

## **"My Sheep Hear My Voice"**

Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (Jn. 10:27). The force of this statement is that only those who "hear" the voice of Jesus and "follow" Him are of His fold, His flock. Only those who heed the commands of the Lamb can rightfully claim to be His sheep. Therefore, it stands to reason, those who do not "hear" the voice of Jesus or do not "follow" Him, are not of His fold or flock.

Many people want to claim to be a part of the flock of God, they want to claim Jesus as the Shepherd of their lives, yet they are unwilling to truly "hear" the Lord. They hear and do not (Jas. 1:21-25). This is well illustrated by the wise and foolish in Matthew 7:24-27. One man heard and did what Jesus said--he was declared wise. The other man heard and did not do what Jesus said--he was declared foolish. When we read these passages, we all agree. Our friends and neighbors agree. However, not all of us apply it, otherwise there would be unity among those who seek to follow the Savior.

Let us look at an "ancient" problem among the disciples to show how some "heard" the voice of the Lord, but did not follow it.

In the first century church there was a big problem over circumcision. There were converted Jews who insisted that Gentiles must be circumcised (Acts 15:1, 5). The issue was debated and forever settled for those willing to submit to the voice of the Lord--Gentiles did not need to be circumcised (Acts 15:7-29). However, in spite of Christ's will revealed through the Holy Spirit, there were men who pressed the issue (Phil. 3:1-3). They had "heard" the voice of Christ, but "listened" to Moses instead.

Now, let us look at some "modern" day issues where people "hear" but do not "follow" the voice of the Shepherd.

Music: The voice of the Shepherd, via His ambassador, declared long ago that music in worship was to be by "speaking," "teaching and admonishing" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Many will read such passages and ignore them. Rather than follow the voice of the Lord, they turn to Moses or David in an attempt to justify their instruments in worship. What do you think of that? Should we listen to Jesus or Moses?

The Lord's Supper: The Lamb of God instituted the memorial feast of His death on the night of His betrayal (Matt. 26:26-29). His followers were to

observe this feast. Later, in Acts, we find that they did observe it (Acts 2:42). We learn that they observed it upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). They obviously "heard" the voice of Jesus and followed Him. In contrast to this, there are men who hear these command, but say that the Lord's supper can be observed on Saturday or Thursday or whenever. Many do not practice a first-day-of-the-week partaking of the communion, but a once-a-month, once-a-quarter, or once-a-year observance. What do you think, dear reader? Should we listen to Jesus or men?

Marriage, Divorce, & Remarriage: Jesus, the loving Shepherd, declared that a man cannot put away his wife and marry another unless she is guilty of fornication, sexual immorality (Matt. 19:9). Men will read this, "hear" Jesus, but then do what they desire. They will put away their wife because they are "unhappy" or they have "fallen out of love." To tickle these itching ears, there is a host of preachers who will attempt to explain away the Lamb's command. They will say a man can divorce and remarry for as many times as he pleases, for any reason, be baptized, and remain with his current wife. Friend, what do you think? Should we listen to Jesus or our "feelings" and false teachers?

Remember, the Shepherd said, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Lk. 14:26). Will you "hear" the good Shepherd or to someone else?

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