

John 10:22-42

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[0 : 0 0] reading this morning is from John chapter 10 verses 22 to 42 and that's on page 1077 in the Bibles in the pews. So John 10 22 to 42.

Then came the festival of dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered round him saying, how long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.

Jesus answered, I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice.

I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. My father who has given them to me is greater than all.

No one can snatch them out of my father's hand. I and the father are one. Again, his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, I have shown you many good works from the father. For which of these do you stone me?

[1 : 2 4] We are not stoning you for any good work, they replied, but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God. Jesus answered them, is it not written in your law, I have said you are gods?

If he called them gods to whom the word of God came and scripture cannot be set aside, what about the one whom the father set apart as his very own and sent into the world?

Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said I am God's son? Do not believe me unless I do the works of my father. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the father is in me and I in the father.

Again, they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp. Then Jesus went back across Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing in the early days.

There he stayed and many people came to him. They said, though John never performed a sign, all that John said about this man was true. And in that place, many people believed in Jesus.

[2 : 3 8] This is the word of the Lord. Right, well, good morning. Thanks for having me. You didn't have much choice, but thanks for having me anyway. And yeah, I look forward to chatting with some of you after the service and maybe over lunch as well. Let's pray, shall we, as we come to look at these verses.

Our father, we want to thank you that you are a God who speaks. You're not a God who made things and then walked away, but you're a God who speaks and is involved. And so we ask, as we look at your word, that you would speak to us by your spirit, through your word. Encourage us, challenge us, do your work in our hearts this morning, we pray. Amen.

So I've got a question for you to quickly discuss with a neighbor, someone near you, and it's this. Who was King Arthur?

All right. Who was King Arthur? 20 seconds. Just chat to your neighbor. Go. All right.

You can bring your discussions to a close. So who was King Arthur? I'm not going to ask you. Don't worry. Your conversations are private.

[4 : 33] Here's a short answer, isn't it? We don't really know. And so the Welsh, my mom's Welsh, the Welsh claim him as Welsh, apparently. The Cornish, my grandfather was Cornish, claim him as Cornish. Some say he was the first king, uniting king of England. He had the Knights of the Round Table, right? Some say that he didn't even exist at all, right? It's just a fantasy. And probably somewhere on the internet, you'll find someone who said he was an alien who taught people how to build pyramids. There are lots of ideas about who King Arthur was. What about Jesus?

Who's Jesus? Who's Jesus? Lots of people have lots to say about Jesus, don't they? He's claimed by different groups for different things as a different person. But who is Jesus? Who does he prove himself to be? And how should we respond to him? Our passage this morning deals with the answers to those questions. There are two things we're going to look at this morning from this passage. And the first is who Jesus proves himself to be. Who Jesus proves himself to be. And the second is how people respond to who Jesus proves himself to be, all right? So two things we're going to look at. So let's get into our passage. I hope you've got it open on the phone or in the old-fashioned physical way with a book.

Let's start by just getting into the world of the passage. You'll see from the first verse there, verse 22, that there's a festival happening, isn't there? Something's going on around Jesus having a conversation. And it says it's the festival of dedication. And the sharp eye will have seen there's another name for that festival. It's Hanukkah. Now, this isn't an Old Testament festival like Passover that the Bible says, the Old Testament says, keep this festival. It's a newcomer on the scene, actually. It's probably about 150 years before Jesus was born. This Hanukkah, this festival of dedication, was started. And it celebrates an event where the temple was rededicated for worship after some baddies had trashed it, desecrated it. And then they were defeated.

And the temple was rededicated for worship. And so that's the setting. And John doesn't just tell us that because he wants to. He tells us for a reason. That's the setting that a conversation is happening in, where people are thinking about worshiping God, and people are thinking about power being beaten, being being got rid of, so they can be free. That's important, and we'll come back to it.

But that's the setting then. Look at verse 24, that some Jewish people come to Jesus and ask, how long, can you see it? How long will you keep us in suspense? Like, how long will you annoy us for?

[8 : 08] If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly. How does Jesus respond to the question? That frames what's coming.

He basically says, and we'll see it, if your eyes were open, it would be really obvious who I am. So let's look at the first thing then in our passage.

And it's this, it's what Jesus says, and what Jesus does, testify that he is Messiah, Son of God. So have a look at verse 25.

Jesus says, I've already told you. I have told you. Now, if you scan back through John's gospel, he doesn't mean that he has said, hi guys, I'm Jesus. By the way, FYI, I'm the Messiah.

Messiah, he means that the things he has said about himself, they lead to one conclusion, that he's Messiah. So think about, think about what you heard last week, if you were here, or what we heard first thing this morning. Jesus said, imagine these in someone else's lips.

[9 : 29] I am the good shepherd. I lay down my life for my sheep. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. Before Abraham was, I am. I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. And then Peter says of him, you have the words of eternal life. And Jesus has said more things, and he'll say even more. There's one conclusion to this.

He's Messiah. He's this anointed king that they're waiting for. A quick test. You meet someone, I don't know, in church, at a party. You meet someone, and they talk to you. They trap you in a corner.

And they talk to you. And they talk in great detail about maggots, and worms, and hooks, and line, and floats, and weights, and reels, and rods, and nets. What is the only logical conclusion about this person? They are a, fill in the blank with your neighbor? They are a, a really cool person. They are a fisherman, or fisherwoman, right? From what they've said, it's really obvious.

From what Jesus has said, it's really clear who he is. He's Messiah. But he doesn't just stop there. He majors on something else, actually. It's not just what he says, but it's what he does.

It's what he does. It's his works. In fact, more so his works. So look at the second part of 20, verse 25. He says, the works I do in my Father's name testify about me. Scan down to verse 37 and 38.

[11 : 41] He says, do not believe me unless I do the works of my Father. But if I do them, the works of my Father, even though you do not believe me, believe the works. Jesus is making a really big point here.

He says that his works prove who he is. They testify. They're bearing witness about who he is.

What does he mean by works? His Father's works. He means everything that he does. Not just the miracles, but the miracles, the seven signs, miraculous signs that you have in John's gospel.

But it's more. It's who he spent time with. What he's done with those people. How he's dealt with the people he's been with. Where he's been. Calling people to himself. And so on. But he wants to make clear that what he does, these works he does, are his Father's works. They're his Father's works.

So he's saying, he doesn't just do what he feels like. You know, I'm a free man. I get up and I do what I want. He's saying, what I do is what the Father wants me to do. I do his works.

[13 : 14] And why does he do his Father's works? It's because of who he is. And this is the point Jesus is making.

It's all about his identity. This is who he is. And who is he? Look at verse 30 with me. I and the Father are one. Look at verse 38.

The Father is in me and I in the Father. So the reason that Jesus does the Father's works is because Jesus maps perfectly onto the Father.

Jesus maps perfectly onto the Father. They're of one mind. They're of one mission. It comes out even in the verses where he says about what he does.

Look at verse 28. Jesus says, no one can snatch my sheep out of my hand. And then he says in the next breath, no one can snatch my people out of the Father's hand.

[14 : 32] They are of one action together. One mission. And of course John has told us right at the start of the gospel, of his gospel, why that's the case.

The word was God. Jesus is divine. So Jesus says, he maps perfectly onto the Father.

And so everything Jesus does reveals the Father to us. His works are the Father's works. And that means his works testify.

He is Messiah. He is Son of God. He is from God. He is the chosen and anointed one. He is the one to do God's restoring work.

He is one with the Father. Father. I want you to imagine a family woodworking company.

[15 : 40] McLeod and Sons, cabinet makers. Something like that, right? Imagine that. And John McLeod is the father.

And from his youth, he has trained as an expert cabinet maker. An expert with wood doing fine bespoke work.

He's now in his 60s. He's really well known across Glasgow, let's say. He's respected as a cabinet maker. He's got a thriving business.

And he's got two sons. And the sons have gone into the family business. And so they've been trained by their dad.

Over many years, they've sat with their dad. They've been taught by their dad about how to do this fine woodwork. This fine cabinet making work.

[16 : 41] And now imagine the sons. There's two sons. They're making a chest of drawers. Or they're making a kitchen. Or they're making or restoring some chairs or something like that.

Imagine you could watch them. You know the father. And you're watching the sons. Who will they look like? I'm doing this.

Who will they look like as they perform their work? What mannerisms will their work remind you of? And when you see the finished work, whose work is it going to look like?

It's their father's, right? The way they do things is like their dad. The finished work they do is like their dad's. In a similar way, but far greater way, Jesus maps perfectly onto the father with what he does.

Now, the people listening, they get it. Right? They get it. They understand how close a link Jesus is making between God and himself.

[18 : 02] And so, they do what they did in chapter 8, right? They try and kill him. They try and kill him. And as Jesus has a chance to say, you know, what are you doing?

Which good work are you trying to kill me for? He doesn't say, whoa, whoa, guys. You have totally misunderstood what I was saying. He doesn't do that, does he?

He doubles down on what he's just said, saying that it is totally appropriate, actually, that he be called son of the most high, son of God.

This is a totally appropriate title and understanding of who he is. And he does it by quoting to them a bit from Psalm 82. And in that psalm, God calls the Israelites, who've received the law at Sinai, those to whom the word of God came, gods, sons of the most high.

But they failed as sons to follow God, right? They did not map onto God in perfect obedience in living out the law. And so Jesus says, look, if God called these Israelites, gods, sons of the most high, and yet they failed.

[19 : 25] They did not map onto him. It's totally appropriate, actually, for me to be called the son of God. To be called one with God as the one who does exactly what the father does.

So as we hit our second thing that comes out of the passage, let's see where this conversation goes. So again, picture the situation Jesus is in.

It's winter. It feels very much like in here. It's cold. Now, to these Jews who know their Old Testament, right?

It should be really obvious, as they've watched Jesus, it should be really obvious that he is Messiah. Just watching what he does.

Everything Jesus does mirrors the God who has revealed himself in their past. It was written about in their scriptures. So how are they going to react?

[20 : 37] Let's look at that second now. What comes out of the passage is how people react to who Jesus proves himself to be. And there are two responses in the passage.

And the first one, which comes out very clearly, is a rejection of Jesus. A rejection of him as Messiah, son of God. It comes out with what Jesus says.

He says, I did tell you, but you did not believe. You've seen my works, but you do not believe. And then it comes out in them wanting to kill him.

Always a sign that people don't like you, right? When they try and kill you. Why? Why? Why won't they see? Why do they reject Jesus as God's king?

We're told in verse 26 something important. He says, but you do not believe these works. You don't believe me because of my works.

[21 : 39] Because you are not my sheep. Now that's a theme that's been in the whole of John's gospel. It keeps coming up.

And it's the reality that in their unbelief, there is the hand of God. But also, very clear, is their responsibility for their unbelief.

It's a tension that runs throughout John's gospel and actually the whole Bible. But their responsibility comes out clearly in the passage. Why do these people who say they know God, right?

They're going to stone him for blasphemy. They're like the gatekeepers of who God is. Why when one comes who looks exactly like the God they're trying to defend, why do they reject him?

It's because he's not the Messiah they want. He's not the Messiah they want. Jesus is not the one they're looking for.

[22 : 45] The setting for the conversation is showing us something here. Remember the setting? This festival which is political as well as spiritual.

A festival remembering, getting rid of these other powers to restore people to God. And people are thinking, that's what Messiah will do.

That's what the Messiah will do. And that mindset has come out already in John's gospel. John chapter 6. I don't know if you've come that far or whether you did that.

But John 6. You remember, they realize he's the prophet. And Jesus, what does he do? He goes away from them to a mountain.

Why? Because he knows they will try and make him king by force. He's going to kick off a fight. Many Jews at the time want a Messiah.

[23 : 47] A king who maps on to the profile of revolutionary political leader. But the works of Jesus, as you read through John's gospel, have not been the works of a political revolutionary.

They've been of another type of king. Of another type of kingdom. Which is entered in a different way. And so as they see this Jesus, they reject him.

He's not the Messiah we want. And as they do that, they miss out on all those things that Jesus mentions there. They don't hear his voice.

They miss out on following him. They miss out on eternal life. They miss out on this complete security of knowing God. That's the first reaction.

And then the passage finishes with another reaction. Verse 40 to 41. People believe in Jesus. They believe he is Messiah.

[24 : 59] And as we think of those different reactions, this is where the passage comes to us. Here are three ways that God is speaking to us here this morning.

The first is this. It's that there'll be some people here this morning who are interested in Jesus. But who are looking for a certain sort of Jesus.

Maybe this is you. You want a Jesus who fits how you view life. A Jesus who will affirm your goals and your vision for life.

And what you do. And how you think. A Jesus who maps nicely onto your life. As a nice extra.

But actually. What the Jesus of the Bible calls us to do is not remake him in our image. So that he fits us.

[26 : 08] But to take him as he is. Take him as he is. And be remade to be more like him. The joy of following Jesus with a completely new purpose and life.

The gift of eternal abundant life that begins now. This total certainty in a world which is very uncertain. Those things come only to people who take Jesus as he is.

So I wonder if that's a word for you today. I don't know you. You barely know me. But I wonder if that's something that God is challenging you with.

That you need to do something about that. To come to see Jesus as he is. How could you respond? Find someone you know. Who knows and loves and trusts the Lord Jesus.

And is being made slowly more and more like him. Find them. Talk to them. Ask them. Please read the Bible with me. Help me to see this Jesus. And then do what he says.

[27 : 26] Believe in him. Deny yourself. Take up your cross. And follow him. That's the first thing. That this passage speaks to us.

The second. Is for others here. Who know. Yeah. No I'm trusting the Jesus of the Bible. I see him. And I'm following him.

But. This is a lot of us. We face the temptation. To change Jesus. The Jesus who is there. To be.

A bit more palatable. For the moment in history that we live. In the place in history. That we find ourselves. So that our lives are a little bit easier.

So that our neighbors won't hate us. So that our work colleagues. A bit kinder to us. So that the friends at school. Are a bit nicer to us.

[28 : 24] The challenge of the passage is that. Jesus is who he is. He's the Jesus that maps perfectly.

Onto the father. To alter Jesus. To just sound a bit nicer. And fit where we are. In our particular time. Is to try and change God.

Isn't it? And he is who he is. Unchanging. How can we be helped when we face that temptation?

Keep coming humbly to scripture. Keep coming humbly. Every day. To read. About the Jesus who is there. Keep humbly seeing him as he is.

And taking him as he is. And asking for God's help to do that. God you know my heart. You know I'm prone to want to change things. Help me.

[29 : 21] To take Jesus as he is. And to love that Jesus. To hold firmly to him. Because he's life.

Maybe that's you today. And you need to be praying that prayer for yourself. And acting on that. Third way this passage comes to us.

Is an encouragement. I like various sports. If you've ever listened to a successful sports person. There's something I've noticed that keeps coming out.

Yeah they've got talent. And all of that. But. But. What they're very good at. Is. Is they do the ordinary stuff.

Over. And over. And over. Every day. The very ordinary things. It's not glamorous. And the noisy stuff. It's just the ordinary.

[30 : 25] Being done. And that's what. Grounds them. As amazing sports people. The Christian life can be a bit like that.

Sitting and reading our Bibles. Does not seem spectacular. Does it? Sitting on the sofa. Sitting on your bed. Sitting at the table. Sitting in the break room.

Or whatever. It can seem a very ordinary. And unspectacular thing. But in the scriptures. We encounter. God.

We encounter the God of the universe. We encounter the risen Lord Jesus. We meet Christ. As we do that.

Then our hearts. And our thinking. Our understanding. Of the world. Our hopes for the future. All of these things are changed. Slowly.

[31 : 20] Slowly. As we encounter the Jesus of the scriptures. Applying to our everyday life. And so there's a great encouragement. Maybe. I don't know.

You just find it really sort of dull. And unspectacular. Reading your Bible. It's not. It's wonderful. It's great. Keep doing it.

Keep up that wonderful discipline. Of meeting Christ in the scriptures. Be encouraged. Your ordinary 5, 10, 15 minutes are wonderful. Keep going in them.

Let's finish. Who is Jesus proving himself to be? Messiah. Son of God. One with the Father.

How should we respond? Take him as he is. Take him humbly as he is. I'm going to leave a moment quiet for you to talk to God about whatever it is that he's been doing in your heart.

[32 : 25] And then I'll pray after that little bit of silence. When we're Euchards. All let's do it. Let's do it. Let me listen. Hello.

Hello. Thank you.

Our Father, we thank you for the Lord Jesus. We thank you for his wonderful work on the cross.

We thank you that he reveals you. We thank you that in him is life and hope and joy. And so we ask that you would help us, that we might keep taking him as he is.

That you might help us where we struggle. You might encourage us to keep doing the ordinary. For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.