

John Ch10v1-18 - Our True 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: 24 November 2024

Preacher: Jonny Grant

[0 : 00] And Chris is going to read for us this morning.

Thanks, Rich. Our reading is from John chapter 10, beginning at verse 1 and going to verse 18. And that's on page 1076 of the Red Bible. So it's John chapter 10, beginning at verse 1. Very truly, I tell you, Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.

The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper 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 is 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.

[1 : 19] In fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice. Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

Therefore, Jesus said again, Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them.

I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. They 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 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.

[2 : 28] 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 should 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.

I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my father. Thanks very much, Chris, for reading and thanks, Sam, for leading.

And thank you too to the musicians. I'm always amazed and wonder and say thank you, God, for musicians, because I'm not a musician. So it's great to have people play.

[3 : 46] So thank you for that today. Let's keep our Bibles open in John chapter 10 as we look at the subject of the one true shepherd.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Father, our prayer is that we would hear your voice to us today through your word.

And that as we hear, we would follow you. That we would trust you. Help us now, we ask.

And it's in his name we pray. Amen. Look at verse 11. Jesus says, I am the good shepherd.

And in case we miss it, again in verse 14, I am the good shepherd.

[5 : 10] Why not, I am the good baker? Or I am the good carpenter. After all, that's what Jesus did. He was a carpenter.

Well, throughout the story of the Bible, God is portrayed as a shepherd and his people as sheep. Look how the prophet Isaiah speaks of God's care for his people. You can see it there on screen. He that is God 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 beautiful picture. If you are part of God's flock today, how reassuring it is that he tenderly holds you and leads you.

[6:10] The shepherd loves you. In fact, God had called the leaders of his people to be shepherds.

Essentially, God was saying to them, shepherd the people just like I do. But the problem was, instead of caring for the flock, they abandoned the flock.

Go with me, please, to Ezekiel chapter 34. Ezekiel chapter 34. First there, if you could give me the page number, I forgot to check it there.

Ezekiel 34. 8-6-5. 8-6-5.

Ezekiel 34. And in this chapter, through the prophet Ezekiel, God gives us a picture. He shows us bad shepherds and promises a good shepherd.

[7:17] Shows us bad shepherds and promises us a good shepherd. First, look at the bad shepherds. We'll pick it up in the middle of verse 2.

This is what the sovereign Lord says. Woe to you, shepherds of Israel, the leaders, who only take care of yourselves. Should not the shepherds take care of the flock?

You eat the curds, the food, you clothe yourselves with wool, and you slaughter the choice animals.

But you do not take care of the flock, that is, the people.

You have not strengthened the weak, or healed those who are ill, or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost.

You have ruled them harshly and brutally. These were leaders, kings, who were meant to be the spiritual leaders, called to provide and protect, to help and to heal.

[8:25] But like all human leaders, they failed desperately. So while not only rebuking the bad shepherds, second, God promised a good shepherd.

God promised to come and replace the bad shepherds with himself. Look at verse 11. For this is what the sovereign Lord says.

I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep.

I will rescue them from the places where they've been scattered on the day of clouds and darkness. Down to verse 15. I myself will tend my sheep and make them lie down, declares the sovereign Lord.

I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak. But the sleek and the strong, I will destroy.

[9:42] I will shepherd the flock with justice. Let's go back to John's Gospel. A picture there of the failed shepherds who will one day be replaced by the promised shepherd.

Now look at John chapter 10 and how Jesus opens up this section. Look who he's talking to. Did you catch that in verse 1? Very truly, I tell you Pharisees.

Anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber. Ring any bells?

You Pharisees. You Pharisees. You Pharisees. The so-called spiritual leaders of the people. You're just like those bad shepherds. Remember how they treated the man who had been born blind?

Just go back a few verses to John chapter 9 verse 34. He claimed he had been healed by Jesus and that he was God.

[11:00] And look at their reply, verse 34. You are steeped in sin at birth. How dare you lecture us? And they threw him out. Jesus, on the other hand, verse 35.

He had heard they had thrown him out. And he found him. He went looking for him. You see, Jesus is saying, I am that promised shepherd.

I am the one who's come to search for the lost and to bring back the stray. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak. I will even lay down my life for you.

I am the good shepherd and you can trust me. Now sadly, our country in many ways has a history of suffering from bad shepherds.

Spiritual shepherds and political shepherds. The church has let the people down. People have run to the church for life.

[12:14] But instead have received lies. And sometimes people have been hurt. Our governments have made promises. But they end up being broken promises.

Do you expect as the politicians, as they canvas around our country and knock on the door, do you think every single promise they give you is going to be completed?

Well, I think they'll try their very best. But the reality is, they fail. But let's not point the finger too much at the church or the government, because what we see at times there is just a little reflection of our own life.

You see, rather than shepherds, the Bible describes us as the sheep. Sheep who have gone astray, who've wandered away and done our own thing.

We cannot even manage to shepherd ourselves. Never mind anybody else. You see, what this country needs, what we all need, is a shepherd who will come and forgive us for all the things we have done wrong.

[13:32] A shepherd who will come alongside us in our brokenness and in our hurt and heal us and restore us and provide for us and be there for us.

And Jesus is saying to us afresh this morning, I am that good shepherd. So let's explore together and see how Jesus is good for us today.

First, Jesus gathers all his sheep. At the beginning of John chapter 10, we have in verse 1 there, the sheepfold.

A picture of, if you like, a stone circle in which is all the sheep. So the different shepherds from the different places in the night time would come down to the sheepfold and they would bring all their sheep in and they would be all mixed in together.

And then in the morning, the shepherd would come for his sheep. We'll pick it up in verse 2. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.

[14:51] The gatekeeper, the one who'd been protecting them through the night, opens the gate for him. And the sheep listen to his voice. He calls out his own sheep by name and he leads them out.

So a big, big pen full of sheep. The shepherd comes along and he calls them. But who comes? Only those, verse 3, he calls by name.

The ones that the shepherd knows. The ones that already belong to him. They're the ones he calls out. Now to help us understand what's going on here, cast your minds back to the Exodus.

When God's people, Israel, were in slavery in Egypt under the brutal tyrant Pharaoh. And what did God do? He called his people out.

Look how that rescue is described in the Psalm 78. God brought his people out like a flock.

[16:10] He led them like sheep in the wilderness. He guided them safely so that they were unafraid. He settled the people of Israel in their homes. You see, Jesus is saying, I am that shepherd.

The one who's come to rescue you. The one who's come to gather my sheep and to call you to myself. I have come to set you free from a greater slavery.

Sin. I've come to set you free from a greater tyrant. Death. I've come to lead you out of your darkness and bring you into a life of light and freedom.

Jesus gathers his sheep, his people, as he calls us by name, calling us into his family. And this is what we are, but an expression this morning of his family.

Sheep who've been gathered in to his church. verse 4. When he is brought out all his own, the shepherd goes on ahead of them and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

[17:29] Now maybe you're wondering this morning if I'm part of God's flock. Maybe you're not. Well, there's good news for you. Jump ahead to verse 16.

Jesus says, I have other sheep that are not of this sheepfold. I must bring them in also. They too will listen to my voice and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

You see, if we are not part of God's flock today, if we are not under his care, you can be. This is the invitation. God, by his Holy Spirit, is calling you by name.

He knows you. He knows your past. He knows your future. He knows your past failures and your future flaws. He knows your hurts today.

He knows your pains and the struggle that you are going through and he calls you to himself. Believe me. Follow me.

[18:37] I am the good shepherd and I will gather my sheep. Second, Jesus gathers all his sheep and he provides for all his sheep.

I got that right. There we are. He provides for all his sheep. Look at verse 9. Jesus says, I am the gate. Whoever enters through me, whoever comes to me, believes in me, will be saved.

They will come in and go out, back and forth, and find pasture. Again, we're provided with this wonderful picture of a shepherd taking care of his sheep, bringing them in and out to the pasture to provide for them what they need.

And Jesus picks up on this image to show us that what he provides for the sheep is eternally good. Look at verse 10. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy the bad shepherds.

But I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. The bad shepherds, well, bad shepherds are all around us and their voice is crying out to us.

[20 : 05] They say, live your own life. Find your own path. Be who you want to be. Believe in yourself. You know what's best.

But that's like a shepherd leading a sheep towards the edge of a cliff. This kind of teaching, this kind of philosophy will only destroy you. life. But the life that Jesus offers is abundant.

Did you see it at the end of verse 10? I have come that you may have life and have it to the full, to its overflowing.

A life that satisfies and fulfills. Remember the food and drink that Jesus has promised to provide for his people? Do you remember the woman at the well?

And Jesus says to the woman, if you knew who has the water of life, you would ask for him. And Jesus says, the water I give will become in you a spring of water, welling up to eternal life.

[21 : 16] And the crowd that he fed with the bread, bread, physical bread that satisfies our hunger, Jesus said, I am the bread from heaven, which you may eat and not die, but live forever.

This is a full and abundant life. Now it doesn't mean to say that we're going to be free of struggles and suffering, but it does mean that we have a shepherd who will lead us and be with us.

Even in the deepest darkness, Jesus will provide what you need. Even when we feel hopeless and helpless, Jesus the shepherd will sustain you.

He knows your need today and he will provide and give you grace for every moment and every day. He will not let you down. Through Jesus we experience life in all its fullness. So he gathers his sheep, he provides for his sheep, and he will secure all his sheep.

[22 : 37] Look at verse 11. I am the good shepherd, and the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

sheep, the hired hand. Well, he's not the shepherd because he doesn't own the sheep. So when he sees a wolf coming, whoa, he abandons the sheep, he takes off, I'm out of here.

And the wolf attacks and the flocks scatter. It's a frightening scene, isn't it? Because sheep are vulnerable and fragile. Sheep don't have sharp teeth and long claws to fight off their prey.

Something a wolf has with great power. They're extremely dangerous. So when the wolf attacks, verse 13, the man runs away because he's a hired hand and he cares nothing for the sheep.

Not Jesus. How different Jesus is to the offers of protection people give us today. He will come.

[23 : 50] He's warning us, yes, that wolves will come. I think in this context it's false teachers and corrupt leaders who will come to harm you and seek to lead you astray.

But Jesus says, don't fear. I'm not like a hired hand. I will lay down my life for you. I will do whatever it takes to protect you and keep you forever.

In fact, Jesus promises to secure our salvation forever. So once we trust him, we are his forever.

Look over at verse 27. 27. 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.

[24 : 54] 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 the Father are one.

Do you see the double protection there? The picture is like we are in the hands of Jesus, gripped by his firm hands and around the hands of Jesus are the hands of the Father.

So no scheming, no lying wolf, can take us from the protection of the Father and the Son. Not even our sin can take us.

Not even the struggle we are going through, not even Satan himself. We are secure forever. The shepherd has gathered you in and he will provide for you and he will keep you.

He will hold you fast. And then fourth, Jesus the shepherd dies for all his sheep.

[26 : 17] Back to verse 14. 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.

You see, when the wild animals come, a shepherd will fight them off with his stick or his crook or whatever he has, a few stones. He will do all that he can to protect his sheep. However, if that shepherd's life is in danger, he's going to let the wolf or the wild animal take that one sheep.

Understandably, the shepherd will protect his own life. No sheep is worth the value of a shepherd. Better the sheep's life than losing your own life, eh?

except for Jesus. Jesus does the unthinkable, doesn't he? The unimaginable. When it comes to his people, Jesus says, I will lay down my life for you.

[27 : 36] I will die for you. I am the good shepherd and I lay down my life for the sheep.

In fact, his giving of his life is not accidental, but intentional and sacrificial. Again, look at verse 17. He says, 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 down my life and I have authority to take it up again.

This command I received from the father. You see, that's what makes Jesus not just a shepherd, but a good shepherd.

These are not just words or illustrations. It's what Jesus has come to do. He came to die for us.

[28 : 50] That's his whole purpose. Speaking of Jesus' death, the prophet Isaiah put it like this. You know these words. We all like sheep have gone astray.

Each of us has turned to our own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

All our flaws, all our failures, and Jesus the shepherd says, I'll come and I'll take the hit.

Jesus puts himself where we deserve to be placed so that we wouldn't face his judgment. He lays down his life for us so that we might have life in him, life in abundance.

And of course, as verse 18 implies, Jesus didn't stay dead. Yes, he laid down his life only for Jesus to rise again from the dead.

[29 : 55] he had authority to take his life up again. And so Jesus remains the living shepherd who continues to be good and continues to care for us day by day.

he. So how can you and I experience this shepherd's care personally and intimately as we scatter into our communities and into our workplaces?

How can we know the love and care of this tender, kind shepherd? shepherd? Well, briefly, two things. First, listen to the shepherd's voice.

We know who the sheep are because they listen. They listen. Verse three. The gatekeeper opens the gate for the shepherd and the sheep listen to his voice.

he calls out his own sheep by name and he leads them. The sheep listen because they are his sheep.

[31 : 17] Go for a walk down through the Kerry Mountains and you will notice there are sheep marked with all kinds of different colours. Red, blue, yellow, purple.

Each colour marks them out to which farmer they belong to. Well, the people who belong to God are marked out as those who listen to his voice.

They listen because they are his sheep. Verse four. He brings out his own, he goes on ahead of them and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

And the primary way in which we will hear the shepherd's voice as we walk through our day is through God's word. So, fellow sheep, let's be reading God's word.

Let's get our nourishment from the bread of life. Let's drink of the water of life. Let's be studying the word together and encouraging each other with words from God.

[32 : 30] God. And as we do, we will grow deeper and deeper in our relationship with him. Look at it. Verse 14. I'm the good shepherd.

I know my sheep. My sheep know me. Just as the father knows me and I know the father. Isn't that incredible?

The relationship the father and son have together, that intimacy, that union, that precious relationship existing from before all time began, the father and the son's relationship.

He says, you can have that too. Listen to my voice and you will grow deeper and deeper in relationship with me and you will find abundant life.

so let's listen to the shepherd's voice. And second, let's run from the stranger's voice.

[33 : 36] Verse 5. The sheep will never follow a stranger. In fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice.

