

Easter 4, 2010
Good Hope Lutheran Church
John 10: 22 – 25

We are today in the Gospel of John, chapter 10, a story which takes place by the way, just a couple of months *before* Palm Sunday and Easter, if that helps at all with your Bible time line. And we are looking in particular at verse 24, where the people say to Jesus, If you are the One. If you are the Messiah, the Savior, the Son of God. Tell us plainly!

The Word of God. And we pray:
Father in heaven you sent your Son Jesus, who in words and deeds proclaimed your Kingdom, and made known your saving love. Open our eyes to see, open our hearts to believe. Let the risen Lord Jesus come and dwell within us. Make us your servants now, and fit us at last for a place in heaven; in the name of Jesus we pray, AMEN.

It was the Festival of the Dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Otherwise known as, Hanukkah? Yeah? Jesus was in town that day, He was strolling through the Temple precinct with all the other pilgrims and tourists. Now Jesus had by this point in His life already caused quite a stir, He'd developed a reputation as a teacher and preacher and worker of miracles. He was someone the crowds had started whispering about, there was a certain buzz about Him. So it happened that long ago winter afternoon in Jerusalem, that Jesus got spotted by the paparazzi. The Live at Five Action News team closed in for an interview, Tell us Jesus, they said. Are you The One? Are you the Messiah, the Savior, the one sent to us by God, is it you? Inquiring minds want to know, the public has a right to hear, tell us Jesus and tell us

plainly—are you The One? Are you the Savior.

Now on the surface anyway, the questions being thrown at Jesus were entirely reasonable. I mean after all, this is a very important subject here, this is literally a matter of life and death— more than that even, it's a matter of our eternal salvation! If Jesus is The One. We better follow Him. If Jesus is The One, the Son of God sent to forgive us and lead us and rescue us from sin and death, well we need to know that, we need to respond somehow, our very souls depend on it! On the other hand. If Jesus is just another fad preacher with a little cult following, well we need to know that too. We need to forget about Him and just, move on. So on the surface, this is not an unreasonable set of questions. Jesus, are you The One? Yes or no, please, make it plain.

Trouble is, that beneath this “reasonable” surface, what we have here in the Gospel lesson is a case of people maybe not paying a whole lot of attention? Or, people paying attention, maybe, but just being unwilling and unable to follow through, being unwilling unable to commit. “Give us a sign Jesus,” they said. “Tell us about yourself,” they said. Well this is what, chapter 10 in the Gospel? What do you suppose Jesus has been doing for the last 9 chapters, huh? Read the book sometime—by this point in the story Jesus has changed water into wine. He's fed the 5000 with a single sack

lunch, He's walked on water, He's healed the sick and just a short time earlier right there in Jerusalem, He'd given sight to a blind man. There were witnesses to that one, by the way, the Pharisees had investigated it, it was front page news for a week, "Jesus of Nazareth gives sight to man born blind!" What, had the paparazzi missed it? Had this curious crowd in chapter 10, already forgotten about what happened in chapter 9?

"*Tell* us Jesus," the crowds demanded. "Use words, make it plain who you are." Again, take a look in the book, what had Jesus said about Himself to this point? Hadn't He in fact made it *very* plain? Chapter 6, I am the Bread of Life. Chapter 8, I am the Light of the world. Earlier in chapter 10, I am the Good Shepherd of the sheep. And so on, in short, I am The One, sent by God, I am The One— could He make it any plainer? Yet they did not hear. They did not see. They didn't believe, they didn't trust, they didn't yield to Him. And they didn't follow.

What's it going to take for these people, in John chapter 10, what would be enough, huh? More to the point, what's it going to take for you? What do you need to see in your life, what do you need to hear—what would it take to get *you* to trust Jesus, and follow Jesus, and yield total control of your life to Jesus, what would it take? Do you need to see more of what life looks like when *you* try to be on control? Do you need to mess up with your family

again, do you need to cave in to the same old temptations and deal with the same old consequences? Do you need to spend another sleepless night worrying about fixing the future, or repairing the past, or doing something else that's totally beyond your control, do you need to see what that kind of stress does to you again? Or are you ready to just give it all to Jesus, and trust Him with it.

And what do you need to see *from* Jesus? What does He need to do to win your faith and earn your affection? Is the cross and empty tomb enough for you, or do you need a 10% per annum return on your IRA before you'll believe. Is the cross and empty tomb enough, or does life have to work out just exactly so for yourself and your children before you're convinced. What are you looking for from God anyway, and is it possible—it's right there in front of you, right now? What the crowds were looking for in John 10—He was right there in front of them! Could it be, on this day, it's that obvious for you too?

Here's the thing. We hear the Gospel story, we look into the Jesus thing, we think maybe tomorrow. Maybe next week. Some other time. But the Good News is, Jesus took one look at you, and He knew right away. One look at you, He was convinced, He was sure, you are a person He would die to save. You are a person He would carry a cross for—and He did!—no

hesitation, no holding back, no regrets. The Lord Jesus has seen your deeds and heard your words and is a witness to your futility, and without hesitating He decided—you are one He intends to save. His love was strong enough to overcome death and the grave for you. May this be the day His love is also strong enough to overcome—whatever it is, that's holding you back.

And it is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray, AMEN.