

I Am the Good Shepherd

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[0 : 00] I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.

The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger.

In fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice. Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.

Therefore Jesus said again, I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

[0 : 57] I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns 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 sheep pen. 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.

[2 : 04] 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. This command I received from my father.

At these words, the Jews 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? Thanks, Chris. Many of you will have noticed that I am not Johnny.

Johnny is away this weekend. He is speaking in Dublin at a church weekend for Grosvenor Road Baptist Church, the church that he served his apprenticeship in.

So we can be praying for Johnny as he is up there speaking to the church. But in this place, we have Michael Grant. The name is familiar. Johnny's father.

[3 : 11] It is great to have you with us this morning, Michael. And if I can invite you up as you share God's word with us this morning. I knew he wasn't Johnny.

He's got more hair than Johnny. Anyway, it's good to be with you once again and to be able to share from God's word.

And as you've already heard, we're looking today at the good shepherd. And I think last week you looked at I am the bread.

And we see in John chapter 10 and verse 11, the same thoughts on I am.

I am the bread of life. And here in verse 11 of chapter 10 of John, we have I am the good shepherd. Of course, there are lots of descriptions regarding the Lord Jesus Christ.

[4 : 18] And all of them describe something of his attributes, something of his character, if you like, something of his beauty. And it's true of this particular description from the words of the Lord Jesus himself.

It's very beautiful. I am the Lord's shepherd. I am the Lord is my shepherd, says the psalmist. And here it is. I am the good shepherd.

There was a commentator by the name of John Brown who lived a number of years ago. And he was studying these words. And this is what he said about them.

They are at once transparently clear and unfathomably deep. There is much important truth on the surface. There is more, much more beneath it.

Much meaning meets the year, but more meets the mind. The words express much. They suggest more.

[5 : 21] They are replete with emphasis. And if you want that in everyday English, a child can understand these words.

I am the good shepherd and can gain much from it. Some of us who were brought up through Sunday school, we heard the story of the good shepherd and the seeking shepherd who went out to look for the lost sheep.

And we understood it. And we gained something from it. And yet there is something here. If we have studied the scriptures for the whole of our lives, we can still learn more.

And I would suggest to you this morning that as we look at this subject of the Lord Jesus being a good shepherd, that our minds are open to receive things that perhaps we have not heard before, that will encourage us, not only now, but in the very day of our death also, when we shall meet face to face with the good shepherd.

But to interpret this with these words of the Lord Jesus, we need to see that the idea of the shepherd is firmly rooted in the Old Testament scriptures.

[6 : 38] We tend to look at a shepherd through our Western eyes, and we see, as I did when I was coming over from Killa today, we look at fields, and we see sheep in them.

And there's all things that can go wrong with sheep. And the shepherd has to go to the field and look out for things, particularly this time of the year when there's lambing going on.

And we tend to think of a shepherd in those terms, but we dare not think of a shepherd in those terms. We think of an Eastern shepherd, and we think of one who, in this particular title of the Lord Jesus, a title that is firmly rooted in the Old Testament.

It reminds me of a story of somebody who was taking a group of young people over to the Holy Land, so-called, and he was taking them over, and he was giving talks each day about various aspects of life in the Holy Land.

And one of the talks this particular morning was on the good shepherd who goes before and calls his sheep by name, and they follow him. If you go out to Israel, indeed I've seen it in Spain as well, a shepherd going before, and the sheep following after the shepherd, leading them to the good pasture.

[8 : 09] And the pastor who was leading this particular group said, well, it's a good thing to do, and it's a lovely story of the shepherd leading the sheep.

And he was telling the people about this. Well, as they were going out on their coach tour that particular day to one of the sites, they saw some sheep going along the road, but the man wasn't in front.

He was behind. And they were saying, I thought you said the shepherd goes ahead. Well, he does, he said. I can't understand this.

Stop the coach. Stop the coach. So he went back and spoke to this man. And there was nodding and talking going on. And eventually he comes back to the coach, and he says, well, I found out the secret.

That wasn't the shepherd. That was the butcher. The butcher drives his sheep. The shepherd leads his sheep. And thank God for a shepherd who leads his sheep.

[9 : 14] So let's look at this story together. Let's see that the title suggests the deity of the Lord Jesus. I am the good shepherd.

Just a few chapters before in chapter 8 and verse 58, Jesus says to the people, before Abraham was born, I am.

And the people are ready to stone him because he said that. They said, you're a man, and yet you're making yourself equal with God.

That's not correct. And they're ready to stone him. I am was a title that spoke of deity. So when we read these words, I am the good shepherd, it's saying that Jesus is truly God.

I am is rooted way back in Exodus chapter 3. Remember that Moses was out in the desert. He was watching sheep.

[10:23] And he sees a bush that's burning with fire. And yet it's not consumed. And Moses goes over to look at this bush to see exactly what is happening.

And God speaks to him from the bush. He tells him to take his shoes off because he's standing on holy ground. And then in Exodus 3 and verse 6, he says, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.

And Moses is terrified because he's face to face with the living God. And God speaks to Moses and says, I've chosen you to lead my people out of the land of bondage, out of the land of slavery, into the land of Egypt.

You're going to be the leader. Now, Joseph, Moses rather, doesn't like the job description. And he argues with God. He doesn't want to go. Let somebody else go.

I can't speak. And he goes through all the arguments. And then in verse 13 of that same passage, he says, Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, The God of our fathers has sent me to you.

[11:41] And they ask me, What is his name? What shall I tell them? And God says to Moses, This is my name. I am that I am.

Tell them, I am has sent me to you. What does it mean, I am? Well, God was making known to Moses that he was unchanging.

That he was Yahweh, Jehovah, the one who would be with him. He would be with Moses. His presence would go with Moses.

His power would be with Moses. He would go with him in order to accomplish the task of bringing the people out of the land of slavery into the land of promise.

I am the ever-present one, the unchanging one. We, for ourselves, are always changing.

[12:48] We cannot be everywhere present. I am here today. I don't expect to be here tomorrow.

Because I'm here today, I cannot be in my own local church in Middleton. And the day will come when I will pass from the scene of time.

And they will speak of Michael Grant in the past tense. He was. Etc. But the God that we serve and the God who reveals Himself to us in the person of the Lord Jesus is the I Am.

In the Lord Jesus, we have One who is eternally present with us. I am the Good Shepherds. We have the eternal presence of the eternal God in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So when Jesus says this, I am the Good Shepherd, He is making it clear that He is the eternal, ever-present One.

[14:05] I am the bread of life, always there to satisfy us. I am the resurrection and the life. He is the eternal life.

And our life is in Him. He is the bread. He is the resurrection and the life. He is the Good Shepherd, the I Am.

I am the Good Shepherd. And that again speaks to us of the One who is eternal.

If you were listening to Jesus' words for the first time over there in the land of Israel as it is today, you would immediately go back to the Old Testament Scriptures.

The New Testament wouldn't have been available for these people. It was yet to be written. So their Scriptures were the Old Testament Scriptures. What were the Scriptures that they would think of as Jesus says, I am the Good Shepherd?

[15:13] They would think of Psalm 23 and verse 1. The Lord, Yahweh, Jehovah, is my shepherd.

And yet Jesus is saying, I am the Good Shepherd. He was saying that that shepherd that David spoke of in the 23rd Psalm, that's me, I manifest in the flesh.

They would think of perhaps Psalm 95 and verse 6. Come, let us bow down in worship. Let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker, for He is our God and we are the people of His pasture, the flock under His care, the concern of a shepherd who's worthy of worship and praise.

And the psalmist is thinking of Him being not only our Lord and Maker, but the one who watches over Him personally and over His people.

Or maybe they would think of the prophecy of Ezekiel, chapter 34 and verse 15. I myself will tend my sheep and make them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord.

[16:35] So thinking of this title that the Lord Jesus gives to Himself, He's clearly demonstrating that He is the eternal I Am, that He is the Good Shepherd, that He is the shepherd who was spoken of in the New Testament, who is now being manifest in the flesh.

My friends, when we think of this, it should cause us to praise and worship. We are His people. He has come down to where we are to bring deliverance for us, to deliver us from the, not only sin, but the power of sin.

It should thrill our hearts. It should cause us to wonder, to stand in awe. And if we are true Christians today, we can say with Peter, as he does in 1 Peter 2 and verse 25, For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls. You have been brought into the fold of God through the One who was eternally God who came down to live among us.

[18 : 02] The Lord reveals His deity in these words. But also in these words, the Lord reveals His destiny. And what was His destiny?

Well again, if you go back to verse 11, we see I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

We have the same thought in the latter part of verse 14. I lay down my life, says the good shepherd. We have the same thought in verse 17.

The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life. Jesus is speaking to His disciples amongst others and He's telling them what is going to happen.

He will become even more specific later on as He goes to Gethsemane. And He says to His disciples in Matthew 26 and verse 31, This very night you will all fall away on account of Me, for it is written, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.

[19 : 20] Which is a direct reference to Zechariah 13 and verse 7. So when we think of this particular I am of Jesus, we have to associate it with His death.

He is different to others who came before Him. Jesus refers to them in this passage as hirelings. What happened to the hired hand?

Well, Jesus contrasts Himself with the hired hand. In verse 12, He says, The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep.

So when He sees the wolf coming, He abandons the sheep and runs away. He doesn't care and He doesn't have an interest in the flock.

Soon, not only the wolf would attack, but the pack of wolves would attack the Lord Jesus. There would be the chief priests, the Pharisees, Herod, Pilate.

[20 : 27] They would all attack Him in one way or another. But He doesn't run because He cares for the sheep. The Good Shepherd knew that He came, yes, eternally God, but He becomes man in order that He might die there upon the cross of Calvary.

He becomes obedient to death, even death upon the cross. He lays down His life because He's not the hired hand and He lays down His life gladly and willingly.

Look at verse 18. No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it again. This command have I received from the Father.

Oh, there was ample opportunity for Jesus to run away as hired hands did. But He didn't run. He went all the way to Calvary.

[21 : 49] He lays down His life as the good shepherd. No one took His life from Him.

He lay it down of Himself. Think of this for a moment. Jesus goes to Gethsemane.

We know that He could have called the legions of angels to come to His aid, but He does not. He prays, Father, if You be willing, take this cup from Me, this cup of suffering, this cup of death.

Yet, not My will, but Yours be done. And as He prays, we are told His sweat was as it were drops of blood falling to the ground.

He was in agony as He faced death upon the cross because He was going to bear the sins of many there upon the cross. As He's in the garden, we see Judas approaching with the officials and the chief priests and the Pharisees.

[23 : 07] and they're all armed to the teeth. And John, giving his account of this particular happening, says in John 18 and verse 4 that Jesus speaks to these crowds that are coming to get Him.

Who is it you want? Jesus of Nazareth, they reply. And then Jesus says, I am He.

And we're told that they fell backwards. Who's in charge of the situation? Is it those that are armed to the teeth? No, they're not in charge of the situation.

When Jesus said, I am He, they drew back and fell to the ground. And only then does Jesus allow them to take Him away to be crucified.

He lays down His life as the Good Shepherd. And He lays down His life to bring a people to Himself.

[24 : 26] It's not just that He dies a martyr's death as others have done for various religions of the world. But He lays down His life, we are told, for the sheep.

He says it in verse 11 that He lays down His life for the sheep. Again, we have it in the latter part of verse 14. I lay down My life for the sheep.

Who were these sheep? Well, they certainly included Jews, but they also included Gentiles. It included people like you and I.

Verse 16 says, I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to My voice and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

So here the Good Shepherd lays down for His sheep. Elsewhere they're referred to as His elect, His chosen. But He lays down His life and gives His life a ransom for many.

[25 : 34] How many? Revelation 7 and verse 9 tells us, a great multitude that no man could number from every nation and tribe and people and language.

And I like the certainty of this. The Good Shepherd is going to bring a people to Himself. He came into the world to seek and to save those that were lost.

And those of us who knew the Good Shepherd this morning could look back to a time when they heard the Good Shepherd calling them out of darkness into light.

perhaps they were in a church service. Perhaps they were in their own home reading their own scriptures. But they heard the voice, I not only died, but I died for You.

And humbly you said, Lord, I'm a sinner. I need the Good Shepherd as my Savior. He died for me. And you were able to say from your heart, Hallelujah!

[26 : 55] What a Savior! The Great God, the Eternal Shepherd, became man to die in order to bring a people to Himself.

Do you know the Good Shepherd? Are you one of the sheep today that has been brought into the fold? Let's follow this up.

Because there's a third thing I want to bring before you this morning and that is this, that the Lord Jesus in these words reveals His uniqueness.

I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. Go back to verse 7. Therefore Jesus said to them, said again, I tell you the truth. I am the gate for the sheep.

[27 : 58] He's making it very clear that there's only one way to enter the fold and that is through Him. I alone am the door to the sheep.

sheep. There is no other entrance into the fold of God's. In verse 1, I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate but climbs by in some other way is a thief and a robber. There's only one way to enter into the sheep fold and that is through the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's underline this truth.

We always have to remember the context of Scripture. The chapter headings and the verses are there for our convenience and our help. But we remember that chapter 9 preceded chapter 10.

And in chapter 9, you have a blind man who comes to know that the Lord Jesus Christ is indeed the one who's healed him, who's also the Messiah.

[29 : 22] And eventually this man, because he puts his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, is thrown out of the synagogue. The Pharisees were upset.

They didn't like this man coming to the Lord Jesus. and putting his trust in the Lord Jesus. They wanted to put him from the scene, as it were, this Jesus.

He's not God. He's not a prophet, as you're making him out to be, they say. Why were the Pharisees upset? Well, they thought that the way of salvation was through the law, through what they had to say.

they were people who were encouraging others to climb in some other way. And maybe there are those here this morning who think that they can climb into the sheepfold through their own good works, and through their own efforts, through what they do, through their supposed obedience, through their own righteousness, righteousness.

But that is not the way into the sheepfold. Jesus says, you must come through me. You must come through my death there upon the cross of Calvary.

[30 : 44] I am the way. In John 14 and verse 6, he says, I am the way, the truth and the life.

no one comes unto the Father but by me. But if we come through the Lord Jesus, if we come to him acknowledging our sin and come through him, we're told in verse 9 that Jesus says, I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. It's an old-fashioned word, but it's what needs to happen, that you and I need to come to the Lord Jesus Christ if we would be saved.

Some people say, and maybe even thinking in their own hearts this morning, because I don't know what's going on as you're listening to me, you're very dogmatic. You're not leaving any other way. No, I'm not. Because the Bible doesn't give any other way. there's not so many ways into this sheepfold. There's only one way, and that is through the Lord Jesus Christ.

[32 : 05] The Lord Jesus Christ himself gave a commission to his church to go into all the world and preach the gospel, to go and make disciples.

and he promised to those who would go that he would be with them to the end of the age. It is Jesus himself who says that there is no alternative.

It is Jesus himself who says there is no other way. And therefore, the world needs to hear that there is only one good shepherd shepherd who can save.

There is only one good shepherd that can bring people into the very fold of God. But that was the good shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep.

So if men and women would be saved, they must come through the Lord Jesus Christ, the good shepherd. The final thing I want to say to you this morning, and that is this, that this Lord Jesus reveals himself to us, not only as the eternal God who entered into time, not ceasing for a moment to be God, but becoming man and dying a death upon the cross of Calvary.

[33 : 37] Not only does he show himself to be unique, but he shows himself to us as being good. let's focus on the wonderful fact that this one who did indeed enter into time is good.

He is good in the three ways we've already mentioned. He's good in the fact that he, though he was eternally God, that he was ready to enter into time.

the word became flesh. We think about that at Christmas time, don't we? The word, the eternal God, became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

And we have seen his glory, the glorious of the one and only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. Now isn't that good?

That the eternal God didn't stay up in heaven, as it were, and look down upon us in all our sin and degradation?

[34 : 51] No, he came to where we are, and he looked upon us as sheep without a shepherd, and he had compassion upon us, full of grace and truth.

God's only begotten Son should come from the glory of heaven to be my shepherd. Is that good or isn't it?

It's good and calls us to worship and to wonder and to marvel that he should not only be good, but good to me.

Good not only in his deity, good in his death. Through his death he purchased me.

Through his death, we who were dead in trespasses and sins are brought into the fold. Remember those words of the apostle Paul as he writes to the Ephesians in chapter 5 and verse 25.

[36 : 04] Christ loved the church and gave himself for us. We're from various nationalities this morning, various backgrounds, but we've been brought together to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the great shepherd of the sheep.

We've been brought together. Why? Because Christ has died for us and risen again for us.

We are the other sheep that have been brought into the fold. What a good shepherd that he should love miserable sinners like ourselves and bring us into his fold.

He's good in his uniqueness. Look at all the religions of the world. They can all be put together. And all of them say something like this, oh yes, you need faith, but you also need works.

And if you have done enough works, you may or may not enter into salvation because you'll never know how many works you have to do.

[37 : 36] But our good shepherd went to the cross and he died and he cried, it is finished.

I've paid the price once and for all. He saves us by grace. his free favor lavished upon us.

No other religion in the world says it's free. It's faith plus works. But Christianity says, trust in this Jesus who's paid the price once and for all and you have the gift of eternal life.

And it will show itself in a life of good works. But not only is he good in these ways, he's pastorally good.

He's pastorally good. In order to get a reflection of this, look at chapter 40 of Isaiah and verse 11. There's a beautiful description of the good shepherd there.

[38 : 49] Isaiah 40 and verse 11. He tends his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart.

He gently leads those that have young. What a tender description of the good shepherd. There's a caring here.

There's a pastoral concern here. How can a shepherd care for us? Does he have that power? Does he have that authority? Is he able to do it? Well, look at the context of those words in Isaiah and you will come to these words.

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand? Or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?

[39 : 59] Think of the creation of the world. That God flung stars into space. That he measured the waters in the hollow of his hand.

My friends, that's the good shepherd who holds you and I. He holds the world, yes, in all its trouble and all its anguish, but he holds you and I.

He tends his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart. He gently leads those that have young.

And this good shepherd that is described by Isaiah is the same one that is brought before us in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ who speaks to his sheep.

John 10 and verse 3, the sheep listen to his voice. Verse 16, other sheep, they too will listen to my voice.

[41 : 14] He speaks to his people pastorally through his word. He may be speaking to you and reminding you of the fact that he is the good shepherd this morning.

He comes to you. It may be through your private reading. It may be through your friends. It may be through the promptings of his Holy Spirit.

But he comes whether it be in the storms of life. And he says to us, I am your good shepherd. Fear not. And as the good shepherd, he speaks to us sometimes to rebuke us because we're apt to stray.

But he does it with love and great tenderness. Why? Because he is the good shepherd. He's pastorally good.

He speaks to us. But also this good shepherd leads his sheep. Again, verse 3, he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

[42 : 23] When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them. Was Jesus himself thinking of the 23rd psalm, he leads me beside still waters.

He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

And that's a walk that all of us will have to take one day and we do not know when it will come. But he leads us through the valley of the shadow of death.

Why? Because he's a good shepherd. He pastorally cares for us. Philip Henry, who was the father of Matthew Henry, the great commentator, fell in love with a young lady.

And she came from a very aristocratic family. And her family were objecting to her going with this nobody, as it were, this nobody pastor.

[43 : 49] But what did she say to her parents who objected to the romance? She said, he knows where he's going and I want to go with him.

In other words, she was saying that he knows that he's going to heaven and I want to go with him. The Lord Jesus has gone to prepare a place for you and me, our bridegroom.

We are his bride. We want to go with him. He leads us because he is the good shepherd.

I am the good shepherd. And the final thing is this, that he gives us fullness of life because he is the good shepherd.

I have come, the latter part of verse 10, that they might have life. and that they might have it to the full.

[45 : 01] The Lord Jesus gives us security of life in the here and now. My sheep, verse 27, listen to my voice.

I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. No one can snatch them out of my hand.

My father who has given them to me is greater than all. No one can snatch them out of my father's hand. I and my father are one.

I'm not a carpenter. I'm not very good at do-it-yourself. But I'm told that sometimes carpenters, when they're hammering in the nail, maybe in a roof joist, that they will knock the nail through. And there may be a few inches exposed at the other end. What they do then is bang that nail into the wood. They clinch it.

[46 : 06] Jesus says he's laying down his life for the sheep. They will never perish and no one is able to pluck them out of my hand.

He clinches it. He clinches it. You see that? He holds us secure and firm. But there's more. The father that has given them to me is greater than all.

There's a nail going in. He clinches it and no one is able to pluck them out of my father's hand. It's though we're held in a double grip. The father and the son who Jesus says are one.

He's good and we should be rejoicing. He's given us fullness of life and that life that he gives us is resurrection life.

He lays down his life that he might take it again and he takes it again that we might enjoy his life in us.

[47 : 18] I am the good shepherd. Do you know him? Do you love him? Are you listening to his voice? Are you following him?

Or will you forget all about it tomorrow? My friends, I trust that you know what it is to be in the fold. But I plead with you this morning.

If you're not in the fold, then humble yourself and bow the knee before the good shepherd and take him as your savior.

Let's pray together. father, you know all our hearts. You know where each of us stand here this morning.

If we know the shepherd, we pray, oh lord, that we might rejoice that we know him and recognize, oh lord, our standing in him.

[48 : 26] thank you for who he is. Thank you for what he came to do. Thank you for his uniqueness. Thank you for his pastoral care. If we don't know him, we pray, oh lord, that you will speak to us in the power of your holy spirit, that we might hear his voice speaking to us for the first time, saying, I am the good shepherd, and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Amen.