

Coffee to Go|4th Sunday of Easter

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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SPEAKERS

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Josh Mangelson 00:17

Welcome to the Project Zion Podcast. This podcast explores the unique spiritual and theological gifts Community of Christ offers for today's world.

Karin Peter 00:34

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the seasons and scriptures on holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter, and I'm here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. And the journey is the question we ask every week. And that question is where are we this week? With Jesus? What is going on with Jesus this week? And maybe, maybe the more important question is, and why does it matter to me? And, that's what we're trying to get to here is, "what is going on with Jesus and in the scriptures for this week?" And why does it matter. So this week, we are still in the season of Easter. We are in the fourth week. We are apparently near some fields with sheep. And the reason I say that is because Jesus uses images from where he is and what's going on around him. Or maybe I should say, the writers of the Gospels use those images and their memories of what Jesus taught from that context. And so you can tell by the different kinds of images, in the stories about Jesus or in the teachings of Jesus, and you can kind of tell where he is, if he's talking about chaff, and wheat, he's probably passing some fields where wheat is growing. And here he's using sheep and a sheep's pen to make a point that he's teaching. And so we can assume that he's near a field with sheep. So in his context, the local traditions are used to teach the disciples and followers just like it is for us, we use local symbols and ideas from our context, and to teach each other and this week, it's sheep. So let's hear about... let's hear this scripture. Now let's hear what Jesus has to say about sheep this week. You're making a face Blake, so I'm guessing it's not all that great.

Blake Smith 02:38

This is another one of those passages that might need a little disclaimer going into it because it is one that has been used as ammunition and, a weapon quite honestly, against people who don't ascribe to a particular way of believing and understanding and it can be read that way. But we want to, we're going to talk about it. So we want to hear that in a little bit more inclusive way in the way we understand Jesus. So it comes from John chapter 10, 1 through 10. "Very, Truly I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheep fold by the gate, but climbs in by another way, is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear His voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all of his

own. He goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know His voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again, Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." So again, this passage has been used often as a weapon, if you will, against those who don't have a particular way of believing but I think what matters most here as we read this passage is "who are what do we pattern our lives after?" What is it that shapes our character because who we watch, who we try to emulate, the lessons that we use to influence our life, shape our character.

Karin Peter 04:57

Whose voice do we listen to. To use Jesus's analogy here, whose voice shapes us?

Blake Smith 05:06

And so in this, Jesus is the gate. But he's, he's the gate to grassy fields and clear water. He's the way to a better way of living. One example that I have told people, you know, that are doubting or questioning and saying, "Well, who can say that Jesus is the only way or Jesus is this or Jesus is that?" I said, Well, you know, I don't know that for a fact. I mean, the scriptures say that. And it's argued that way, I don't know that for a fact. But what I do know is that if I pattern my life after Jesus life and ministry, and more people did that, not necessarily calling themselves followers, but lived a life like that, the world would be a better place. So it's about patterning our lives after this model of goodness. So we can ask ourselves, what is the message here? Is the message that only followers get included? Or is it that followers will learn to care for, invite, welcome, and nurture others? I mean, that's what the Shepherd does. So that is what an authentic expression of following would look like, if we're patterning our lives after Jesus.

Karin Peter 06:21

So like, I find this interesting that this scripture is always used to exclude others. And yet, what we're pulling out from it today is a completely different message. It's not about I'm special if I follow the way it's about, oh, if I follow the way, this is how I'm supposed to behave?

Blake Smith 06:38

Yeah, absolutely.

Karin Peter 06:40

Yeah. So how do we deal with that this week? How do we experience that this week, and I'm thinking about being a gate? So when you go to your door each day, stop and ask yourself? How can I be an open gate or an open door for someone to join me in conversation, Join me for a walk, or just join me for a friendly brief exchange, over the fence are across the driveway? How can I be an open gate? Or even, how might I open doors for people this week? I mean, literal doors. How might I do that for all people... at work, at home, shopping, school, wherever it may be, open doors for people? And as you do, think, how does it feel to be part of someone else's gate opening coming in and going out? How am

I involved with somebody else as I open the door for them. So this week, it's all about being an open door or an open gate, so that we can all experience grassy fields and clear water as we learn to follow Jesus.

Blake Smith 07:47

So if all that's tied to who we pattern ourselves after, or whose voices we listen to, that gives us our first question for this week. Whose voice or what voice, or voices, do I tend to be most responsive to? That is how I'm shaped. So who is that influencing voice? Or, what are those influencing voices? What do I spend my time following? It's not just following a physical person. Is it sports? Money? Friends? What is it that we're following after ...seeking after? And how is that shaping my character?

Karin Peter 08:25

Hmm.

Blake Smith 08:26

How was that shaping my character? And back to some of the things that you were talking about? And experiencing is what kind of gate Am I an open gate? Am I open towards wholeness and welcome? Or do I shut others out? Am I there more is a gate to guard and protect what's inside?

Karin Peter 08:43

Good question.

Blake Smith 08:44

So let's close out with a brief blessing. And you might be surprised the source of this. This is from J R R Tolkien. Oh, I know a little sacrilegious perhaps right. Here it goes. Still round the corner. There may wait. A new road or a secret gate.

Karin Peter 09:08

Oh, that's a great blessing for this week, this fourth week of Easter.

Blake Smith 09:13

Yeah. So thanks, everybody for joining us again this week at Coffee to Go. We of course invite you to join us next time as we continue on our journey through the liturgical seasons and the holy days of the Christian tradition.

Josh Mangelson 09:34

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