

Easter 4C

Acts 20:17-35

Revelation 7:9-17

John 10:22-30

The sermon for Good Shepherd Sunday is from the Gospel of St John 10:22-30. The sermon is entitled, "Where does your faith rest?"

**Grace Mercy and Peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.**

If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.....

And thus Jesus said plainly at the end of our Gospel reading today, I and the Father are one.

There it was, as plain as day, The suspense was over as Jesus clearly and plainly revealed who He is as the Son of God, from His miraculous works that He had accomplished in His Father's Name, to His identity as one with the Father.... Therefore proclaiming that He indeed is the Word in the Flesh.... the Good Shepherd, the voice of faith, yet what was said plainly would be received with animosity as they desired to stone him, and this was no surprise for Jesus says to them, you do not believe because you are not part of my flock.

It was a matter of faith, or a lack thereof.....

If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.

It is quite simple isn't it?

Yes, the Word of God is profound, yet at the same time the Word is what it is, and in a very paradoxical way, it is quite simple. From the voice of the Shepherd to His sheep, it is the Word, the voice of the Shepherd.... for this is where our faith rests, upon His Word, for He is God.....it is as plain and simple as that.

Yet why is it so complicated?

Well, it began with the plain and simple words of our Lord, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die".

Simple Word, Simple Command, plain as day,

Yet we know what was to happen,

For the devil would tempt our first parents as if it was not plain at all, as if God was hiding something from them, for the devil would say, surely you will not die, you will be like God....

It was a matter of faith, where would their faith rest....upon the words of Satan, or upon the word of God?

Yes, we know how the story would unfold, the story the unveil the matters of the faith....for trusting to be your own god, what a faith for our first parents yet how awfully destructive this truly was....

And thus, as we know, due to original sin, sin and death would wrap its fangs around of all humanity, and thus we know very well the struggle, the spiritual battle in regards to where our faith rests....

You shall have no other gods our Lord says...

And this is Good, for what good do false gods bring...? And God tells us plainly how we ought to fear love and trust Him, yet the first commandment unveils these false gods in our lives....

For... false gods will only give false and fleeting things, yet because of sin, how alluring these false gods are.....how plain and obvious this is, yet in our sin, how we adhere to the voices of our idols, our false trusts, our own reason, our own strength, our pride, our greed, our lusts...as if these are the bedrocks of our faith.

Again, it is a matter of where your faith rests....

And thus Jesus says, I and the Father are one.....

This is where your faith rests, upon Him, upon His Identity, for there would outpour His Work for the sins of the World...

Yet the Jews remind us today what it means to lack faith, that no matter what the Lord had said, they were unable to hear him, what seemed simple, what seemed plain, without faith, it would not be heard....

Yes we may look at the Jews and shake our heads saying, How could they be so stiff-necked? How could they be so arrogant,

proud and full of themselves? How could they not listen and rest upon Christ and His Word to Christ?

Yet friends, we too must ask ourselves these very questions,

Even in regards to the Gospel,

The radical grace of God, that He came into the world to die for sinners, this is where our faith rests, yet in this simple and most gracious gift, there we find ourselves, negotiating with God, as if this is a 50/50 split in terms of assuring our salvation, it is quite the easy temptation, for when the Word says, Baptism saves you, indeed, the Lord delivers by His means, and in this gift of faith, you simply rest upon these words, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins, indeed at the Supper to which our Lord feeds you His body and blood, right here right now, according to His Word, forgiving you of all your sins, this is where your faith rests.

Yet again, how easy it is to trust in a transactional Gospel, or where the sacraments become, not what God does for us but rather what we do for Him, these are symptomatic of a deeper spiritual conflict where man desires by his own human reason and strength to play a part, to cooperate and graduate, to earn and merit their way to God, and soon this becomes their faith...to save themselves....

And all of us here, how much stock we put into ourselves, puffing out with pride, as if we have the ability to bring something to the table in regards to eternal life forgiveness and salvation....

And thus we repent.

The Law of God's Word unveils the humbling reality of our sin and no one here is immune, but thanks be to God, there is Christ who says,

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me".

Indeed, the Word, it is plain as day, Just as the Lord says, for the Word shows us our sin, but also, promises, if we confess our sins God is faithful and just and He will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

This is where your faith rests....in the Word, in the promise....

Yes, Jesus is the Christ and He is For You, this is the Word this the promise, yet the burden of our sins seem to have no end, and some of you may say, is it for me, it may be for everyone else, but Lord, my sin.....this for you Jesus is not for me....

And for others who are running rat race of doing good works in hopes of somehow assuring yourself of your place and status with God, again, this is not the way, for surely we are to do good works, this is the call in the Christian life, yet the Word does not say, do them and be saved, no.....

So take comfort....."My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand".

It is a matter of faith, and your faith is Christ.

Your faith is the Good Shepherd.

Your faith is the Word....

Your Faith is the Gospel.....

as our Lord the Good Shepherd, laid His life down for each and everyone of you, yes, He laid His life down on the Cross, where there He paid the ransom, the cost, the payment for the penalty of your sins, our Lord, His voice, shouting it is finished.....

My Sheep hear my voice....

That our Lord delivers what He promises,

For there our faith rests....

Upon His Sacrifice at the Cross,

Upon His body and blood shed for us

Upon His Crucifixion where there at Calvary's Cross He willingly died for your sins..

Upon His Resurrection where there... victory was accomplished for you....

Upon the Sacraments, for there our Lord by His Means of grace, delivers you the forgiveness of sins

And this is what you hear...this is where your faith rests.....

Not in me not in you.....but only...

In Christ...who vanquished sin and death and the power of the devil.

In Christ...who has redeemed you a lost and condemned person

In Christ...who brought you out of the domain of darkness into His marvelous light...the light of eternal life....

For the voice of the Good Shepherd say to His sheep,

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

No one, never, these are your words of assurance, this is where your faith is....that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the Living God who gives you eternal life, and you will never perish and No one, snatch you out of his hand....

So tell us plainly they asked, and the Lord has done so...and here rests your faith...

Go now redeemed

Go now in good cheer,

For your faith is Christ....for the forgiveness of your sins.

Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Amen.