

GOSPEL MESSAGE

May 8, 2022

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Aligned by Grace

As a group corners Jesus in the portico at the time of the festival of the Dedication, they are intent on determining whether he is the Messiah. Jesus' response points to two things: the words he has spoken and the testimony of his works. Jesus' words and works are aligned, and this integrity is grounded in the unity of Jesus and the Father.

People are complicated. We have an ability to justify ourselves when our speech and our actions do not align. We have a capacity to hold together contradictory ideas, some of which can be full of love, others of which can be harmful to our neighbors. We are not sometimes good and sometimes sinful, but both at once.

How does this paradox impact our integrity and our witness? Our words and actions matter in that they affect other people. To the extent that we can put effort into aligning our speech and our deeds in faithful ways, we should do so, but ultimately it is Jesus who draws us into alignment. The voice of Jesus is like the magnetic force that brings the compass needle to point north, or like the mechanic who adjusts the alignment on a car so it will steer straight.

We will inevitably get out of alignment with our values and our faith from time to time, but the voice of the Shepherd is always there to invite us back into alignment with grace and love. As we seek to live with faithful integrity, we do so with the promise that we cannot be snatched away from God.

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