

Sept 26 – Small Group Questions – Leader's Guide

Read John 10:1-10

1. Before sheep could trust their shepherd's voice, the shepherd must first attune their voice to their sheep. How do we as God's people attune ourselves to God's voice?

We must read and know the Bible. But not as we interpret it according to our own personal perspective and preferences. Our understanding of the Bible must accord with the long history of church interpretation and teaching throughout the millennia. It is not straightforward as knowing church history and hermeneutics. But we must align with the fundamental and primary core doctrines about God, His Word, His Trinitarian nature, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, faith, grace, forgiveness, the resurrection--the elements of the Creeds. Knowing God leads to knowing His voice in and through the Scriptures.

2. Jesus said that He is the Door of the sheep fold. He is what determines who is in and out of God's community. It is an incredible claim! How do we as late-modern people react and respond to Jesus' claim of "exclusivity", to being the only way to God?

It is culturally distasteful to claim exclusivity as it is perceived to be discriminatory and alienating. But Jesus' claim is indeed exclusionary because of the nature of truth. Truth by definition excludes everything that is false. Not all religions or philosophies claim to be all the same. Ultimately, Jesus' claims are either true or false. And His proof is the historical resurrection from the dead.

3. According to Jesus, whoever enters through Him into God's fold will be saved. He meant that those who believe in Him will be kept safe to the very end. How do we as believers of Jesus experience "salvation" or "safety" today?

Salvation does not mean a pain-free life. It means that our life in faith on earth will not finally end in total destruction, the loss of our souls, and a waste of our lives. Jesus taught that we can gain the entire world but lose our souls. Ultimately, life is about trusting God in Jesus, to have a true and loving relationship with God, whether or not we have pleasure or pain on earth.

4. According to Jesus, whoever enters through Him into God's fold will also go in and out and find pasture. This is a pastoral metaphor for perfect freedom. How do we as believers of Jesus experience perfect freedom today?

Perfect freedom means being in total submission and service to God. There are parameters to this obligation. And those parameters afford life in abundance. Again, life in abundance does not mean a pain-free or trouble-free life. Rather, as there is pain and trouble in life, we have divine wisdom to pursue God's will in all things. Thus, in the end, those with perfect freedom does not experience ultimate loss but ultimate gain.