

Theme: THE MUTUAL TREATMENT OF JESUS AND THE HOSTILE JEWS

Introduction: John chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 tell us of the increasing ^{not} hostility of the Jews toward Jesus. It began at Jn. 5:16-18. They would accept Him, the true God. This hostility grew and grew. It was the final cause of His crucifixion. Read Mt. 26:63-66. When Jesus said He was true God they wanted to kill Him. See vs. 31 of our text.

I-THE HOSTILE TREATMENT OF THE JEWS TOWARD JESUS.

- A-They threatened Him physically. Jesus made Himself available to people by going to Solomon's Porch. For this place see also Acts 3:11; 5:12. It was a popular meeting place. The unbelieving Jews encircled Jesus. This indicates how they threatened Jesus.
- B-They lied to Him. They asked Him to speak plainly about His identity. He told them that He had already told them. See Jn. 5:14-47; 6:29,35,51-65; 7:37-39; 8:12-20,28,29,42,56-58;10:7-18. Though they knew the answers they acted as if Jesus' was unfair to them: "How long will you keep us in suspense?" They were acquainted with His works: healing the lame man (Jn. 5) and the blind man (Jn. 9). But they act as if nothing had happened.
- C-Their real problem was their unbelief. Faith links a sinner to God. Unbelief links a person with Satan. Paul says: "By grace you are saved through faith." Mk. says: "He that believeth not shall be damned." The Jews' refusal to believe closed their ears and their hearts so that they continued as children of Satan, Jn. 8:44. They were liars and murderers. See vs. 24 and 31. Sinners can be helped but unbelievers cannot be helped unless God is gracious to them.

II-THE LOVING TREATMENT OF JESUS TOWARD THE JEWS

- A-He tells them what their problem is. He tells them: "You do not believe because you do not belong to My sheep." Jesus tells people what their problem is because He loves them. He wants to save them although they hate Him. He is like a good physician who tells the patient what the cause of his illness is.
- B-With a very beautiful illustration Jesus tells them what it's like to belong to Jesus. Two months before, at the Feast of Dedication, Jesus had used the illustration of the sheepfold and the Good Shepherd. See Jn. 10:1-16. He is the door to the sheepfold, 10:7-10. He is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep, 10:11-18. These are such beautiful words. But some said: "He has a devil and is mad." But Jesus did not cease to love His enemies.
- C-Jesus tells His enemies about His intimate love for His sheep:
 - 1-His sheep hear Him and He knows them, vs. 27. "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it." Lk. 11:28. "Faith comes by hearing and hearing comes by the Word of God." Rom. 10:17. Sinners often came to Jesus to hear Him. This caused Jesus to know these hearers as His very own. Jesus knows His own very well. II Tim. 2:19
 - 2-The sheep follow Him and He gives them everlasting life. They follow Him to hear His Word, His forgiveness, His help. They follow Him because He is always promising them that they will live forever. As Peter said, Jesus has the Words of eternal life.
 - 3-The sheep will never perish. No one can take them out of the hand of Jesus and the Father. This is an absolute promise which Jesus makes. He says to the person who confesses his sin and listens to Jesus' promises: "You will never perish. No one can ever take you out of My hand, the Father's hand." The believer repeats the words of Rom. 8:38-39. Nothing will separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, the Lord.

Conclusion: The hostile unbelief of these Jews is a warning to us. The Words of Jesus about His sheep are a great comfort to us. "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life." Rev.2:10

1. Jn. 7:10-10:21 is a description of Jesus' visit to Jerusalem on the occasion of the Festival of Tabernacles, a required festival, in October, six months before His death. Jn. 10:22-39, at the Festival of Dedication, not a required festival, two months later, in December, Jesus battles with the Jews. There is a gap of two months between vs. 21 and 22. The Gospels are not total biographies of Jesus but they tell us enough for our salvation.
2. The Festival of Dedication, also called The Renewal or Festival of Light or Hanukkah was instituted by Judas Maccabaeus in 167 B.C. to commemorate the cleaning and rededication of the Temple after its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes. In our time it is still celebrated when Christians celebrate Christmas although there is no connection between the two.
3. Solomon's Porch, vs. 23, was a remnant of the old temple which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed in 588 B.C.
4. The hostile Jews encircled Jesus. They said: "Tell us plainly if You are the Christ." Sadly Jesus said: "I've told you but you don't believe. See Jn. 5:14-47; 6:29,35,51-65; 7:37-39; 8:12-20,28,29,42,56-58; 10:7-18. He had proved it by healing the lame man two years before (Jn. 5) and healing the man born blind two months before (Jn. 9). They heard it, they saw it, they had the evidence, but refused to believe it. Unbelief is never satisfied. Faith is always satisfied. Hostile unbelief is ever learning but never coming to the knowledge of the Truth. Unbelief is a deep mystery, a work of Satan.
5. In vs. 25 Jesus says: "The works which I do in My Father's name, these testify about Me." They tell the Truth about Jesus. "In the name of the Father" means that Jesus partakes of the very qualities of the Father. He is true God.
6. The hostile Jews did not want to learn. They were looking for a pretext to stone Jesus for speaking blasphemy. See vs. 33. Vss. 31-39 is a very clear statement about who Jesus is. He is true God, begotten of the Father from eternity.
7. In vs. 26 Jesus says: "But you do not believe because you do not belong to My sheep." Two months before (10:1-18) Jesus gave an extended discourse of the Good Shepherd theme. Here in our text Jesus resumes this discourse. Jesus calls Christians sheep because they are totally dependent on Him. They hear His voice. He knows them as His own. They follow Him. He gives them eternal life. They will never perish. No one will take them out of His hand (His power). This is an absolute promise. It is the teaching of election by grace. Read the Epitome of the Formula of Concord, Article XI, pp. 32-35, of Bultmann's Lectures. In paragraph 3, Jn. 10:26 is quoted. Why will the sheep never perish? Because God, in Christ, chose them from eternity. It is an absolute promise.
8. Vss. 29-30 make this promise even surer. The Father is greater than all. No one can seize the sheep from His hand (His power). His hand is the same as Jesus' hand. Both are true God. Now comes vs. 30, one of the most important passages about who Christ is. "I and the Father are One." They are one in essence. But Jesus says "are". They are distinct in persons. God is three in One and One in three. There is only one God but there are three persons. Here Jesus gives the hostile Jews their final answer. But He does it in connection with the sheep who hear His voice, are known to Him and who follow Him. No one, not even Satan, will ever take them from the power of Father and Son. Read vss. 31-39. Jesus' answer infuriated the Jews even more.
9. Vs. 30 is short and brief but very meaningful. Jesus and the Father are one. That refutes Arianism which denied Jesus' divinity. They are one. That refutes Sabellianism which denied the distinct persons of the Trinity.
10. Faith in Jesus is a gift of God. Jn. 6:29; Eph. 2:8. It comes by hearing the Gospel. Rom. 10:17; Gal. 3:2,5. It is associated with Jesus Who is the Way, the Truth, the Life. Unbelief is the work of the god of this world. II Cor. 4:3-4; Lk. 8:12; Eph. 2:3. It is associated with Satan, the liar and murderer. Jn. 8:44. Its goal is everlasting death. Mk. 16:16; Jn. 3:18; it is the way of the world.

Sermon Notes on Jn. 4:46-53, Trinity XXI

1. This account of the healing of the nobleman's son cannot be the same as the account at Mt. 8:5-13 and Lk. 7:1-10. All that they have in common is the locale (Capernaum) and healing at a distance.
2. Vs. 52 says that the boy was healed at the seventh hour. If that is according to Jewish reckoning of time, 1 p.m. is meant. But if according to Roman reckoning, 7 p.m. is meant. We cannot be dogmatic about this. Nor need we be. We do know that the boy was completely restored to health in the moment when Jesus spoke. That is sufficient for us.
3. Very likely this nobleman was a Jew because of what Jesus says in vs. 48. He said this often to the Jews. In this vs. Jesus is not condemning signs. He is objecting because the Jews regarded signs only as sensational wonders and mere entertainment. Jesus brought this nobleman from a "signs" faith to a true saving faith in Jesus' Word. In vs. 49 the nobleman asks Jesus to come to his house before his son would die. Jesus purposely does not go. He focuses the man's attention on God's Word. Jesus says to the nobleman: "Be on your way. Your son is alive." In other words: "Do not worry. My Word can heal your son at a distance." We know that the boy was healed in the very instant when Jesus spoke the Word. The father believed this Word. So did his household, wife, children and servants. More than one person was healed on that occasion.
4. Luther wrote about this text: "Although the Lord performed miracles and signs to make Himself known and to lead people to faith in Him, the underlying purpose was to focus their attention on the Word rather than on the signs which served merely to attest the truth of His testimony. Faith must rest on the Word of God."
5. Another Lutheran theologian wrote: "In affliction faith is practiced and chastened. If a person does not see, taste and experience the help and grace of the Lord, then that person learns to trust the Word and nothing but the Word. That is the true faith, trusting the Word for its own sake. Such faith comes not from flesh and blood. It's the Word to which faith clings. That almighty Word works faith." Jesus afflicted this nobleman. He led him from a "miracle" faith to a true faith in His Word. He does this to us also.
6. In vs. 50 Jesus says: "Be on your way. Your son lives." This Word of Jesus was not only a prophecy. It had the power to heal the sick boy. And this Word took the nobleman's worries away.
7. When Jesus cleansed the Temple, Jn. 2:14-17, the Jews asked Him: "What sign do you perform to prove that You have the right to do this?" He said: "Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up." They thought He was speaking about the physical Temple in Jerusalem. But He was speaking about His own body, His death. In vs. 22 John tells us: "When therefore He (Jesus) was raised from the dead His disciples remembered that He had said this and so they believed the Scriptures and this Word which Jesus had spoken." Jesus spoke of a sign which led His disciples to His Word.
8. I Cor. 1:22 tells us: "Jews seek signs and Greeks seek wisdom but we preach Christ crucified, an offense to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks but for those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God." To this day the Jews say: "Prove that Jesus is true God." They want only signs. The Greeks still say: "Give us human wisdom, philosophy." But what do we preach? We preach Christ crucified for the sins of all men. That is what the Word of God says.
9. Just a few months before Jesus' death, the Jews said to Him in the Temple: "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus replied: "I've told you but you won't believe. The works which I perform in My Father's name testify about Me. But you will not believe because you do not belong to My sheep."

Sermon Outline on Jn. 4:46-53, Trinity XXI

Theme: NOT BY SIGNS BUT BY FAITH IN HIS WORD

Introduction: Evidently this nobleman became a true believer in Jesus because of what Jesus said. When he came to Jesus, Jesus severely criticized his attitude. But the next day when he arrived at his own house we are told that he believed the Word of Jesus. He was changed from merely seeking signs to faith in Jesus' Word.

I-THE WRONG ATTITUDE OF THE JEWS

The miracles of Jesus always did one of two things: Either they helped people to believe that Jesus was the Messiah or it hardened them in their unbelief. St. Paul said later: "The Jews seek signs but we preach Christ crucified." I Cor. 1:22. What did he mean? When Jesus cleansed the Temple (Jn. 2) the Jews asked Him: "What sign do you perform to show that you do these things (to cleanse the Temple)?" Jn. 2:18. His answer was about His suffering and death. After Jesus had miraculously fed the 5000 the Jews asked: "What sign do you do so that we might believe in You?" The feeding of the 5000 did not impress them. When Jesus healed the blind man in Jn. 9, the Jewish authorities would not believe that Jesus had performed the miracle. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the Jewish authorities began to plan Jesus' death. About three months before Jesus' death the Jewish authorities surrounded Him at the Temple and said: "If you are the Christ tell us plainly." He answered: "I've told you but you won't believe. The works which I do in My Father's name, these testify about Me. But you do not believe because you are not My sheep." Jn. 10:22-26. Abraham told the rich man in the parable: "If they don't listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead." Lk. 16:31. The Jews do not believe that Jesus rose from the dead. That's what Jesus meant when He said to this nobleman: "Unless you (Jews) see signs, namely wonders, you refuse to believe." This man accepted Jesus' criticism. He said: "Lord, come before my child dies." Jesus said: "Go. Your son lives." This command and promise converted this nobleman. We are told: "The man believed the Word which Jesus had spoken to him and so he went on his way." His going proved His believing.

II-JESUS REQUIRES FAITH IN HIS WORD.

The Word of Jesus changed this nobleman's heart and life. Immediately after Jesus said: "Go. Your son lives," we are told that he believed. And the next day he was strengthened in this faith in Jesus' Word. When he learned that his son became well at the moment when Jesus spoke His Word, he believed and also his whole household believed too. That was a wonderful occasion. What happened to this nobleman and his whole family was more important than the healing of his son. The raising of Lazarus (Jn. 11) is somewhat like this. Both Martha and Mary said to Jesus: "Lord, if You had been here our brother would not have died." They were not trusting Jesus' Word as they should have. To Martha He said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he dies, yet shall He live. And he who lives and believes in Me shall never die." Then He asked her: "Do you believe this?" And she said: "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, Who has come into the world." And later He said to Martha: "Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?" Jesus permitted Lazarus to die so that He could teach Martha and Mary a lesson. Jesus permitted the nobleman's son to become very ill to teach this man to believe in His Word.

Conclusion: So it is with us. Because of our sinful nature we often doubt the goodness and power of our Lord Jesus. He wants us to believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God, Who came into the world to die for our sins and prepare heaven for us.