

A Gospel Reflection From Deacon Steve-
Grab your Bible and read John 10:22-30

Jewish leaders want to know how long Jesus is going to keep them in suspense. There is so much doubt among them because of their beliefs. When they are asking if he is the Christ, they are thinking of a messiah, someone who is going to save them, like a powerful ruler that would conquer their enemies. Jesus did not look that way to them.

Common people listened to what he was saying, he taught as someone who had authority, not as Jewish leaders who were teachers of the Law. What he was saying was shocking to them. He was saying clearly that he was Deity.

Many of us want strong, overwhelming reasons to believe in God. Why doesn't God just do something so obvious that people would have to believe he exists?

Perhaps it is because God has given us the freedom to believe in him or not. I want God to overwhelm me, to overcome my doubts with certainty, to give proofs of his existence. I want a God without having any doubt. Does our faith suffers from too much freedom, too many temptations to disbelieve?

Jesus could have done the things that the Jewish leaders were looking for. He could have conquered all their enemies, and built them great cities 2000 years ago. But he didn't. Why not? Because God insists on us having free will as part of his plan in our loving relationship with him. God's insistence on human freedom is so absolute that he gives us the power to live as though he does not exist, to spit in his face, to crucify him, or to love him freely. I believe God insists on such restraint because no displays of incredible feats will achieve the response he desires.

We can be given anything we want, or be forced to be obedient, but only love can bring about a response of love, which is the one thing God wants from us and the reason he created us. What God wants is for us to know him in an intimate way, willingly, not because we have to, or that he gives us everything we want. This is how we would like our relationships with our children, our parents, and our friends. We want people to love us because they want to, not because they have to.

He certainly has given us plenty of reason to believe in him. But he doesn't force, or give us anything we want to know him. Instead, he politely asks if we will allow him to enter our lives. Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20). He enters our lives with our permission. With great unwavering faith invite Jesus into your lives.