

## MAKE IT PLAIN

(John 10:22-30)

- Intro: On the wall of my study.
- Hangs this wooden plaque.
    - #It came from a craft shop in Branson, Missouri.
  - It says:
    - #"IF YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT . . .
    - IT MAY BE GREAT SERMON MATERIAL"
  - We thought it was cute.
    - #So we bought it.
    - #But is it true?
      - \*"IF YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT . . .
      - IT MAY BE GREAT SERMON MATERIAL."
    - #What does this mean?
      - \*Sermons are by nature meant to lose and confuse people?
      - \*Sermons are supposed to take confusing topics?
      - +And make them plain.

An unnamed member of an unnamed congregation.

- Was asked how she liked her new pastor.
- She said:
  - #"Oh, I think he's just great."
  - #"Of course, I haven't understood most of what he's said."
  - #"But I think he's really nice."

Contrary to what you may sometimes think.

- Those of us who dare to stand up here and preach.
  - #Are trying to be more than nice.
  - #We are trying to be clear.
    - \*To make things plain.

- I. The Jewish Leaders In Our Gospel Lesson Asked Jesus To Make Things Plain.
  - A. Are You The Messiah?
    1. Are you the Christ?
      - a. Christos.
    2. "If you are, tell us plainly."
      - a. John 10:24.

3. "How long are you going to keep us in suspense?"
  - a. "How long are you going to take our life?"  
-Literally what the Greek says.
  - b. "How long are you going to annoy us?"
  - c. "How long are you going to beat around the bush?"
4. "Are you the Christ?"
  - a. "Yes or no."
  - b. "Tell the truth."
  - c. "Make it plain."

B. Jesus Detected Another Problem.

1. It wasn't that he hadn't been clear.
2. The problem was that the Jewish leaders didn't believe him.
  - a. For Jesus to answer their question with an unequivocal "yes."  
-Might have gotten him:  
#Lynched.  
#Crucified.  
\*Before his "hour" had come.  
+John 2:4.  
+John 7:30.  
+John 8:20.  
=John 12:23.  
=John 13:1.  
=John 17:1.
  - b. For Jesus to answer their question with an equally clear "no."  
-Would have been to deny his true identity.
3. Jesus said:
  - a. "I have told you, and you do not believe."  
-John 10:25.
  - b. "You do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep."  
-John 10:26.
  - c. "My sheep hear my voice."  
"I know them."  
"They follow me."  
-John 10:27.
  - d. "The problem isn't that I haven't been clear."
  - e. "The problem is that you don't believe what I tell you."  
-"You don't have ears to hear."  
-"You're not part of my flock."  
-"You don't believe."
  - f. "If you don't believe what I say."  
-"At least pay attention to what I do."  
-"The works I do in my Father's name testify to me."

4. Farmer.
  - a. Was asked by an enthusiastic young evangelist.
    - “Are you saved?”
    - “Have you accepted Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior?”
  - b. Replied:
    - “Why do you ask me those questions?”
    - “I could tell you anything.”
    - “Ask:
      - #“Clerk at the feed store.”
      - #“My grocer.”
      - #“My neighbors.”
      - #“My farm hands.”
    - “Ask them if I’ve been saved.”
5. Do you want to know plainly if Jesus is the Christ?
  - a. Then listen to what he says.
  - b. But more importantly, pay attention to what he does.
    - Loaves and fishes are multiplied.
    - Water is turned into wine.
    - Storms are stilled.
    - Lepers are cleansed.
    - Lame walk.
    - Dead are raised.
    - Sins are forgiven.
    - Jesus is resurrected from the grave.

## II. Do You Believe This?

### A. Are You Part Of The Flock?

1. Do you have ears to hear?
  - a. What Jesus says.
    - “I give you eternal life.”
    - “You will never perish.”
    - “No one will snatch you out of my hand.”
    - #John 10:28.
  - b. It takes ears of faith to hear what Jesus says.
2. Do you have eyes to see?
  - a. Eyes of faith.
  - b. Eyes to see the hand of God.
    - In the buds and blossoms of spring.
    - In a scab that heals.
    - In an ex-offender who becomes a productive member of society.
    - In a loved one who whispers:
      - #“I love you.”
      - #“I forgive you.”

3. I met a woman in the hospital one day.
    - a. She was scheduled for surgery the next morning.
      - #I don't remember any more what kind of surgery.
    - b. Doctor came into the room while I was there.
      - #Explained the procedure.
      - \*Risks.
      - \*Outcome that was hoped for.
      - #Got her to sign the "informed consent" form.
      - #Then he asked her:
        - \*"Are you afraid?"
    - c. She answered:
      - #"No, doctor, I'm not afraid."
      - #"Because I know you will be holding the instruments."
      - #"But God will be doing the operation."
  4. It takes eyes of faith to see the hand of God.
    - a. In a hospital operating room.
    - b. In the food we eat.
    - c. In the diapers we change.
    - d. In the empty tomb.
    - e. In the waters of Holy Baptism.
    - f. In the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper.
  5. We:
    - a. Hear.
      - With ears of faith.
    - b. See.
      - Eyes of faith.
    - c. Because we're part of the flock.
  6. We're part of the flock.
    - a. Not because of what we've done.
    - b. But because of what God has done for us in Jesus.
      - Who is the Christ.
      - Who is the Messiah.
- B. Is It Plain To See That We Are Part Of The Flock?
1. Actions really do speak more loudly than words.
    - a. Sometimes our actions speak so loudly.
    - b. People can't hear a word we're saying.
      - If our words and actions are not consistent.
  2. On our street in St. Louis.
    - a. Woman was walking in the street.
      - We had sidewalks.
      - #But she was walking in the street.
      - \*Pushing a baby carriage.
      - +There was a baby in the baby carriage.

- b. There was a toddler.
  - Who wanted to walk in the street beside her.
  - She gave the toddler a swat on his bottom.
    - #Told him to get back up on the sidewalk.
    - \*Because it wasn't safe for him to walk in the street.
- 3. Do our actions testify to what we believe?
  - a. Mohammed Ali.
    - Claimed to be the greatest.
    - But his words meant nothing.
      - #Until he backed up his words.
      - \*With what he did in the ring.
  - b. Call Committee.
    - Wanted to get to know me.
    - So they did a phone interview with me.
      - #But like the farmer.
      - \*I could tell you anything.
    - So they talked to my references.
      - #People who knew me.
    - Then they invited Pam and me to come for a weekend.
      - #Words.
      - #Actions.
        - \*Do they go together?
        - \*Do they testify to what we believe?
  - c. Chris Falkenstein.
    - Our congregation president.
    - Has put up some signs around the building.
      - #Maybe you've seen them.
      - #They say:
        - \*I WILL:
          - +Invite.
          - +Contribute.
          - +Volunteer.
    - Chris isn't asking us:
      - #To talk about these things.
      - #To encourage others to do these things.
    - He's challenging each one of us:
      - #To do these things.

- d. Nurse.
- Volunteered to go to Africa.
    - #To work in medical missions.
    - \*For a year.
  - There she worked in a hospital.
    - #For people with AIDS.
    - \*Bathing them.
    - \*Feeding them.
    - \*Emptying bedpans.
  - One day a wealthy American woman visited the hospital.
    - #She saw what the nurse was doing.
    - \*With these:
      - +Sick.
      - +Dying.
      - =Patients.
  - Visitor.
    - #Stuck up her nose.
    - #Said:
      - \*"I wouldn't do that for all the money in the world."
  - To which the nurse replied:
    - #"Neither would I."

Concl: Is it plain enough?

- Who Jesus is.
  - #By what he says.
  - #By what he does.
  - \*"I love you."
  - \*"I forgive you."
  - \*"I give you eternal life."
  - +John 10:28.

Is it plain enough?

- Who we are.
  - #By what we say.
  - #By what we do.
- People of God.
- Sheep who hear the shepherd's voice.

I think you can understand.