying something. I know it is not something we think about but verbal and non-verbals tell us a lot about a person. Sometimes that moment of silence and the expression on a persons face is all that is needed to convey meaning. This is another difficult reality of truly hearing a person.

It is also another difficult reality to recognize that sometimes we offer advice, and make assumptions about what another is saying because we are trying to hear our own voice. The Jews in our scripture had an agenda already and knew of Jesus' reputation so they heard what they wanted to hear.

So what can we learn from this scripture and this video. To hear a person we must truly listen, we need to set aside our own assumptions, our own ideas, we have to throw out our judgments, our thoughts, we need to open our minds, open our hearts and hear them as God hears us, with no condemnation, with nothing but love. Amen.