**5/11/25**

**Distractions**

**Vicar Vince Piekarski**

**John 10:22-30 (NRSVUE)**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSVUE) (2) **Amen.**

Earlier this week I met up with a few colleagues at Pilsner, Pizza, and Pride which was an event at a local brewery to support Equality Cape May. We of course met some new people and we got to talking about several different things while enjoying beers, pizza, and the company of one another. We of course all had church in common, so go figure, we also talked shop over the course of our time together as well. I was very excited to share some of my thoughts for this upcoming sermon. While doing so I kind of forgot that I was sitting in front of my Vice Pastor. He of course began to throw more questions at me in an inquisitive but positive manner. I was rather quick to provide backing and support to my thoughts and vision, despite only having just recently completed the majority of my reading and research.

So, with that I am going to go ahead and deliver some of those very thoughts and arguments here to all of you as well. Now, I will admit that the very title and focus of this particular sermon also became the very issue and struggle that I actually had with defending and even typing it. For **Distractions** are indeed something that happen or occur way too frequently, and more often than not they occur at the most inopportune moments. However, that is not always the case, because I have come to realize that **Distractions** can also be a blessing and a recentering tool as well. **Distractions** of course can be something as simple as the sound of a motorcycle driving by, a text or a phone call, your dryer buzzing and another load of laundry being done, a Facebook notification, a game on your phone, your stomach growling, or even someone knocking on your door. **Distractions** can also be something more concrete like having plans and a time to be somewhere right when you finally got focused on a task or job that you had been trying to get done for some time, an alarm going off that you had set to remind you to take your medications or take your blood pressure or blood sugar at a specific time of the day, or even having to deal with an emergency situation due to the health or safety of a loved one. **Distractions** can also be that voice telling you to go ahead and eat something else despite being on a diet, they can be that slow driving car when you really need to get somewhere, and they can be the temptation to do something despite you knowing it is wrong. **Distractions** are indeed a blessing and a curse pending on the situation and the moment for sure. Sometimes they actually cause us to focus more, and sometimes they kill our focus and our drive completely. Sometimes they keep us safe, and sometimes they cause more of an issue. Sometimes they are welcomed, and sometimes they are just annoying. There are several different scenarios and examples, and regardless of the role that **Distractions** play in our lives we come to realize that we still need to find a way to manage them to get to our desired means or destination. Sometimes we need to be thankful for them, and sometimes we just need to tune those **Distractions** out.

So, before I allow this sermon to **distract** me any longer from a few vital things here I will pause briefly before I come back to the regularly scheduled topic. First off, thank you one and all for joining us here yet again today. Thank you for committing your time and your focus to the Word and this community. It means a lot to be able to gather together in one accord, worship together, and gather around the table of Christ’s blessings. Secondly, I want to wish a Happy and Blessed Mother’s Day to all of you out there who have had the fortunate blessing of playing a role as mother in any shape, way, or form throughout your life and the life of others. Mother is an extremely valuable title and role, and it is fulfilled in so many awesome ways and forms. I thank you all for managing to form an awesome relationship and providing support and love. I am ever so thankful for my mother, my aunt, my mother in-law, all my church mothers, and even my wife. You all have shaped who I have become, and who I am continuing to become as well. You all mother me in various ways with the various gifts that God has blessed you with. I definitely believe that without your strength, guidance, mentality, preparedness, love, thoughtfulness, care, concern, presence, motivation, and so much more I might not be standing here in front of you today or moving forward. So, thank you one and all for playing the role of mother in my life, and for playing that role in the lives of people that you may realize or may not even realize as well. I also want to pay special attention to those mothers who have passed on, like my grandmother and some of my church mothers. I realize that this day can be rough for some of us when we realize the past or most recent losses, but thank God for the time and love put into our lives from those that are no longer with us as well. Prayers to all of you who may really be struggling on this Mother’s Day as well.

Now back to our regularly scheduled topic here folks. You may wonder what in the world I was getting at when I spoke of **Distractions** so much earlier. You may wonder what exactly that has to do with the Good Shepherd and the very message that has been dealt to each and every one of us here today. Well, let me draw this out for you. Let me lay this on the line a little bit more. In our Gospel Reading Jesus tells the people that have gathered around him that he has shown them time and time again who he is, who sent him, and what the message is. Jesus plainly tells them that if they are so **Distracted** by trying to find something different, to justify something alternative, or just not believing then they are simply not his people. He tells them that his people, his children, have heard his voice and listen. That they believe and have been called into his and even his father’s arms. Jesus informs them that when all the **Distractions** of this world come a calling that he and has father have a tight grip on their children because they have chosen to put their faith and trust in his very message and ministry. Jesus tells them that if they cannot see and understand this by now, and if they truly have not come to believe and have faith that they just honestly may never will. Jesus tells them that they are not of his fold, of his flock, or of his people. Now that right there is some powerful stuff if you ask me. He literally has told them that the wool over their eyes and their hearts is so heavy that nothing can remove them. Jesus literally tells them that they have been gifted eternal life, and practically tells them good luck on your alternative journey because you simply refuse to accept it because of the **Distractions** you still allow to live in your life.

Our Triune God calls us in a similar, but yet different way than a mother calls us. Our Triune God has even been there even before conception if you really think about it. Our Triune God has been a voice offering total comfort and a sense of being. The true question is… When do we choose to really hear it and put all the **Distractions** on the backburner and really dial in and focus on that voice? When do we really allow for no more **Distractions** to allow us to not be in the firm and forever loving grip of our Triune God? When do we allow our heart and our mind to get out of the **Distractions** market and in the market for everlasting and eternal life that we all have been called to and gifted? This world and Satan have so much to offer, but they dull in comparison to that which our Triune God has to offer. So, we need to constantly push those **Distractions** aside and allow ourselves to truly believe, to truly live, and to be gathered up in the loving arms of our Lord and Savior now and forever.

We are going to go ahead and close things out with a story here today, as I am sure you have heard enough from me and my thought process for sure. So, let’s send you on home later to ponder things from our Gospel Reading here a little more from a different viewpoint as well. Now, “There were two cousins. One cousin grew up and lived in the country; the other one was reared and lived in a big city. One day, the country cousin came to visit his city cousin. The city cousin was very excited to show his country cousin all that the big city had to offer. They toured the magnificent parks and museums. They ate lunch at a fine restaurant. He showed his cousin the large skyscrapers downtown.

As they were walking through the canyons between the tall, tall buildings, the country cousin spoke up, “Hey, did you hear that?”

“Hear what?” his city cousin responded.

“I just heard a cricket!”

The city cousin couldn’t believe it. He listened to the cacophony of the city: horns honking, a jack hammer echoing, busses and vehicles roaring by, sirens blaring in the distance. “I can’t believe it. How can you hear a tiny cricket in the midst of all this noise?”

His country cousin said, “Well, I guess it all depends on what your ears are attuned to.”

“My sheep hear my voice. I know them and they follow me.” Friends, keep your ears attuned to the voice of our Savior Jesus Christ. He has proven his loving intentions and his strength through his works. In his resurrection he showed us that nothing can snatch us out of his hand, not even death. He has claimed you as his own beloved.” (9) Push on past the **Distractions** to become who and whose you really are called to be! Let us rejoice and proclaim each and every single day that Christ is Risen… **He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia****!**

**References & Study Points**

(1) Sundays and Seasons

 Preaching

 Year C 2025

 May 11th, 2025

 Fourth Sunday of Easter

(2) BibleGateway.com

(3) The Four Pages of The Sermon

 Revised and Updated

 A Guide to Biblical Preaching

 Paul Scott Wilson

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 Abingdon Press

(4) WorkingPreacher.org

 Fourth Sunday of Easter

 The parable of the good shepherd is still the literary context for this section, but the

 physical context has moved now to the temple.

 May 12, 2019

 Commentary on John 10:22-30

 Osvaldo Vena

(5) WorkingPreacher.org

 Fourth Sunday of Easter

 Discerning the Shepherd’s voice amidst all the other voices that clamor for our

 attention

 May 8, 2022

 Commentary on John 10:22-30

 Elisabeth Johnson

(6) WorkingPreacher.org

 Fourth Sunday of Easter

 One of the stunning parts of this text is the location.

 April 21, 2013

 Commentary on John 10:22-30

 Karyn Wiseman

(7) WorkingPreacher.org

 Fourth Sunday of Easter

 This passage focuses on Jesus’ identity and his relationship with the Father.1

 April 25, 2010

 Commentary on John 10:22-30

 Frank L. Crouch

(8) SermonCentral.com

 By God's Grace, We Are The Sheep Of His Fold

 Contributed by Ronald Harbaugh on Nov 28, 2017

 Scripture: John 10:22-30

 Denomination: Lutheran

(9) SermonCentral.com

 A Powerful Grip

 Contributed by Mary Erickson on May 10, 2022

 Scripture: John 10:22-30

 Denomination: Lutheran

**John 10:22-30 (NRSVUE)**

Jesus responds to questions about his identity with the remarkable claim that he and the Father are one. Those who understand this are his sheep; they hear his voice, follow, and will never be snatched from his hand.

22 At that time the Festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. 24 So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.” 25 Jesus answered, “I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me, 26 but you do not believe because you do not belong to my sheep. 27 My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, in regard to what he has given me, is greater than all, and no one can snatch them out of the Father’s hand. 30 The Father and I are one.”