

**JOHN 10:22-31****DO NOT APPROACH JESUS WITH PREJUDICE;  
HE APPROACHES YOU WITH COMFORT**

*Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one." Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.*

Likely you are familiar with the term "prejudiced." The word describes the opinion or frame of mind of someone who has already reached a conclusion without examining all the facts—a person "pre-judges" the situation. Example: "All people from the big city are unfriendly and snobbish." Another, someone whose skin is not as white as yours cannot be trusted. Prejudice. A pre-judgment.

In this text we see how Jesus' words of Truth about Himself and His ministry of salvation were met by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem with prejudice—negative pre-judgment. Yet the same words are words of comfort, peace, and joy for His flock.

Two months prior to the text, Jesus had been in Jerusalem for the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, or Booths. That feast celebrated God's care for His people when they lived in mere "shelters," or "booths," in the wilderness for forty years, traveling from Egypt to the Promised Land under Moses. Tensions had gotten quite high between the Jewish leaders and Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles. They even wanted to stone Him. Two months later, the Feast of Dedication was at hand, and Jesus came to Jerusalem again. This feast has another name, which you likely know. It comes every December—Hanukkah. Hanukkah commemorates the "re-dedication" of the temple altar in Jerusalem. The re-dedication took place about 164 BC. Antiochus IV, a Greek, was ruler of one of the parts of Alexander the Great's dismantled empire. Antiochus' territory included Judea. To spite the Jews He desecrated the temple by offering swine's blood on the altar. The Jews were incensed. Under the Maccabee family, the Jews overthrew Antiochus, and the altar was rededicated in 164 BC. Every year thereafter a Feast of Re-dedication was held.

Our text also tells us that when the time of this feast came, *it was winter*. Although their winter was (is) not like our winter, nevertheless winter is colder. (It does snow on occasion in Jerusalem.) Interestingly it was winter in the hearts of the Jewish leaders too. Their hearts were cold toward Jesus, opposite of the joy and the warmth of the Re-dedication Feast. They met Jesus in a temple portico or porch, called Solomon's porch. *Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."* They encircled Him—sounds like intimidation. They meant business. Think about the foolishness of it. They believed that they could limit, encircle, intimidate, overpower Him who is limitless and invincible, who has no fear, who has no equal. The devil will try to get you to think just as foolishly—that God will back off, if an idea is popular enough and everyone agrees enough—even if it is contrary to His wisdom and will. Bad move.

They asked Jesus, *How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.* Very literally, How long do You "lift our souls?" In English we might say, "How long do You keep us up in the air?" They wanted a straight answer from Jesus, that He was the One appointed by God from the first sin and before, to come from the throne of God to save sinners. Why did they want Him to say that? To comfort their own hearts? No, not at all. To use against Him! In their own "we-save-ourselves" hearts, they thought, they were good without Jesus and needed no mercy or forgiveness from His hand. They wanted to bring Him down. He made them look bad. He drew followers after Himself. Like a cagey attorney, they wanted to get Jesus to say something that would discredit Him.

Jesus answer? *“I told you, and you do not believe. Two months earlier at the prior feast, He told them, “Most assuredly I say to you, if anyone keeps My Word, he shall never see death” (John 8:51). Doesn’t that sound like the promised Christ/Messiah of God? He also said, “Before Abraham was I AM” (John 8:58). Doesn’t that sound like the promised Christ/Messiah of God? So He said, I told you, but you do not believe. There’s more. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. His miracles were not just done by sleight of hand seeking glory for Himself. They were done in the Father’s name! He healed crowds of people—crippled, blind, deaf, demon-possessed, fed the hungry, raised the dead! Doesn’t that speak volumes? But you do not believe.*

Why? Because often people believe what they want to believe. They prejudice the circumstances to suit themselves. People believe lies, lies of Satan, lies of their own imaginations, lies of their evil desires—because they want to. It sounds so good and so logical to their sin warped thinking, including yours and mine. They don’t want to know the truth.

Certainly, logic and reason are great gifts from God. They work wonderfully in the earthly realm. If someone says  $2+2 = 3$ , you can logically prove  $2+2 = 4$ , which can be demonstrated over and over again. An animal cannot do that. The lawnmower won’t start: It doesn’t need gas in the tank, the gas is getting through the carburetor, the spark is good. Ah-ha, the switch lever is at off. Animals can’t do that. Logic and reason work well in strictly reasonable matters and are a gift. But can you tell what a guy or girl is like because he or she is good looking? Can you tell what a pie tastes like, just because it looks plain? Although circumstantial evidence logically points to Mitch as the thief, does that mean it’s 100% certain? The leaders in this text, using bad logic had badly pre-judged Jesus. They didn’t want Him to be the Messiah, because He didn’t fit their pattern. Prejudice or pre-judging people is a very sad mistake. Pre-judging the Lord is even worse! Definitely set et your logic and reasoning power aside, when it comes to spiritual matters. Trust Him for Truth, forgiveness, and salvation.

How does one know the truth about the Lord and spiritual things, if logic and reason do not work? Go to His Word. Hear His voice. Let the Holy Spirit teach you Truth—show you your sins and disobedience of every kind, and show you God’s Son your Savior, who against human logic and reason said, “I’ll suffer the consequences for them. I’ll let Myself die for them. I, against all human logic, will rise from the grave, unscathed by death. In Me they are forgiven.” It’s in the Word of God. But people believe what they want to believe. *You do not believe, because you are not of My sheep.* Whenever you disregard the voice of God, you are stepping away as one of His sheep! You are pre-judging Him. Beware!

But in this same Jesus, you have forgiveness, safety, protection, peace, love, and life forever—even for you, sinner that you are! *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.* Here is truth and here is comfort. Jesus washes every sin off your slate, He leads you through ditches and over cliffs in life. He is your Good Shepherd who gave His life for you. He knows you and sees you. He calls to you. He calls you by name. When a little child is confused in a large mass of people but hears Dad or Mom calling his/her name, the child follows the voice. There is safety and comfort there. Likewise Jesus’ Words speak salvation to the heart, leading you to eternal life. You shall never perish. What about groceries marked “perishable”? They will soon give way to decay. You and I are also perishable, except in Jesus. In Jesus you shall not perish. Even though the body “lies a moldering in the grave” like John Brown, through Jesus, it will be raised from the grave, reconstructed with the soul and taken to heaven. Jesus’ hand is filled with love. Jesus’ hand gives security—like the touch of the hand of a good and capable friend.

If you don’t think Jesus is enough, He also works in unity with the almighty Father! *My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are one.* When you’re dealing with Jesus, you’re dealing with the Father. When you’re dealing with the Father, you’re dealing with the “big boy.” Nobody out-maneuvers Him. Lay reason and logic aside—God created the world in six days, God made man and woman without their decision which gender they were, the babe in the womb is a precious life given by God. To pre-judge God is to stand on the wrong side of the fence. The Jewish leaders were on the wrong side of the fence. *Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.* Beware! I would really not want to do that.

Learn to trust Him. As one learns to trust a new teacher, new boss, a new pastor, etc.; in the Word learn to trust your loving Jesus! He brings comfort. Don’t pre-judge Him.

Amen! So be it!

Pastor Kanzenbach---