**“Can You Hear Me?” 2016 04 17**

**John 10:22-30 Pr. H. Adachi**

May the Grace and Peace of the Lord be poured into the hearts of the people in this sanctuary!

I often say, “Can you hear me?” Especially, at the beginning of my phone conversations, I use this phrase to determine whether or not the other person can hear the sound of my voice. In other words, I am checking if the phone system is working.

However, if a parent is talking to his/her child and says, “Can you hear me?” they are not usually asking whether or not the child can hear the parent’s voice.

In most cases, the father or mother is telling an important fact to the child, and that child is expected to understand what the parent said and, based on instructions given, act as the parent wished.

In the Gospel text today, I believe the 27th verse is the key verse. I would like to use my translation which is literally translated from the Greek, “My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.”

In this key sentence, I would say there are two key words. The first one is to “hear”. As I mentioned earlier, the word “hear” does not really refer to sheep hearing the voice of Jesus as a sound, but that the sheep understand and follow what Jesus meant.

The second key word is to “know”. I think it is an interesting word. Probably, everyone in this sanctuary knows something about President Obama, or one of the current Presidential candidates, like Clinton, Trump or whoever.” The word “know” in this case refers to general knowledge of him or her through the newspaper, TV, or internet. It doesn’t imply personal knowledge.

Therefore, to the contrary, President Obama, Clinton, or Trump doesn’t know each one of us. However, in many cases when we say “I know Mr. A.” Not only do we know him, Mr. A knows us also. There is a certain relationship between him and us. It is a different level of knowledge.

Likewise, when Jesus says, “I know them, sheep” there is a much deeper relationship between Jesus and His sheep. Several verses before today’s text Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.” And in the Gospel text today, Jesus said, “I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.” In this Easter season, why don’t we remember those words Jesus said before he was crucified, “The Father knows me as I know my Father. My sheep hear my voice; I know them and, they follow me.” Jesus is expressing the intimate relationship between the Father and Jesus and Jesus and His sheep.

In the latter part of today’s Gospel, Jesus said, “What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand.” What is Jesus referring to when he says “what my Father has given me is greater than all?”

A Christian educator and speaker, Dr. Parker Palmer wrote a book titled “To Know As We’re Known.” In the first chapter of this book, he talks a lot about “knowledge.” Basically there are two types of knowledge…He starts with scientific knowledge and moves to more spiritual knowledge. And he teaches us “Knowing is Loving.”

Although we talked about hearing and knowing in this message based on the text of John Chapter 10, and I did not mention the word “love” from the text, I believe God, the Father, gives love to Jesus, which is greater than all else. And that same love was given to His sheep, us, through Jesus’ death and resurrection on the Cross.

We not only know that Jesus was crucified, died, but resurrected as history 2000 years ago, but we also hear what Jesus says today and follow His instructions.

I would like to conclude my message quoting a couple of questions my seminary preaching professor, Dr. David Lose, asked, “Have you ever felt like you’ve heard Jesus’ voice? What was it like? If not, what might you imagine Jesus would call you to do?”

As you ponder these questions, please remember, all of us in this sanctuary know Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ knows each one of us and loves us. And nothing can separate us from the love of God. Amen.