

John 10: 27-30

At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem.

**It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple,
in the portico of Solomon.**

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.

Jesus answered, “I have told you, and you do not believe.

The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me;

but you do not believe,

because you do not belong to my sheep.

Jesus said:

“My sheep hear my voice.

I know them, and they follow me.

I give them eternal life,

and they will never perish.

No one will snatch them out of my hand.

What my Father has given me is greater than all else,

and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand.

The Father and I are one.”

Meditation

**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.**

He was in the beginning with God.

All things came into being through him,

and without him not one thing came into being.

Last year, Bill and I took the grandkids to Lincoln Park Zoo...
We saw pacing tigers and sleeping lions...
we saw swinging monkeys and flamingos sleeping on one leg
we saw hefty, powerful rhinoceros and wiry, lanky hyenas....

Then God said...

“Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed,
and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.’
And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation:
plants yielding seed of every kind,
and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it.

Last spring at the Zoo we saw
purple Sicilia, and yellow daffodils,
and trees just waking up after a long winter’s nap...
we ate fresh oranges and drank cool water...

And Jesus said: “My sheep hear my voice.
I know them, and they follow me.

At the zoo...
there were children giggling,
zebras bellowing, birds chirping and tigers roaring...

Do you remember yesterday?
Can remember what you heard?
Can you remember if you heard the song of the morning dove
or the voice of Jesus?
Could you tell the difference?

Can you remember if you saw a flower burst into bloom?
or birds doing somersaults in the blue sky or the face of God?
Could you tell the difference?

Can you remember if you felt the morning sunshine on your face?
the spring breeze gently ruffling your hair?
Could you smell the grass turning green?
Could you hear the whisper of the Holy One inviting to pay attention
and notice the presence of Grace flooding through your pores?

Who among us can deny what we experience
when we recognize the majesty, miracle and mystery of the natural world.

Who among us would *even want* to deny what we feel in our hearts,
in our bones and deep down in our souls when we awaken to
beauty of all that is: when we stand silenced by the presence of the Mysterious
grace and power that brought all life to be...
from the far flung galaxies of the cosmos....
to the sweet smile of any newborn babe....
human or otherwise....

In the beginning God spoke all of creation into being...
In the beginning and even at this very moment, right here and right now...
God continues to speak all of creation into life...

And Jesus said: "My sheep hear my voice.
I know them, and they follow me

For a couple of thousand years, now...
we Christians have associated the voice of the God

**with the voice of Jesus of Nazareth...and that is well and good...
for this is what makes us Christian...**

**Unfortunately though, and to the detriment of much of creation....
for a couple of thousand of years...
we Christians have narrowed, limited ...restricted the voice of God
into only that one person: Jesus of Nazareth....**

**In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.
All things came into being through him,
and without him not one thing came into being.**

**Limiting the voice of God to the voice of Jesus alone,
has allowed some Christian people, some Christian nations
to wreak all sorts of havoc and destruction upon
all of God's creation in the very name of God.**

**We have used the word of God to justify using
that which God took billions of years to create
to satiate our temporary yet unrelenting wants and desires....**

**In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth...
God looked at everything God had made, and found it very good. (Gen1:31a)**

**Now in this 21st century
we are beginning to understand the folly of it all...
we are beginning to awaken to all the many ways
we have heard the voice of our egos**

rather than the whisperings of the Divine...

This gross misunderstanding is no one person, no one nation's
or no one religion's fault..

All of us are evolving in our understanding of what it means to follow the voice of the
Master, to head the shepherd's call, to listen to the word of God
and so we are offered, right here, right now,
a chance to change our hearts and our lives.

A chance to open our eyes and our ears,
to see and hear the voice of the Holy One speaking through all
that the God has created...
speaking through bird song and lion roar,
greening trees and the laughter of the children of many hues....

Now is not the time for despair or blame...
that's just the ego speaking once again in its effort to remain center stage...
For as Joanna Macy has said:

“The most remarkable feature of this historical moment on Earth is not
that we are on the way to destroying the world —
we've actually been on the way for quite a while,”
“It is that we are beginning to wake up, as from a millennia-long sleep,
to a whole new relationship to our world, to ourselves and each other.”

Now is the time to wake up, to see, to listen...
to hear the voice of Jesus the Christ, the one who was with God, in God,
and was God in the beginning creating all that is and continues to do so
to this very day....

Now is the time to hear him who calls us to love not just those we are like,
but to love all that God has created: human and non human...

Because we will save only what we love....

This is our invitation, our purpose for this time in history...

**Today as we walk down from the chapel
let us do so slowly and in a mindful, present moment way...
let us use every one of our senses to hear, see, smell and
feel the voice of the God
speaking through all that He or She has created...**

And Jesus said: “My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.

**Let us follow God’s voice to the proverbial other side of the road..
let us commit to being the hands and feet and heart of God’s compassion in action...
in ways large or small:
Let us walk gently, drive graciously and
speak kindly to all who come your way...**

And Jesus said: “My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.

May it be so.... Amen.