

BRMC Small Group Study: John 10:22-42

Leaders Guide

Please note that the suggestions below are not model answers but to help guide your study. Feel free to adapt the questions for your group.

Leader's Notes:

Context:

In our previous study, we observed the end of the Feast of the Tabernacles. We now move on to the last feast in the cycle that started with the Passover commemoration. This is the Feast of Dedication. These chapters from John 6-10 are characterised by the signs that Jesus did such as healing on Sabbath and how the Pharisees tried to use that to accuse him of sin. There are many debates between the Pharisees and Jesus and we see the Jews divided over who to believe. Chapter 11 onwards presents the events leading up to the passion (period from entering Jerusalem to the crucifixion) and crucifixion of Christ.

Introduction:

This passage, like many before it, explains Jesus divinity. However, Jesus never says explicitly in a public Jewish context that he is the Messiah and he is consistent here. This allows people to show true faith and belief. Only his true sheep will follow him and be given eternal life.

Lesson Objectives:

- Learn what it means for Jesus to be one with the Father.
- See how Jesus explains that he is also from God.

Observation

1. What are the three movements in this passage? (John 10:22-42)
 - *John 10:22-30: The setting is winter, during the Feast of Dedication. Jesus explains that only his sheep know and follow him and that he and the Father are one.*
 - *John 10:31-39: Jesus is accused of blasphemy, but he argues that he is truly the son of God and is no blasphemer.*
 - *John 10:40-42: Jesus heads to where John the Baptist used to preach and many believed in him there.*

Interpretation

2. What is the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22) and why is it important?
 - *The Feast of Dedication is a somewhat recent celebration in biblical terms. Also known as Hanukkah, this feast came about to celebrate the rededication of the temple to God. In 167 BC, the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes conquered Jerusalem and defiled the temple. He had sacrificed a sow to the god Jupiter on the holy tabernacle. The Jews, under leadership of Judas Maccabaeus, revolted and recaptured the temple. They rededicated it to God. Today, Hanukkah is still celebrated by the Jews.*
 - *During the Feast, the Jews would light the menorah lamp to celebrate the rededication of the temple after its desecration.*
 - *In the previous feasts, Jesus represented an element of it: In John 6, he provided bread (just like manna in Exodus). In John 7, he provided rivers of living water (similar to water from the rock in*

Exodus). In John 8, he is the light (just like the pillar of fire in the wilderness leading the Israelites to safety).

- *In John 10, it is possible to suggest that Jesus' words point to himself as the fulfilment of the temple, as the ultimate sacrifice and also to fulfil the role of the temple as where God's presence dwells.*

3. With reference to Jesus' earlier words in John 10:1-21, how are Jesus' sheep different from those who are not in his flock (John 10:25-27)?

- *Being sheep entails 3 things mentioned in verse 27:*
 1. *"My sheep hear my voice". We must hear his voice. We cannot be deaf to his voice and after hearing him, we cannot turn away.*
 2. *"[A]nd I know them". Jesus knows us. He, the shepherd, knows us by name. He calls us with gentleness and love. But also with severity when our safety is at stake.*
 3. *"[T]hey follow me". After we have heard the call, only the true sheep would follow Jesus. This is a choice we must make. To follow and not to wallow.*
- *Jesus was saying this about the Jews. Many of them were not true sheep and only followed him for his signs and wonders. Many also didn't believe in him.*

4. John 10:28-29 tells us that no one can snatch God's sheep out of his hand. What does that mean for us?

- *These verses provide us with a deep assurance that we as long as we follow Jesus' voice, we will never fall from grace.*
- *In John Wesley's paraphrase of John 10:29, "Those who follow me, neither men nor devils can pluck out of my hand. My Father who hath, by an unchangeable decree, given me all that believe, love, and obey, is greater than all in heaven or earth, and none is able to pluck them out of his hand."*

5. What did Jesus mean when he said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30)?

- *The Gospel according to John, The Pillar New Testament Commentary by D. A. Carson explains that "The word for 'one' is the neuter hen, not the masculine heis: Jesus and his Father are not one person, as the masculine would suggest, for then the distinction between Jesus and God already introduced in 1:1b would be obliterated, and John could not refer to Jesus praying to his Father, being commissioned by and obedient to his Father, and so on. Rather, Jesus and his Father are perfectly one in action, in what they do: what Jesus does, the Father does, and vice versa"*
- *From the Greek grammar of this verse, we can see 3 implications.*
 1. *That the Father and Jesus are distinct individuals.*
 2. *That the Father and Jesus have a unity in their work, e.g. the Son does what He sees the Father doing (John 5:19-20)*
 3. *That the Father and Jesus can both be addressed as God as their wills are united.*

6. Read Psalm 82. How does this help with your understanding of John 10:34?

- *The leaders of Israel are seen as 'gods' because they have been given the holy mandate to lead and to judge the people fairly. However, due to their corruption and greed, they have failed their mandate. As such, they will die like men (Psalm 82:7).*
- *Jesus is God who will rise up and inherit all nations (Psalm 82:8).*
- *If the Jewish leaders could call themselves gods, what more Jesus who is the Son of God. He should not be condemned for calling himself God.*

Application

7. How might you explain the Trinity to a friend?

8. How does knowing you are *secure* in God's hand help you confront your *insecurities*?