

050822 "My sheep listen to my voice" John 10:22-30

Happy Mother's Day! Mother's Day is the day to thank your mother, whether she is alive or passed away, we celebrate and are thankful of their love. Also, I sincerely congratulate and bless the members of our church who are mothers! Our lives are still limited in different ways due to the coronavirus, and life is tough, I hope our hearts can be relaxed and warm through the love of our mothers, especially on Mother's Day. In addition, I sincerely pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that we will be able to count the love of our God through the love of our mother, and that we can count not only the love we received, but also the love we will share with others.

There was a man who grew beautiful roses in a greenhouse. He had one unique habit – he would be whistling all day while working. When a neighbor asked him why he whistles all the time, he took the neighbor into his house where his wife was staying. His wife was blind. The man explained that he whistles so that his wife knows and feels relieved that he is close. The sound of his whistles was a sign to her that they were together.

Is there such a sign between us and Jesus that reminds us that we are together? Of course! The Lord sends a sign to us continuously. In our relationships, in our quiet prayer and reflections, the Lord sends various signals to communicate His presence. When we hear them, when we see them, we feel relief and peace, knowing that He is with us. "My sheep listen

to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”

John 10 records Jesus’ last sermon to the public. Jesus compared himself to the Gate for Sheep and the Good Shepherd. We saw last week that Jesus asked Peter three times, “Do you love me?” and told him to “feed my lambs and tend my sheep and follow me.” When Jesus was on the earth, He lived his life as a good shepherd; after resurrection, the command He gave to His disciples was to feed and care for the Lord's sheep.

In today’s passage, it is written that it was the Festival of Dedication. Also known as the Feast of Light, the Feast celebrates the day when the Jews restored the Second Temple of Jerusalem that was polluted by idol-worship, and re-dedicated it to God. During this time, Jews were not expected to go to the Temple of Jerusalem; they would stay at home for eight days by the lighting candles on each day of the festival. We also know this holiday as Hanukkah.

For the Jews, the Festival of Dedication was a celebration of their most recent memory of salvation. For the 400 years of silence between the prophet Malachi to John the Baptist, there was no prophet. John the Apostle testified that the spiritual meaning of the Festival of Dedication was fulfilled in Jesus. Today we sang “Sanctuary”: Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true. With thanksgiving, I'll be a living Sanctuary for You. True dedication means that we become worshipers who worship God

rightly. It is important that the temple be clean on the outside, but it is more important that we love God purely on the inside. In 1 Corinthians 3:16 the apostle Paul said, "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?"

"My sheep listen to my voice..." Are we listening to the voice of the Lord? Or are we more attentive to the voice of the world and to your own desires? What does it mean to listen to God's voice? I have something to tell you. I heard the voice of God when I met the Lord personally in the first year of high school and was called as pastor: "Why don't you go to seminary?"

Until that point, I'd thought that I was a very special person. I'd had many accomplishments in my studies, fine arts, music, science... so I was misled to believe that I was better, more special than other people. I attended church solely because my parents were in ministry. I remember contemplating how I could run away without staying through the afternoon youth activities at church. I read the Bible when I was forced to at church, or to receive some money from my parents. Vaguely, I thought God was in the Bible. When my father would ask me, 'Do you want to be a pastor?' I would answer back "I would be anything but!"

However, after I met Jesus personally, everything changed. I realized for the first time that the God of Genesis, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, was a living God and was also the God of Young Choi. I

believed that Jesus died on the cross not only for the people who were standing around Him, but also for me. At that point, it felt like He loved me and only me in this world; So, I did not pay attention to anyone else. In my ignorance, I often judged and condemned people while appearing holy on the outside. After some while, God finally opened my eyes and let me realize that God loves the people around me as much as God loves me, and that it is God's will for me to love others. Then I repented my arrogance.

I thought that God will keep speaking to me in a physical and tangible way. I was blessed with several such moments, but that was certainly not the case all the time. Instead, I struggled with other voices in my heart. There were times when I was confused, conflicted, and challenged. Once I thought I heard a voice of God to suddenly kneel down when I was brushing my teeth. I ate a fallen leaf on the ground while walking on the streets, thinking that I heard a commanding voice of God. That's crazy, right? All of this happened when I was in high school.

But I began to discern the many voices (of my own desires, of the devil, of myself) as I began to read the Bible diligently. Experiences are very important in our lives, but experiences sometimes deceive us. But our continuous exposure to the Word of God shines the path ahead of us.

We wish that our lives will be happily ever after once we have received Jesus as our Lord and Savior. We long to never thirst again like the Samaritan woman at the well. But that's not our reality. The Word of God is the river of

the living water, and God wants us to enjoy the life that flows from the Word every day. The Lord still knocks on the door of your heart. This is grace! Let us not turn our Lord away and make him wait outside the door for a long time. Revelations 3:20 "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."

Humility in the Bible means acknowledging God, and putting God where God belongs – in the driver's seat. As Proverbs 3:6 says, being humble means admitting God's almighty and thorough control and power. "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." In other words, it is a life that acknowledges the absoluteness of God. "The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps."

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." I pray that you hear the voice of the living God in your daily life through the Bible. We want to discern the voice of the Lord in the midst of a busy world, among the many noises of the world, to follow Jesus. I pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that we will listen to, read, and reflect on the word of God until the day of His coming. Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you and your family, and your business, and your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.