

I Am the Good Shepherd

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 November 2021

Preacher: James Ross

[0 : 00] This reading comes from the book of Micah, Micah chapter 5.

We're going to read the first nine verses of that chapter as we continue in John 10 where Jesus describes himself as the good shepherd. We have here in Micah 5 another prophecy where God would send his shepherd king for his people.

Words that we perhaps are used to hearing at Christmas as we think about the coming of Jesus. And so Micah chapter 5 and the first nine verses, let's hear God's word together.

Marshal your troops now, city of troops, for a siege is laid against us. They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod.

But you, Bethlehem, Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.

[1 : 18] Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites.

He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

And he will be our peace. When the Assyrians invade our land and march through our fortresses, we will raise against them seven shepherds, even eight commanders, who will rule the land of Assyria with the sword, the land of Nimrod with drawn sword.

He will deliver us from the Assyrians when they invade our land and march across our borders. The remnant of Jacob will be in the midst of many peoples, like dew from a Lord, like showers on the grass, which do not wait for anyone or depend on man.

The remnant of Jacob will be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among flocks of sheep, which mauls and mangles as it goes and no one can rescue.

[2 : 30] Your hand will be lifted up in triumph over your enemies, and all your foes will be destroyed. Amen.

Now let's once again come before God in prayer. Let's pray. Lord, our God, we thank you for the Bible.

We thank you that it is your true and living word. We thank you for these scriptures which are able to make us wise for salvation. These words of truth that are God-breathed and are useful for us and are essential for our lives of faith and godliness.

Lord, we pray that you would make us a church that lives by your word. Now we pray that as families and as individuals, we be people of your word. Help us to read and to listen and to do.

Lord, we thank you for your kindness and your mercy and your grace in our salvation. Lord, as we recognize all that we receive from you by your spirit and through your son Jesus, we ask that you would give us a sense of worship, a desire to live with grateful obedience.

[3 : 47] And Lord, we also pray that you would help us to reflect your character in our lives. Help us to be those who are kind. Help us to be those who are quick to show mercy, who extend grace and compassion to others in our thoughts and in our words.

Lord, help us to be, as Jesus described himself, as the light of the world and then said to the church, you are the light of the world. May we reflect the light of the Lord Jesus in our day-to-day lives.

Lord, today we want to give you thanks for marriages. Lord, we are especially thankful to you for Fergus and Delina and for their marriage.

We thank you for them, for their faithfulness to one another and to you, for their love and service. Lord, we thank you for every marriage within our church and within our families, and we ask that you would protect and guard.

We pray for marriages, Christian marriages, that are rooted on your word, that are full of grace. My Lord, just as you said that marriage presents a picture of the gospel, of the wonderful love of Jesus for his church.

[5 : 17] May people see in us a glimpse of your love in the way that husbands and wives love and serve one another.

Lord, we pray today for your church, for your church here in Scotland and in the UK. Lord, especially as we're asked to pray today for rural congregations, we do remember the church in our towns and villages and small communities, perhaps places where there has been a lot of depopulation, where there may be issues of unemployment, perhaps where the church is small and fragile, where it's hard to find someone who will come and be minister there.

Lord, we ask that you would build up your church. Lord, we think especially of Tain and Fern, up in the northeast. Lord, we thank you for Alistair Macaulay and for Andrew McLeod up there as they seek to minister.

Lord, we pray as they look ahead to running a Christianity Explored course shortly, may you bring to that course those who are interested to discover what Christianity is all about, who perhaps have questions about Jesus, and may they come to know truth and life in him.

Lord, we pray for them too as they look to build a new church building. We ask that you provide the finances, that you give the practical support, so that that would happen swiftly, that a new centre for worship might be established.

[6 : 55] Lord, we also remember the small congregation on the island of Mull, over in the west. We remember them without a minister. Lord, we pray for that small fellowship that you would enable them to continue a living witness in that island.

We pray that you would strengthen their links with Oban, that they might encourage one another. Lord, we pray that the light of the Lord Jesus would shine in that island through the lives of your people.

Lord, we also want to pray as COP26 has just finished, that those outcomes and resolutions would find themselves being worked out in national policies and in business and industry.

Lord, we pray that you would help governments and businesses and individuals, and we include ourselves in that, to be wise and responsible stewards of your world.

I pray for richer nations like ourselves to do our part, to provide generous justice. Lord, we pray for those nations that we kept hearing of who are at greatest risk.

[8 : 14] Some have huge populations like Bangladesh, others like the Marshall Islands, just tens of thousands, but each individual precious to you, made in your image.

Lord, we pray for them in their anxiety. We pray for them in the disasters that come so frequently. Lord, may you have mercy. May you enable nations and organizations to provide help and support.

Lord, most of all, we pray for the good news of the Lord Jesus to come to all the nations of the earth. Lord, that people would recognize our most urgent and pressing need is to be right with our Creator and Savior.

And so we pray for gospel work in the nations, gospel work in hard places. Lord, that there would be encouragement. Lord, that there would be people who would come to put their faith in the Lord Jesus today and to live for Him today.

Lord, we remember too some of those places where it becomes evident that life is so difficult for some. We think of the border between Belarus and Poland.

[9 : 25] Lord, we think of the migrants streaming out of Venezuela. Lord, people risking everything for the sake of a better life.

Lord, the needs and challenges for so many in our world today are so great. Lord, we pray that you would give us compassion. Lord, that we would call on you for mercy.

And again, we pray that your redeeming love, your saving love, I would come to many who find themselves in despair, in dark places, in hard places today.

And now, Lord, as we come again to read your word and to consider it together, may you speak and may we be listening. In Jesus' name, amen.

Now, can we turn in our Bibles to John chapter 10? John chapter 10 from verse 11 to verse 30.

[10 : 35] We're going to focus on verses 11 to 18, but I want to read more widely. So John 10, beginning at verse 11, where we read, I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away.

Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me, just as the father knows me and I know the father.

And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

The reason my father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

[11 : 38] I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my father. The Jews who heard these words were again divided. Many of them said he is demon possessed and raving mad.

Why? Listen to him. But others said, these are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind? Then came the festival of dedication at Jerusalem.

It was winter and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's colony. The Jews who were there gathered around him saying, How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.

Jesus answered, I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my father's name testify about me. But you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice.

I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. My father who has given them to me is greater than all.

[12 : 46] No one can snatch them out of my father's hand. I and the father are one. So we're thinking about this fourth of the seven I am sayings where Jesus says, I am the good shepherd.

But I want us to begin thinking about work. Perhaps you can remember applying for the job that you're in or applying for a new job.

And things that you look for will be the job spec. And most often they'll come with a character profile. And those are important because they tell us, here's what the job involves.

Helps us answer the question, do I have the necessary skills and experience to do this task? It's always interesting, I think, to learn about other jobs from industries that you know nothing about.

To hear about different roles and responsibilities, the challenges, the burdens, the joys that come in different workplaces. And now my presumption today is that when we come to listen to Jesus talk about his being a good shepherd, and we find ourselves in a global city like Edinburgh, I'm going to presume that not too many of us know too much about shepherding.

[14 : 04] Some of us do, but many of us don't. Whenever I come to this passage, I cannot help but remember my disaster in a kids' club in Manila, in the Philippines.

I had this extended, wonderful children's lesson on Jesus the good shepherd, only to discover they didn't know what a sheep was, they'd never seen a sheep, and we had to go right back to basics.

So I'm not going to fall into that trap. And what actually Jesus does for us, because we might hear Jesus say, I'm the good shepherd, well that sounds really nice. Maybe we've seen some Christian art and we think of peace and we think of beauty and we get all kinds of conceptions, but what Jesus does, if we listen to him, is he lays out for us, here is the job spec, here is the character profile of God's good shepherd.

Here's how I have come to fulfill this role perfectly. So as we study verses 10 to 18 together, we'll hear Jesus speak of his commitment, of his knowledge, of his going out and seeking, and of his voluntary sacrifice.

So he builds up for us a true picture of what it looks like for Jesus to be the good shepherd. So it helps us learn about Jesus and his work, but I also think it's going to help us to consider our own human condition, and I also hope it'll let us learn some things about the church.

[15 : 40] So let's begin by thinking about the commitment of Jesus, the good shepherd. You can look with me at verses 11 to 13, where Jesus says, I'm the good shepherd, the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

The hired hand, not the shepherd, does not own the sheep, so when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Last week, Jesus drew a contrast. He said, there's a shepherd and there are thieves and robbers.

This time, the contrast is between a hired worker and the shepherd who owns the sheep. And what's the contrast that Jesus is making? He's saying there's a difference in the level of care that is extended by these two, especially when danger comes, especially when the wolves come.

Jesus says, only the shepherd will stand in the gap. Only the shepherd will fight for his sheep. Why is that? It's because the sheep belong to him.

It's because of that belonging that there is that tender care for the flock. Now, we read that wonderful promise in the Old Testament from Micah chapter 5, promising a shepherd king would come.

[17 : 00] And that shepherd king would stand and he would shepherd his flock. Commitment and watchfulness. And the gospel writers tell us, this is speaking about Jesus.

We think about the commitment of Jesus anticipated in Micah and we discover our good shepherd is one who cares for his people. Who protects his people, who provides for us with absolute commitment, not just when the going is good.

To the extent that, as Jesus says, the good shepherd will lay down his life for his sheep. Jesus, ready to sacrifice himself for the sake of his people, his flock.

Here is Jesus, once again, anticipating the work of Calvary and his death on the cross. So, what do we learn about Jesus?

Remember when Jesus says, I am, he's using the Old Testament name of God. So, Jesus is saying, I am God and I am the shepherd for my people. I am committed to care for my own.

[18 : 13] They belong to me and I fight for them. In the Old Testament, the great shepherd king was David. David had to fight against bears and lions.

And that sounds scary. That was big trouble. But King Jesus has come to face down an even greater enemy and danger.

Jesus has come to save, to protect us from Satan, from sin that leads to death. So, what does Jesus teach us about the human condition?

Imagine when he says, I'm the shepherd and we're like sheep and there's wolves. Think about the animal imagery for a moment. You know, Jesus could have used another image, but he didn't.

He didn't say, people are like lions, where we're an apex predator and we're strong and we have no enemies. Or he could have said, people are like horses, strong and majestic.

[19 : 11] But he didn't. He said, we're like sheep. The Bible says, people are like sheep because we are prone to danger. Here, Jesus uses wolves to point out the danger.

In Jesus' teaching, he talked about wolves in sheep's clothing. Those false teachers who would claim to show us the way to God were without showing us Jesus.

Anyone claiming truth but rejecting Jesus is a wolf in sheep's clothing. And so, there is that danger that the church always needs to be aware of, of false teaching and false teachers.

The Bible, too, as we think a bit more widely, uses animal imagery to speak of the greater danger that we face.

Way back at the beginning of the Bible, Genesis chapter 4, we meet Cain and Abel, two brothers. One, Abel brings a sacrifice that God is pleased with. And Cain is angry and jealous.

[20 : 18] And God comes to him and says, sin is crouching at your door, ready to pound. And Cain doesn't listen and Cain doesn't resist temptation and he murders his brother.

There is the danger of sin that crouches like an animal ready to pound. So, then 1 Peter, Peter in his letter describes the devil as being like a roaring lion, being an enemy, an adversary determined to destroy.

So, we need to recognize these destructive forces that are intent on destroying and recognize that without Jesus, the good shepherd, we are powerless.

And we will find ourselves far from God, far from true life, far from the security that he provides. And so, as we recognize that, Jesus is giving us an invitation, an opportunity to trust him, to recognize he is a committed shepherd, king, and savior.

His death on the cross for sin and for sinners is evidence of his commitment to you and to me. And to think, what can we learn about the church from this section and from Jesus talking about himself as the good shepherd compared to the hired hand?

[21 : 38] I think it's a reminder to us that one of the pictures that the Bible gives for a church minister or for its elders is shepherds or under shepherds.

We are not the shepherd. The church does not belong to a minister or to a group of elders. And that's profoundly good news.

Your hope is not in human leadership. And that's good news because we will fail. But Jesus doesn't. Jesus is our good shepherd and he remains committed to caring for his church.

Now, let's move from there to the next section. Wonderful truths there in verse 14 and 15 when we think about the knowledge of Jesus, the good shepherd.

So, if the idea of shepherding contains with it the idea of care, it makes sense that that implies relationship between sheep and shepherd.

[22 : 44] We put that in human terms. Think about children with parents or teachers. Think about a patient with a doctor. And we understand that a good relationship, a level of trust is important for that good care to happen.

And Jesus talks about this wonderful relationship that he has with his people, the church. Verse 14, I am the good shepherd and my sheep know me just as the Father knows me.

And I know the Father and I lay down my life for the sheep. So, let's begin with this truth. Jesus says, my sheep know me.

So, here is this privilege. Here is Jesus and he is God and he is saying that by faith we can know, we can enter into relationship with him. And who is Jesus to us?

He is the one who is fully committed to saving us. He is the one who has announced that he has come to give life and to give life to the fool. He is the one who has said he will give his own life to save us.

[23 : 50] And it's this God that we are invited to know. We are invited into a living relationship. That's wonderful. Our God isn't distant and disconnected. We have a Savior who is personal.

And that relationship grows as the Father and the Son send the Spirit to live in our hearts so God himself lives within us. That relationship grows as we hear him speak to us in his word.

That relationship grows as we pray to him. As we share life with the people of God, we learn from one another and we see more of Jesus in one another.

And all of these ways help us to know and to grow in our knowledge and our trust and our love and our thankfulness to the Lord Jesus.

It's a wonderful thing to be able to say, I know Jesus. But that's not all he talks about. He has something absolutely mind-blowing to say when he says, I know my sheep and my sheep know me just as the Father knows me and I know the Father.

[25 : 05] There is something in this relationship that mirrors the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. And what do we know about that relationship between the Father and the Son?

We can spend hours there, but we know it's a relationship of eternal love, where each delights in the other, where there is intimacy. And our privilege then is to be brought into the overflow of that eternal love and delight.

Jesus knows us and loves us and takes delight in us. Here we're brought to the very heartbeat of the gospel.

We know Jesus because he knows us. We love Jesus because he first loved us and gave his life to rescue us, to bring us to himself.

Jesus is teaching us some wonderful things about himself. He's teaching us that he is in the closest possible relationship with God the Father. Jesus is not just another teacher.

[26 : 20] He's not just a religious leader. He is the very Son of God, the one who has come to reveal God and his glory to us.

But not only that, Jesus is also in the closest possible relationship with his people. It's a wonderful thing about the gospel that we can say that Jesus knows us.

He knows us inside out. He knows us better than we know ourselves. That includes all our sin, all our shame, all our issues, and is pleased to love us, is pleased to give us grace.

When we would want to run in shame and hide away, Jesus comes to seek us and find us and to welcome us home. When we think about ourselves as people, doesn't this relationship that Jesus extends to us, doesn't that meet the very deepest longing that we have in our hearts?

That longing to be truly known by someone and to be accepted by them, and to be loved with that kind of love? And here is Jesus saying, I give you that invitation to the love we're all looking for.

[27 : 39] He invites us all the way in. Here is one relationship that will never disappoint, where that love will never be removed for all eternity. And then as we think about that as the people of God, what do we learn about our life as the church?

Don't we learn that we have the most wonderful privilege in all the world? That here we have in Jesus the promise of security when perhaps others let us down.

Here is the promise of one who will be right beside us to comfort us when perhaps we feel all alone in the world. Here is reason to give thanks and to worship because of the knowledge of Jesus, the good shepherd.

Let's see where he goes next. Look at verse 16 with me. And think about the seeking of Jesus the good shepherd. He says there, I have other sheep that are not of this sheepfold.

I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. So our picture changes again.

[28 : 50] We have a sheepfold, and there is security there. But the shepherd is not there. There is a flock that is already gathered, but our shepherd, he is on the move, isn't he?

He is on the lookout for others. He is going out to find still others to bring them in. And this speaks to the mission of Jesus. In the setting, Jesus is saying to us, he's not just come as a savior for the people of Israel.

He's not just come to be a savior for the Jews. That would be too small a thing, the Bible says. Rather, he's come to be good news for the whole world. Now, this is very different from the teaching and the mindset of a lot of the religious leaders who are very sort of narrow.

We are the people of God, and we need to hold on to that identity. Jesus recognizes his grace. God's grace extends beyond those boundaries. Notice too, when it comes to the mission of Jesus, the effectiveness of this mission.

Jesus says, I must bring them, and they will listen, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. Jesus is in control. Therefore, his mission is certain.

[30 : 04] That's good news. And we'll think about that. So Jesus, the seeking shepherd, he fulfills the mission of God. A very quick survey of the story of the Bible shows us that at the heart of the story of salvation, it is God seeking to bring sinners to himself through his chosen one.

So back in Genesis chapter 3, after Adam and Eve sin and rebel against God in the garden, they're given a great promise that one of their seed would come, and he would crush the head of the serpent.

This seed would come and win a great victory, though it would come at suffering to himself. We think about the cross, and we see that fulfilled there with Jesus. And then that promise to Abraham in Genesis 12, that one of his seed would bring blessing to the nations.

And Jesus comes, and he announces that he's good news to the nations. He is the fulfillment of that great promise. Again, towards the end of the Old Testament, we have Isaiah announcing God's chosen one as light to the nations, as salvation to the nations, and that's picked up in the Gospels, because the Gospel writers recognize, and Jesus declares that he is that light, he is that hope of salvation.

We hear Jesus saying he's come to seek and to save the lost. He picks up that image. And we have him in Acts chapter 1, verse 8, just before returning to the glory of heaven, saying to his disciples, the apostles, you'll be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

[31 : 43] It's not just for a few, it's for many. And then we get to the very end of the Bible, Revelation chapter 7, in verse 9, we get this wonderful picture of worshipers from every tribe, from every people, and every language, and they're gathered around the throne of God and of the Lamb.

And that's the point where the seeking and the saving is complete. But up until that point, until the return of Jesus, that mission continued, Jesus is still, through his word, through his spirit, by his church, seeking and saving to bring people in.

And that says something to us today, especially if you're not a Christian, here today, it says that today is a day of opportunity, a day of invitation.

Here is the voice of Jesus, the good shepherd, calling to us in the gospel, saying, I have lived the perfect life that you could never live. I've died in your place for your sin.

I've risen for your salvation. Were you trusting? Today, do you know your needs of Jesus?

[32 : 53] Are you aware that all is not well between you and God because of sin? Let me encourage you, don't let anything hold you back. Don't put it off for a more convenient day, but rather believe in Jesus today.

Join the flock of God today by trusting in Jesus. Verse 16 also has something really important to say to us as a church.

It says, here is the mission of Jesus, to go out and to seek and save and bring people in. That means the mission of the church has to be that same mission.

That God's plan for the world should lead us to prioritize mission. For those of us who are members of this church, perhaps if you get the news sheet, you may have noticed that we have just recently decided to set up a mission support fund where we want to set aside a significant amount of our money every year to support people involved in mission locally and nationally around Scotland and internationally.

And we do that because we believe that that's the mission of God. That's what God would want us to do as his church. This week I came across a book called the St. Andrews Seven.

[34 : 15] And it's a story about mission. Thomas Chalmers, one of the founding fathers of the free church in the 1820s, was teaching in St. Andrews University.

And the book of St. Andrews Seven tells the story of seven of the best and the brightest who were training for ministry, but as they were in this Bible college, they decided that the best thing for them to do, as they felt God's call on their life, was to leave Scotland behind and to go to India, one of the great mission fields at the time.

And they gave 141 years combined of their life to extend God's kingdom in India. And it's because of verses like this.

It's because of the mission of Jesus. I have other sheep that are not of this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

Here is the hope and the power for mission. The call of Jesus is what makes mission possible. There are still others to be brought in. Until Jesus returns, there are still others to be brought in.

[35 : 24] And they are scattered in the world. Jesus said, they're not in the flock already, so we need to go and we need to bring the good news to them. And our confidence isn't rooted in ourselves.

It's the fact that the Lord Jesus has committed to bring them home. And if he brings and if he calls, they will listen and they will come.

So we have this wonderful confidence as we go in mission locally, nationally, internationally. Because we're going on the mission of God. We're going on the mission of Jesus, the seeking Savior.

One last thing to notice from our verses. So important. The sacrifice of Jesus, the good shepherd. Verse 17. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it up again.

No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. So at this point in the Gospels, Jesus is more than aware that there are enemies who are plotting against him.

[36 : 38] That he's been facing rejection and opposition and he knows that they are conspiring to kill him. But the point that he makes to his enemies is to say, you can't take my life from me.

You don't set the timetable because my Father dies. Even when Jesus is arrested and he's on trial, he says, you would have no power unless God my Father was pleased to give it to you.

Here is Jesus. I am, he is God and he is total authority and with that total authority, what's he going to do? He says he's going to lay down his life for his sheep.

He's going to sacrifice himself and he's going to take that life back up again in resurrection. And he does it to obey his Father's command.

So Jesus knows, comes into the world, he knows that the cross is vital and fundamental to God's eternal plan of salvation. He knows, too, that the cross represents a fulfillment of Scripture.

[37 : 52] Scripture was always preparing for the reality that a perfect, voluntary sacrifice must be given. Not of an animal, but of a perfect person.

A substitute who would wash his people clean from sin once and for all, who would end slavery to sin, who would give new life through his life given.

And Jesus knows that he has come to fulfill that role. What is Jesus saying to us about himself and about his death here? He's saying, when we think about the cross, we are not to think of Jesus as a helpless victim.

We're not to think of the cross as an accident of fate and circumstance. We're not to think of the cross as the waste of a good life, one who died young and could have done so much more.

Rather, we are to think of it, of the self-giving sacrifice of Jesus in order to save his sheep. We are to see in the cross the demonstration of the love of God.

[38 : 57] Here is Jesus, the Son of God, willing to bear our sin, willing to take our place to suffer God's wrath as the only way to save us.

In the teaching of Jesus here, he's saying something about our human condition that really humbles us or should humble us when we consider it. Blaise Pascal, the mathematician, said helpfully, I think, the incarnation, the coming of Jesus into our world, the incarnation, shows man the greatness of his wretchedness through the greatness of the remedy provided.

In other words, what Pascal is saying, that we may be tempted to think that our sin is no big deal. So long as it doesn't hurt anyone, so long as it doesn't get us in jail, no big deal.

Perhaps we may be tempted to think that our needs of God and his salvation are no big deal. We perhaps wouldn't appreciate just how desperate our condition is until we look at the cross, until we see that remedy.

The only way for us to be saved and forgiven and to have peace with God is if Jesus, the Son of God, will give his life in place of us. So as we look at the cross, as we look at the cost to Jesus to bring us home to God, that we understand our desperate situation and we understand how great is God's salvation.

[40 : 43] What do we learn too about the church? As we think about this whole image of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, don't we understand that we are only in God's flock by God's grace so it's never a case for pride, rather grateful worship.

If we belong to Jesus, it's because of the love of God. It's because of the obedience of the Son. It's because of that effective call of Jesus to us. It's because Jesus knows us.

It's because Jesus chose to lay down his life for us. So our hymn of praise should be forever Jesus.

Let's ask God to fill our hearts and our minds with that sense of gratitude for grace received. That it would give us a sense of joy, it would give us security, it would give us hope for the future, it would give us a sense of our mission as the people of God.

So we spent a couple of weeks in John chapter 10 thinking around the issue of Jesus, the good shepherd. And in light of all that we've seen, I guess the question as we finish would be, what other shepherd would we want in our lives?

[41 : 58] Who else would we want to lead us and to provide for us, to guide us, to care for us? Who else can offer this safety and security? Who else can give us life like Jesus?

us. We could, and often we can and do, look elsewhere. We look into ourselves, we look to a career or education or to performance of various kinds and we think, that's going to give us security and joy and peace and hope.

Friends, why would we? When we think about what Jesus has said about himself and what Jesus has done for us, he is Jesus and he is God. He said, I'll give you all that I need and he gives himself.

He says, I will save you and protect you and he goes to the furthest length he dies for us to prove it. He is the one who can bring us into life, into life eternal.

So the call again is to listen and to believe Jesus when he says, I am the good shepherd and the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

[43 : 03] Let's pray together. Our Father in heaven, we thank you for this wonderful chapter from your word and we thank you for all it reveals about the work and the character of Jesus, the good shepherd.

Thank you for his commitment to his church, his promise to protect and to guard us and to bring us home to glory.

We thank you for the wonderful knowledge of Jesus. Thank you that we can know him and thank you that he knows us.

Thank you that we're brought into that perfect, loving relationship and fellowship with the living God through Jesus, our good shepherd.

Lord, thank you for the mission of Jesus. Thank you that he continues to call people to himself. Lord, as we have heard your word, as we have heard the gospel, as the call of Jesus has gone out, we pray for any who aren't yet Christians that they might hear that call and turn to him, to trust in him as their Lord and Savior.

[44 : 23] Lord, we thank you for the sacrifice of Jesus, Jesus who had all power and authority, being willing to give his life to save us. Lord, may these never become commonplace ideas, but may they be the very foundation of our life and our worship.

May they give us hope and strength and peace and joy. And we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Now, our closing hymn is Forever Jesus and we'll stand to sing together.

Amen. Thank you.