

# Sheep

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Preacher: Christopher Baker

[ 0 : 0 0 ] All right, if you have your Bibles this morning, which I hope you do, I'd encourage you to take them and turn to the Gospel of John. That's where we're going to be at this morning. The Gospel of John. And we're going to be looking at some things that Jesus had to share. John chapter 10 is where we're going to start at least. John chapter 10, beginning in verse 7.

I encourage you to follow along. There are always Bibles in the back as you come in. If you forget your Bible or don't have a Bible, please take one. If you know somebody that needs a Bible, give it to them. We can get more. It's important that we have God's Word. John chapter 10, we're going to begin in verse 7. And I'm going to ask if you're able, if you would stand as we read God's Word this morning. John chapter 10, beginning in verse 7, and this is what it shares.

Then said Jesus to them again, Verily, verily, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.

I am the door. By me, if any man enters in, he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes not but for to steal and to kill and to destroy. I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd, and the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. But he that is a hireling and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf catches them and scatters the sheep. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and cares not for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd and know my sheep and am known of mine. As a father knows me, even so know I the father, and I lay down my life for the sheep. Let's pray together this morning.

[ 1 : 5 5 ] Lord God, once again, we thank you for this time that we can come into your house. We thank you for that we can worship and praise you. We thank you, Lord, that we can pray together. We thank you that we can take time to look at your word, that we can find the truth that is in it, that is intended for each one of us to help us live our lives in a way that pleases you, to help us live our lives in a way that brings peace, that brings comfort, that brings joy. Lord, our lives here are not always easy. But Lord, the things and the promises that you give us in your word are intended to see us through those difficult times. So thank you for your word. I pray that it would speak to our hearts on this morning. And it's in the name of Jesus Christ that we pray. Amen. You can be seated this morning. So in these verses, it's talking about sheep and a shepherd, right? And you know, it is interesting in God's word, sheep and lambs and shepherds are talked about over and over again in God's word. I think I've read that sheep, shepherds, lambs, that whole thing. If you look, it's mentioned, I think, close to 300 times. Hundreds of times in God's word, it talks about sheep and shepherds and lambs. That's pretty significant, isn't it? Would you agree with that? And you look throughout the Bible and you see how many of the men that are in the Bible that it talks about were shepherds who spent a lot of their time around sheep. You can look at Abel, one of the first ones we read about in the Bible. What was Abel? Or Cain. What was Cain? Shepherd. We can look at Moses. What was Moses? Shepherd. Did you know Amos was also a shepherd? What about Zechariah? Also a shepherd for a time. We obviously know David. What was David? A shepherd. We can go into the New Testament and we look at Christ's birth. The angels appeared to who to say that Christ was born? Shepherds.

Shepherds are throughout the Bible, watching sheep throughout the Bible. And the thing is, people then knew more about sheep than what we probably do today. And that's why it's used so often because it's something that they understood. And Christ, as He's talking here, He talks about a shepherd and He talks about sheep. But it's interesting, the first thing that Christ compares Himself to, look in verse 7. We always think of Jesus comparing Himself to being a shepherd or being a lamb that was slain. But here He compares Himself not to either one of those, but He says, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. And then if you look in verse 9, how does He start

that verse? I am the door. It's kind of odd, Jesus saying, I'm like a door.

It's kind of an odd thought, isn't it? I mean, maybe a shepherd, we understand a sheep, but a door. Jesus says, I'm a door. I'm like a door. Well, you know, if you really think about it, and we probably don't spend a lot of time thinking about it, but how important is a door?

Yeah, a door is pretty vital, isn't it? We could have this wonderful sanctuary here, which aren't you glad we have a nice air-conditioned sanctuary to sit in and to praise God together.

We could have this beautiful, wonderful sanctuary to come together in. What if it didn't have a door? Would there be a problem? What if when they built this, I don't know, it's 12, 13, I forget how long ago.

[ 5 : 42 ] When they built it, they forgot to put a door in. It's the only thing they forgot. They did everything else right, but they forgot to put a door in. Would there be a problem? Why?

If it was all just walls all the way around, no door. Well, you couldn't get in, right? Or what if we all got in here and then they finished it with no door? How about every Sunday you got to climb in that window to come into church? And after church, we all have to climb out the window to get out. It sounds like fun. I mean, it would make no sense because we understand a building needs a door. That is a pretty vital part of a building. And Jesus says, I'm a door. And folks, we have to understand that that means Jesus is important. What does a door do? It separates, doesn't it? It separates the outside from the inside. And for us in the climates that we live in, most of the year, we're pretty happy about that. In the winter, that door keeps what out? The cold.

In the summer, that door keeps what out? The heat. It enables us to come and go, but it separates. It also protects, doesn't it? Doesn't it protect? At home, you have a door, right? You ever lock it? No. Why? No. Some of you don't. That's good. We live in the country. I get that. But why not? Why is it so important sometimes you lock the door? For safety. That door is protection. It's what keeps just whoever from just strolling right in your house. What if we had a rule, no doors. You can just go around. If you saw a house you wanted to go in, you just walked right on in. How would you feel about that? No, that door is necessary. It protects. It doesn't allow just anyone to come through. It allows passage in and out. And Jesus says, I'm the door. By me, in verse 9, if any man enters in, he shall be saved. And then he shall go in and out and find pasture. It means that Christ allows in and out at his discretion. He can say, open the door and go out when he knows that it's safe. And then he allows back in when he knows that that's best. But it's the understanding that

[ 8 : 12 ] Christ knows best when it's time to go in and when it's time to go out. And that's what it's saying when he says that Jesus, when Jesus says, I am the door. And in verse 10, he says, the thief comes not, but for to steal, kill, and destroy. I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. What is Jesus saying there? He's saying, I want what's best for you.

Isn't that really what he's saying? I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly. God wants us to have a full life, a life that is full of love, a life that is full of peace, a life that is full of all of that. That's God's desire for us. Does that mean we won't go through any difficulties? What if you follow God really closely? Then you won't go through any difficulties, right? Your health will always be good. Finances will always be... Is that the way it works?

No, you'll still go through difficulty. Things will still happen that you wish maybe wouldn't have happened. But God says, I will give you a full life. In the midst of that, I will still give you peace. In the midst of that, I will still give you comfort. In the midst of that, I will still give you strength and let you know that you are not alone. That is what it means to have life and have it more abundantly. Not a lack of problems, but knowing that God will get us through those problems. The other side of that, Jesus says, that's what I want for you. But he talks about a thief.

[ 9 : 42 ] Who's the thief? Satan. And Satan comes and gives three things that Satan wants to do. What are they? Steal, kill, destroy. That is Satan's objective. He wants to tear down, he wants to tear apart, and he wants to destroy. That is Satan's desire. Does he ever accomplish that?

Oh, absolutely. It doesn't take long to look at lives in the world that we live in today and see people's lives that are truly torn apart. See people that are truly beat up and torn down.

That is what Satan desires. Now, Satan doesn't make it look like that. Satan makes sin look good, doesn't he? And then he gets you wrapped up in it, and then all of a sudden things start to unravel. Folks, that is Satan's desire, but it contrasts that here to what Jesus wants, to give life and to give it more abundantly because he wants what is best for us.

And he's not just a door. The other thing he says then in the next verse, in verse 11, I am the good shepherd. And the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. Here's where Jesus compares

himself to that shepherd that watches over the sheep. And isn't that a beautiful picture to have Jesus as a shepherd watching over? So in that example, Jesus is a shepherd, but what are we? [11:09] Sheep. We are the sheep. And what a beautiful picture in your mind to see Jesus just watching over us, taking us to where he wants us to be, bringing us in at night when it's dangerous, letting us out to the pasture. That's God's desire that we have those good things that he watches over us. I want to take a little time this morning and show you some pictures from our trip. Isn't that wonderful? Don't you like looking at people's vacation pictures? I'm going to take about a half hour, 45 minutes to just show you pictures of our trip. Isn't that going to be great?

That is not the purpose of this. I don't want you to think, oh, the pastor did it. Show us pictures when they're on their trip. But you know, the amazing thing to me is wherever you're at, whatever you're doing, God can speak to you through that. God can make his word alive through our lives, our everyday lives. And as we were on our trip, there's some things that just really stood out in my mind that I can't help but share that really came alive to me, one thought in particular. But I want to show you a few pictures and I want you to start to get an idea. All right, beautiful background, isn't it? But I want you to look at the foreground of this picture. What is in front and what is it that you see? Looks like a sheep. It looks like a sheep. It acts like a sheep. So it is a sheep.

It's a sheep. All right, next picture. We have another picture of our vacation. And here we have what? Another sheep. All right, next picture. Oh, more sheep. How about the next picture?

I think we're going the wrong way through these, Chris. Maybe not? Oh, yeah. There we go. What is that? More sheep. Starting to see a theme here? Okay. Next picture.

What do we have? Huh, more sheep. Okay, next picture. All right. What do we have in this picture? [13:20] Sheep. You guys are good. What do you think is going to be in the next picture? Sheep. All right, next picture. Oh, look, more sheep. And I will point out, isn't that a beautiful, that's a church in the background. I didn't go in it, but we took a picture of it. And more sheep.

Beautiful ocean in the background, but what do we have in the foreground? Sheep. More sheep. All right, next picture. And more sheep. You getting tired of looking at sheep yet? And more sheep. If you're not getting the picture, we saw a lot of sheep. A lot more sheep than I've ever seen in my entire life.

All right, next picture. More sheep. Next. More sheep. Next. More sheep. Next. More sheep. More sheep.

Is that it? All right. So we saw all these sheep. You couldn't hardly drive around a bend and there'd be more sheep along the road. And, you know, we got to look in it and these sheep, some of them were in just beautiful locations. They had a nice green pasture. They had water in the background, a stream flowing beside them, there's streams all over. Beautiful places for these sheep to be in. But, you know, as we drove along, there was something that I noticed. You know, when the farmers or the, if you want to call them shepherds, the ones that would take care of the sheep, they would have these fenced in areas where they wanted the sheep to be.

[14:52] What do you think was in those fenced in areas? Everything the sheep would need was in the fenced in area. There was green pasture, there was fresh water, all the things the sheep would need. Isn't that great? You think God does that for us?

Puts us in places where it's what we need is there. Do you believe God supplies all of our needs? Absolutely. And it was a wonderful picture to think about God supplying our needs just like these farmers supplied for the needs of the sheep. But as we drove along, there was also something that I noted about sheep. I want to go through some of these pictures.

All right. Keep going. Stop. Go back one. Do you notice anything different about this picture of a sheep than the rest of the pictures? Let's just say we were taking this picture from the road in the car. So do you deduce anything from this picture of this sheep that's different than the other pictures? Sean nailed it. If we're in a car here and there's the fence, what's the problem?

That sheep is on the wrong side of the fence, right? Is that a good place to be? Why not? Well, yeah, the road's there. The sheep can get run over. He is not on the side where all his needs are going to be taken care of, is he? He is not on the side where the farmer can protect him.

He's on his own. He is on the wrong side of the fence. So we saw this as we drove. Go through. Okay. Go back one. All right. Again, we're taking this from the road. What problem do you see?

[16:50] Okay. Now we don't just have one sheep on the wrong side of the fence. What do we have here? A whole group of sheep on the wrong side of the fence. How do you think that happened?

Fence broke. There was a hole in the fence. Who do you think discovered that breach in the fence, that hole, whatever happened? One sheep. And one sheep decided, I think I'm going out of this fence because I don't know, maybe the grass over there is a little better than the grass I got here. I'm going to go over there and look. And one sheep goes out and then next, what happens next? The next sheep goes out and then the next sheep goes out and then the next sheep goes out and then the next sheep goes out and all of a sudden you got a whole group of sheep outside the fence. All right. Go to the next one. Now, is this a problem?

Many of these roads, this is a nice straight section. Many of the roads were like this and like this. So you're driving along, you come around the curve or you come over the crest of the hill and you see this. Is that a problem? Why?

Speed bump. Would have been quite a speed bump. It is a problem. So even if it's not a problem for the car, it's just a speed bump, is this a problem for the sheep?

[18:20] Yes, because they could very easily get hit. So why are the sheep in the middle of the road? Because they don't know any better.

They got the bright idea. It must be better out there. So let's go check it out. And this is a situation that you end up with. I don't know if there's any more or not.

Go one more. Yeah, okay. Again, similar situation here. That's the mirror on the car, right? And there's a sheep right there by the road. You also notice how far is the visibility off to the side there. Yeah, not very. So we have all this beautiful images of sheep. But everywhere we drove, we saw sheep on the wrong side of the fence.

That's a problem. But as Jesus is talking here, you know the Bible talks about the fact that that is us.

[19:22] We are often the sheep on the wrong side of the fence. I want you to look at a couple other scriptures. I want you to look in the Old Testament in the book of Isaiah.

Isaiah chapter 53. Isaiah 53 verse 6. And you've probably heard this verse before.

Isaiah 53 verse 6. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Again, who's the sheep in this picture that it's talking about? It's us. And how many of us does it say have gone astray? All. What's all mean?

It means all means all. It means every one of us have gone astray. We have turned everyone to what? His own way.

[20:28] Going where we think is best. Having the idea in our mind that we know what is best. We know what's right. We know what's good. We can just set off on our own course. Thinking that we know better than the shepherd.

Thinking that we know better than God. You know, I don't know, but as I looked at those sheep that were all on the wrong side of the fence, I thought at times those sheep aren't very smart. Their needs were all taken care of and yet they still chose to get out of the fence and go where it's dangerous.

Folks, those sheep are us. It says all we like sheep have gone astray. There are times in our lives for all of us when we make our own decisions that are not good ones. We, for whatever reason, think we know better than God that we can set off in our own way, that we have our own definition of right and wrong that is going to lead us where we want to be.

And folks, in that we are the same as sheep. We are not very smart. And I know you might go home and say, the preacher said we weren't very smart. I'm putting myself in that category too.

Whenever we choose to do something that is against what God has for us, we are not being very smart. Because guess what? God always knows what is best for us, doesn't He?

[21:42] Do we? No. I want you to look at another scripture. In Psalms, turn to Psalms, chapter 119. Psalms 119.

It's a very long chapter. Look at the very last verse, verse 176. Psalms 119, verse 176.

Who wrote most of Psalms? David. David was a what? Shepherd. I have gone astray like a lost sheep.

Seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments. You know, this to me is a pretty interesting verse with David having been a shepherd. And he says at the end of this, I do not forget your commandments.

In other words, he knew what God wanted of him. And sometimes even when we know what God wants of us, what can we still do? Go astray. We know what God wants, but we may choose to do otherwise.

[ 22 : 56 ] Does that describe us sometimes? You know, we think of our children. Do they often know what is expected of them? Yes. Do they sometimes do what they want anyway?

Yes. Are we any different from that? No. But David here, the part that I think is impressive, he is willing to admit. He says, I have gone astray like a lost sheep.

He's willing to admit when he has gone the wrong direction. Are we? He is willing to admit that he sometimes makes mistakes. He's willing to admit his faults and recognize his faults.

Folks, it is important that we do that and understand that sometimes we go astray. We have to recognize it and make it right. I want you to look at one more scripture. This is the last one we're going to look at.

It's in Ezekiel. Look in Ezekiel chapter 34. Right before Daniel, Old Testament. Ezekiel 34, verse 6.

[ 23 : 56 ] Ezekiel 34, verse 6. God is speaking in this verse.

Ezekiel 34, verse 6. It says this. Let me just read it. He was saying the people were scattered.

They were where they didn't belong. They had gone outside of God's will. They had gone their own way and they were just scattered all over. And the sad part, it says, none were seeking after them.

They were just letting them go. Folks in the world we live in today, how many sheep are on the wrong side of the fence? If we think of people as sheep, the problem is most of the sheep are on the wrong side of the fence.

The reality is even us as believers, we sometimes find ourselves on the wrong side of the fence.

Outside of where God wants us to be. So what does God want from us?

[ 25 : 15 ] He wants us to admit it, to acknowledge it. When we realize we're not where God wants us to be, to get back where He wants us to be. Jesus said He was the door, right?

That means, you know what He's willing to do? Let us back in. Jesus never says, sorry, you got out. You're on your own now. Instead, He says, you got out.

You went astray. But guess what? If you're willing to admit that and ask forgiveness, I'll let you right back in. Folks, that is a beautiful picture. A picture of a shepherd that loves his sheep.

And you know what? I believe God does everything He can to try to keep us where He wants us to be. You know, there's a couple other pictures. I don't know whether you can find them in there, Chris.

There's a picture of a gate. Somewhere. Somewhere. That's a beautiful picture of the ocean, though, isn't it?

[ 26 : 21 ] Run through it. There's a picture of a gate. You're going to have, like, sheep flashing through your head all week now, right? Right? There. There we go.

What is that? It's a gate. What's the purpose of it? Let the sheep in and let the sheep out. Does God give us a gate?

It's to try to keep the sheep where they need to be. You know, we can think of God's Word as kind of a gate, isn't it? It's God's way of saying, this is what I want for you. You stay within this, and you're going to be where I want you to be.

You listen to this. You follow this. And you're going to be in a good place. Go one more, Chris.

Yeah. Anybody know what that is? These are all over.

You know, you can put up a fence, but you still have to have a road. So they put these in the ground, sheep and horses, whatever. Sheep especially can't walk over it because they're... Little... Hooves.

[ 27 : 30 ] Thank you. Couldn't think of the word. Little hooves will go down in there and get stuck.

So they can't cross that. It's a way to keep them where they're supposed to be. God has given us all kinds of things to keep us where He wants us to be.

He gives us His Word. He gives us His Holy Spirit. But it's up to us. It's up to us. Because there'll be some times we want to follow our own way. There'll be some times we want to follow the crowd.

But God says, no, what I have is always best for you. If you find yourself ever on the wrong side of the fence, know that God is ready to welcome you back. He's ready to say, come back in and be where I will supply your needs.

That is the beautiful picture of Jesus as a shepherd. And you know what? It doesn't matter how far someone has gone astray. Jesus still cares about how many of the sheep?

Every one. All of them. You know, the message this morning isn't complicated. We're sheep. Be on the right side of the fence.

[ 28 : 34 ] Is that complicated? No. But I hope in our lives that we understand how much God loves us that He has provided that pasture, that He has provided all those needs that we have in our lives.

He has provided for us. You know, we think of the 23rd Psalms, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He leadeth me beside the still waters.

He's our shepherd. He will lead us to good things. But we have to be willing to follow. And I pray that we are. And you know, if you're thinking about your life this morning and you think, well, maybe there's some areas where I'm out on the wrong side of the fence.

You got a choice to make. You can stay on the wrong side of the fence. That's your choice. It's not a good place to be. It's not going to lead to anything good. But you can choose to stay on the wrong side of the fence. Or you can say, Lord, forgive me.

And when you do that, He opens the door and brings you back in to where you need to be. If this morning you know there's some things in your life that have gotten you on the wrong side of the fence, the altar is going to be open.

[ 29 : 43 ] You can come up here and pray about it. You can pray in your seat. But talk to the Father and make sure you are where He wants you to be. Let's pray. Lord God, thank You again for this morning.

And I thank You for the reminders that You give us, for the examples that You give us to help us understand. And the reality is we are like sheep. We go astray. We go on the wrong side of the fence.

But Lord, I pray in those times that we do that You help us to realize it, to admit it, to seek forgiveness and to get back where You want us to be, back in that pasture that You have prepared for us. Thank You for the shepherd of Jesus Christ that is willing to lay down His life for us.

Thank You for that, Lord. And I pray that each and every day we understand how blessed we are to have a shepherd like that that loves us. We ask and pray these things in His name.

Amen.