

# Jesus the good shepherd

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[0:00] Well, life is a thing, isn't it? How do you find your way through life? The world that we live in can be lonely, isolating, isolating, be like an animal wandering around all by itself.

It can be confusing and threatening wild animals, as it were. It can be draining and we feel that we need to be refreshed and replenished by all the stuff that life just sucks out of us, like needing green pasture for a sheep.

A sheep would understand all this sort of thing and a sheep would be really pleased to say, actually all those problems are solved by having a shepherd.

A shepherd who can bring you into a flock, who can show you the right way in guidance, who can protect you from danger and who can make sure that you're fed and that you thrive rather than being drained, dehydrated and famished.

And a good shepherd would actually be ideal, wouldn't it? And that's what we're going to look at today in John's Gospel. The Bible uses the idea of sheep and shepherd in a number of places, as we shall see.

[1:20] But in this particular passage, in John chapter 10, Jesus declares himself in person to be the good shepherd. And that's what we're going to look at this morning.

So let's, if you have your Bible there, I'm sure it would be helpful to look at it. Jesus was a very inventive person. He was an innovator. But he bases himself firmly in the context of his scriptures, the Hebrew scriptures.

And the Hebrew scriptures give us a very rich background to this idea of sheep and shepherd. We have, for example, Psalm 100, which says, We are his flock, the sheep of his fold, the sheep of his hand.

We, the people of God, the Lord shepherds us. We have Psalm 23, which we sang, but we didn't read. The Lord's my shepherd. I shall not be in want.

Let me just flick it up very quickly. The Lord's my shepherd. I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters.

[2:32] 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, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.

Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23. We have the idea of King David, who was taken from looking after sheep to being the shepherd of his people Israel.

And the idea of kings as shepherds. When the kings died, it would say that the people were like sheep without a shepherd. So a shepherd is not only an agricultural worker, but there's a likeness to a king.

And the other Wednesday, I think it was, we were looking into Ezekiel 37, where in prophecy, the prophet looks forward to the people of God being no longer ravaged but cared for.

And in Ezekiel 37, it quite vividly states the picture of the Lord shepherding his people, the Lord God shepherding his people, and also simultaneously puts forward the picture of one shepherd, David, the king, as promised.

[3:50] So these are very rich statements and lots of threads there. And if you are taking notes, you might like to go and look some of those up later on. But it's a very rich background.

And let's just look at the context of this chapter 10. Chapter 10 follows on from chapter 9. You've probably all worked that out for yourselves.

The chapter 9 is the one about the man born blind, whom Jesus heals. So he can't see. Jesus opens his eyes, and he can see.

And then he gets into terrible trouble with the Jewish leaders, the Pharisees. He came home seeing, but he got bullied by the antagonistic Pharisees.

They try to knock his faith out of him. And the questions that are floating around in John's Gospel at this time are, who is Jesus? What does he claim to be?

[4:47] And you picked up a little bit of that at the end of the reading, where there was a division, chapter 10, verse 19. The Jews were divided. There was a schism. And some of them said he's mad and demon-possessed, but others said that can't be who he is, because he could open the eyes of the blind.

And who alone can do that? What do you say about him? This idea of who is Jesus. And of course, Jesus has given us a number of answers already. He said he's the one who gives water.

If you're thirsty, come to me, says Jesus. He's the one who gives light and life. If you follow me, you won't walk in darkness, but have the light of life, said Jesus.

And then another question that's floating around is, how is it that some people get this, and other people don't? You've seen that, haven't you? That some people, yeah, this makes sense, and other people just don't get it, and are dead against it.

How is that happening? And of course, there's some clues in the way the story develops, because there is a blindness. The man was born blind, wasn't he? And there is the power of God to open blind eyes, and that's exactly what Jesus did in that chapter 9.

[6:02] And you find this blindness and opening of eyes reflected in people's attitudes. The Pharisees are dead set. They don't, not only can they not see, but they don't want to see.

But the man, if you remember when Daniel took us through it last week, the man says, I would like to see. I would like to know who Jesus is.

Who is he, sir, that I may worship him, he says. So there is this sort of dichotomy, this division between people who are closed and hard, and people who somehow, on the human level, are open.

And on the divine level, it's God who's opening their eyes, as we can see. Some of the proudly blind. And of course, we have Jesus' statement, sort of mysteriously saying, actually, I'm not surprised that some people don't get it, and some people do, because no one can come to me, says Jesus, unless the Father draws him.

So there's a deep mystery there. There's a human level to it, and there's an underlying divine level, this whole thing about belief and unbelief. And then the question of what role the Jewish leaders have in all this, and that we'll see a little bit of that as we go further on.

[7:21] Are they helping? What are they supposed to be doing? They've got the scriptures. They're the people who are supposed to know, aren't they? How does that all work? And so they've got the, but in chapter nine, they weren't at all helpful, were they, to the man who was born blind?

And you remember it, that they interrogated him, they bullied him, they told him he was stupid, and in the end they kicked him out. And that was no, humanly speaking, that was no help to him at all. I mean, surprisingly, in all that process, his faith was even stronger, because he could see the logic of it.

I couldn't see. Now I can see. What's going on here? You know, can't deny that. And strangely, he came through with his faith intact.

Perhaps he would have liked to sing that song, He Will Hold Me Fast. He Will Hold Me Fast. Ah, I can't even tell what I've written there, because it's gone off the end of the screen.

[8:26] Anyway, that's sort of introducing us to this text. And what I'm going to do, I can't do anything clever, I'm not going to do anything clever with this more.

I'm just going to go through it verse by verse, and section by section. The first six verses are this figure of speech that they didn't understand. Verses seven to ten, Jesus talks about being the door, or the gate.

I wrote down door. The translation in the other says the gate. And then the next bit, eleven to eighteen, he says he's the good shepherd. Now there's a lot in here, but I'm just going to try and take us through it bit by bit, and hope that God will speak to us through that.

So let's go straight to chapter ten, verse one. It says, I tell you the truth. In the original, Amen, Amen. Jesus says this when he says there's something important coming up.

Listen up. Amen, Amen. Amen. So we're expecting something important. And he says, 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.

[9:38] The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him. The sheep listen to his voice. He calls out his own sheep by name and leads them out.

So let's just set this up. So we have a sheepfold. I'm going to draw a sheepfold. Have we got a sheepfold? There's a sheepfold and there's sheep in it and it has a door or a gate which I have symbolized like that and there's a doorkeeper who opens the gate and closes it and there's a fence all the way around and the first thing that he's mentioned really, having set that all up, is the thief and the robber.

So his Amen, Amen is actually a negative statement. Here's something I'm going to tell you about thieves and robbers and he goes on later to mention stranger.

I'm going to try and sort of mix those up together. But the thing about the thief and the robber is that he doesn't come in through the gate. He gets in over the fence.

So there's the thief and the robber climbing in over the fence. And the difference between the thief and the robber and the shepherd is that the shepherd comes in through the door.

[10:57] So there's the picture of it. I'm just trying to sort of tease out what he's saying here. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. And this first statement is really focusing on thieves and robbers.

Here are the different characters. So let's think about the thief and the robber. He doesn't enter by the door. He's a thief and he's a robber. He's going to steal stuff.

He's going to as he later on says to kill and destroy. Later on Jesus says I am the gate for the sheep verse 7.

So we perhaps should bring Jesus into this as being the gate. This picture works in various different ways. So here first of all we're seeing Jesus is the gate.

And if we put it into the context in which this is being spoken the man born blind has just been kicked out the watchman well let me not get ahead of myself.

[12:06] I think we're talking about the Jewish leaders and we're saying what? How does Jesus characterize them? Now they are rejecting Jesus so they are not entering in through the gate.

they're coming in some other way. The Jewish leaders the Jewish militants because there had been people who would claim to be sort of saviors who militantly kick out the Romans there's a long history of Jewish militancy like that.

They claim to save but not through Jesus. and so let's learn this first of all that the real people looking after the sheep should enter through the gate.

They should enter through Jesus and it's a very simple principle but I think an important one. So we're going I want us this year to be praying for elders praying for leaders shepherds of our little flock.

So number one point they need to be Christians. They need themselves to have entered through Jesus. They need to be Jesus people themselves.

[13:29] Very simple but very important. It strikes me that we need to pray for the Church of England. They are convening together I think in the next week or so.

The House of Bishops getting together to make decisions about how the Church of England reacts and responds to pressures from today's events or today's atmosphere and I'm not confident myself that all those leaders are born again people personally.

It's so important that the shepherds have entered through the gate because if they're coming in some other way the effect is just to kill and steal and destroy.

Let's think about the watchman. He's supposed to open the door to the shepherd. He's supposed to be the one who says shepherd here are your sheep here's your shepherd come on in.

That's what the watchman is supposed to do. And of course you say reflect that on the context that's exactly what the Pharisees didn't do for the man born blind isn't it?

[14:40] The Pharisees did not say to the man born blind if he opened your eyes he must be the Messiah you should be worshipping him. The Pharisees did everything they could to prevent the man born blind coming to Jesus.

What an awful thing to do. The watchman God had put in place for hundreds of years the guardians of his people Israel so that they could open the door to the shepherd not close it in people's faces. No wonder Jesus had such a negative view of the way the Pharisees operated. They're supposed to let the sheep come to the shepherd. They're supposed to let the shepherd come to the sheep but instead those leaders kept them apart.

And you think what an awful thing that was. You know Jesus says woe to the Pharisees. You bind burdens on people. You don't lift a finger to help them. You bind laws and guilt on people but you don't do a single thing to lift that guilt away.

Jesus does that. Why don't you point people to Jesus? Jesus. And this is the job of the ministers of the gospel today isn't it?

[15:56] To bring the sheep to the shepherd. The great shepherd. To point people to Jesus Christ. And maybe we could think of that as we're thinking of appointing elders.

Do they the good shepherd sorry put it this way that good sub shepherds lead people to the great shepherd. Let's put it that way. Let's think of the shepherd in verse 4 and his sheep.

It says that the sheep, verse 3, the watchman opens the gate for him, the sheep listen to his voice, he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

And when he has brought them all out he goes ahead of them and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. Sort of interesting reflection on the fact that people weren't necessarily recognizing Jesus.

And Jesus might say well the reason is you're not my sheep. My sheep hear my voice and they follow me. It's an interesting thing isn't it that when you become a Christian you hear the voice of Jesus and recognize it as such.

[17:14] Among all the other voices you hear his voice and he says come and follow me and you follow him. That's what being a Christian is to hear the voice of Jesus.

And if you're not a Christian that would be the prayer Lord open my ears so that I can hear your voice. Give me ears to hear, give me eyes to see, do for me what you did to that man, you opened his blind eyes and he could see.

Do that for me. The sheep know his voice. The sheep follow, he says come and the sheep follow him. A stranger they will not follow. They don't recognize his voice.

The stranger, I'm putting that with the thief and the sheep go whoa, no I'm not having that and they run away from the stranger. It's a very wise sheep that runs away from the stranger's voice. I hope all of the sheep here are wise enough to run away when you hear a stranger's voice and not to follow the stranger.

And just looking back again into chapter 9, whose voices was the man hearing? And they said, give glory to God this man is a sinner.

[18:25] That's the voice that the man born blind heard. And the man born blind said, do you know I don't think that's right. I don't recognize that. I don't think Jesus is a sinner.

If he were a sinner God wouldn't be listening to him. I wouldn't be answering his prayers and a stranger's voice the man did not recognize. And the Pharisee said, we don't know who this man is. And the man born blind said, he's from God. I don't recognize your statement of his insignificance. I don't recognize that. He's from God. God. And of course, there are lots of voices on us today, aren't there? Lots of voices. And we need to distinguish between the stranger's voice, which we should run away from, and the shepherd's voice.

You know, our world is telling us Jesus is one among many. There are many spiritual teachers and Jesus is just one of them. Choose whichever one you want.

[19:30] And the sheep would say, that's not right. That's not right. He is unique. He is special. He's the only one. Modern gender stuff says Jesus didn't take any view about the body, and he didn't take any view on sexuality and marriage and so on.

And the sheep say, no, that's not right. No, he didn't say that. He did take a view on these things, and I want to follow him in what he said.

Voices say to the sheep, he's made a mistake with you. He's made a mistake in his providence. He's let something happen to you that was wrong, a mistake.

He's put you in a situation that's wrong. He's made a mistake. He's led you up the garden path. He's left you on your own. He's abandoned you.

And the sheep says, I don't believe that. That's a stranger's voice. I'm running away from that. My shepherd is a good shepherd. He leads me in the right way.

[20:41] He doesn't lead me up the garden path. He leads me in the way everlasting. He hasn't made a mistake. It's important that we don't listen to the stranger's voice, but we listen to the shepherd's voice.

And of course, voices might say, of course, Jesus can forgive everybody's sins apart from yours. Which is a terrible thing to say.

But the sheep says, that's not right. His death was powerful enough for me. His promises apply to me. I'm not an exception.

Who am I to say I'm an exception? His blood avails for me. His promises apply to me. His grace applies to me. His grace is sufficient for me.

He leads me. And then voices say, Jesus isn't the right one to follow. And the sheep says, yes, he is.

[21:43] I'm going to follow him. I trust him. He's my shepherd. And whatever he says, I will do. And wherever he leads me, I will go. Whatever he provides for me, I will be grateful.

A stranger's voice, voice, they don't recognize, but the voice of the shepherd, they do recognize. Let's now look at the next section, where it talks about the door, or the gate.

Verses 7 to 10. I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. I should have told you that in verse 6, they said they didn't understand any of that. I hope I put it across so that you could understand it. But let's now go to verse 7. I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All whoever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 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.

[22:47] So this is another amen, amen. This is an important thing. Let's look at this. So I am the door. So he didn't say that in the first section. He just set up the whole picture and we started drawing threads from it.

Here, Jesus says, I am the door, I am the gate. And he says something about the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved.

And then he referred to the thieves and robbers. All the other ones were not the saviour, they were thieves and robbers. And the sheep didn't listen to them. So whoever enters in through me, verse 9, will be saved.

I'm just going to pause on those few words. What a terrific statement. If you enter through me, if you direct your life so that it all focuses on Jesus, that whatever you enter into, you enter through him. he says you'll be saved. And there's a lot in those few words, probably more than I'm capable of unpacking. But that just says everything, doesn't it?

[23:59] If you enter through me, you will be saved. And I take it to mean you'll be safe in this world, you'll be safe in the world to come, you'll be enriched, you'll be secure, if it's through Jesus.

So I just stop and ask whether that's you, or whether you want it to be you. You say that wherever my life goes, I want it to go, first of all, direct through Jesus.

Wherever each of my days goes, I want it to go through Jesus. Whatever the future holds for me, my career, my education, my family, I want it to be through Jesus.

I want to enter through him. And the promise is, you will be saved. So not because of my authority, but because of the authority of Jesus, I make that promise to this congregation this morning. Jesus said, if you enter through me, you will be saved. Let's go a little bit further, because he doesn't just say that.

[25:08] He says, if you enter through me, you will be saved. And the person who does this will go in and out and find pasture. And then he again compares to the thief and the robber.

But let's just think about this going in and out and finding pasture. Please imagine yourself, put yourself in the place of a sheep. Just imagine yourself to be a sheep. You know, what sort of day? You won't have to do any washing up. You don't have to think about that, just because you're a sheep. What do you think about? You think about, I want somewhere to rest. I want somewhere secure in the sheepfold.

And I want some food and some exercise and some fresh air. And that's outside the sheepfold. That's the pasture where I'm led beside still waters and have pasture to eat.

And for a sheep, that would be pretty much it, wouldn't it? No energy bills to pay, no mortgage to think about, no part-time work.

[26:12] You're just resting, feeding. That's it. And Jesus says, well, in the same way that a sheep, that's absolutely it for a sheep. They go in and out and find pasture.

That's what it is for a Christian. Just everything is looked after by the shepherd. There's the security that he gives, as it were in the fold.

There's coming out and all those things. He looks after that, my going in and my coming out. And the food I need and the guidance I need, he gives that.

And it's just all included in that. That's what the shepherd does. That's not too bad, is it? Everything in my life, from one end to the other, encompassed in this promise.

You'll go in and out. And find pasture. I think that's a very reassuring picture, isn't it? A very reassuring statement.

[27:13] Take it home and think about that. I found that very helpful. The shepherd rules and guides and protects all the way. Let's try and do a little bit of justice to this.

The thief. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. And Jesus compares himself or contrasts himself with the thief. And he says, I'm the opposite of that.

What does the thief come to do? He comes to kill. There's a thief with a bag that's trailing blood.

And I've got another picture of him dragging a sheep off somewhere.

The one who comes to kill, to steal and kill and destroy. Jesus does the opposite. He doesn't kill. He gives life.

He doesn't take away life. He gives life. I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly. He says, they have life to the full. I come to give life.

[28:13] He doesn't come to rob. He doesn't come to make us poorer, to make our lives more miserable and more plain boring and more flat and uninteresting.

He says, I've come to do the opposite. I've come to enrich you. I've come to give you joys that you never thought existed. I'm going to give you fellowship that you never thought existed.

I'll give you a meaning in your life you never thought you could have. I'm going to give you comfort in your life you never thought you were capable of. I'm going to give you life and give it to the full.

And the thief comes to destroy. And I'm going to do the opposite, says Jesus. The thief just messes you up and breaks things and ruins things and vandalizes people.

I do the opposite, says Jesus. He restores my soul. He mends. And I think that's such a wonderful thing, that the Lord comes into people's lives to mend us, to restore us, to bring us to a better place.

[29:24] And how we need it. I mean, I'm not going to claim that the Lord does it all at once overnight. I mean, he can do things overnight. But to my mind, it's a process, a lifelong process.

But it's not a process of being destroyed. It's a process of being given life. And a process of being mended. And a process of being healed. Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven.

Who, like me, his praise should sing. So it's an extremely positive view of what Jesus does for people, is it not? And this is a good shepherd. Would you like a good shepherd like this to rule your life?

Because I certainly would. And the good shepherd here is not the enemy of human flourishing, but the one who takes responsibility to produce it.

Christianity is increasingly portrayed as something that limits and diminishes people and hurts people. But the exact opposite is true. The good shepherd makes people flourish and produces good fruit in people's lives.

[30:33] That's who he is. That's what he does. I believe that. Do you? Yeah. Yeah. Let's go on now into verse 11 to 18.

And here another set of pictures and characters and the new person in this one is the hired hand.

Verse 11, 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's a hired hand. Does it for money and cares nothing for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep. My sheep know me just as the father knows me and I know the father.

And I lay down my life for the sheep. Let's look at that that far. So compared with the hired hand, he does this for money. He's in it for the money.

[31:42] He doesn't really care. He's just in it for the money, what he can get out of it. And when the wolf appears, the deadly wolf, not a friendly wolf, the hired man says, that's beyond my pay grade.

I'm off. And he runs away and leaves the sheep to be destroyed. And why does he do this? Well, the sheep aren't his. He's got no real interest in them apart from what he can get out of it in the way of payment.

They're not his. And he doesn't care about them. How different the shepherd who knows his sheep and his sheep know him. It's a very, very different thing, isn't it? The sheep recognize his voice.

Did you notice how intimate that knowledge is where it says, my sheep know me, verse 14, just as the father knows me and I know the father.

That's a very deep relationship. That's a very real knowing. And Jesus says, the sheep might not realize it, but that's how I know them.

[32:53] And that's how they know me. But the hired hand isn't in that sort of relationship. He values his own skin more than caring about the sheep.

But the good shepherd, the good shepherd knows his sheep personally and lays down his life for the sheep. So this is taking this metaphor, this picture, a stage further than it's ever been before. The fact of Jesus as a good shepherd can only be understood in relation to the cross, where he laid down his life in sacrifice for his people, people, because that was what was necessary to defend them from the justice of God.

If he hadn't laid down his life, we would be completely sunk, wouldn't we? If it was up to our own righteousness and goodness to stand before God and say, here I am, I'm fine.

And God will say, no, you're not fine. Not at all. how deeply you misunderstand yourself. And Jesus got in the way and said, I will, these people actually deserve to die, but I will die instead of them.

[34:15] I will lay down my life for the sheep. I care about these people and it will cost me, but I'll pay it. He lays down his life and this is not to be separated from the resurrection, which Jesus mentions in verse 17.

I lay down my life only to take it again. And he says it again in verse 18. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again.

And then he tells us some deep things. He says, this isn't just a sort of last minute thought. This isn't just a sort of tragedy which seems to work out somehow in my life.

He says that the eternal father has commanded this. This command I have received from my father.

I was given authority, verse 18, to lay down my life and take it up again.

Think of what that means, of what the father and the son must have, I presume, sort of discussed and arranged before the worlds were made. I will give you authority to lay down your life as a

sacrifice and I give you authority to sort of turn all the, all this fallen world into reverse and take your life up again.

[35:32] He was given authority and says Jesus, and I'm not doing it against my will. I was given this command and I said, yes, I will.

I have, no one takes it from me. I lay it down of my own accord, says Jesus. I willingly go along this path. life. And, furthermore, he says, and I'm just quoting from the text, the reason my father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it again.

So there's some very deep things about the interrelations between the father and the son, sort of outside of this world's business in eternity and in sort of heavenly things.

the father loves the son and shows him all that he does. There is a constancy of the father's love for the son, but there's also a responsive love.

And it says, the reason my father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it again. And we can imagine, we have to sort of imagine it a bit, don't we, that when the son went to the cross to die for the sheep, that the father said, that is such a wonderful sacrifice.

[36:50] That is such a brilliant action. It is so perfect, so noble, so kind. I can't help but love my son for what he's done.

The reason my father loves me is that I lay down my life. Something quite deep there, isn't there, about the Trinity. But the father could love his son for laying down his life.

Surely we can do a bit of that too. Do we not love the Lord because he laid down his life for us? We love him because he first loved us, laid down his life for us. And so we started off in this idea of shepherding and sort of agriculture, but we're sort of led back into the love that existed from before the worlds were made.

The love of the father for the son and the planned love of the father for redeeming redeeming these sheep, these wandering, rebellious, lost sheep that needed finding.

And here it is in the text. And I think what a privilege is to be part of this, isn't it, as Christians? That we are caught up in this, not because we've deserved it or asked for it, but the Lord has caught us up by his grace into this sacrifice, into this plan, into this redemption.

[38:20] What a privilege. And let's just take it on into verse 16 where he 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 will be one flock and one shepherd. So Jesus says, I have a plan and it's not just limited into chapter 9 and chapter 10 of John's gospel.

It's much bigger than that. I will bring my sheep. And I think we could see him as referring to the scope of God's dealings up to this point with Israel.

And he says, it's going to go beyond that. I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I'm going to bring them too. So we've got the sheep that he's been dealing with up to this point.

And there's other sheep and they're purple, just to show that they're different. I'm going to bring other sheep in the same way. I'm going to bring sheep from nations you've never even heard of.

[39:24] I'm going to bring sheep from the Chinese nation. I'm going to bring sheep from the Indian nation. I'm going to bring sheep from those weird European nations.

I'm going to bring sheep from Wales and Scotland, places you've never even heard of. But I'm going to bring them and they will listen. And Africa, thank you very much.

And Ethiopia particularly, of course. And these will listen to my voice, says Jesus. It just says it quite matter-of-factly, but I think we can say it dramatically, can't we?

He, they too. No, let's go back to verse 16. 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 will be one flock and one shepherd. And you notice the definiteness of what he says. I must bring them and I will bring them.

[40:22] They will listen to my voice and there will be one flock and there will be one shepherd. You notice the confidence that Jesus has in this ongoing mission, which we're part of, aren't we?

Because in the New Testament, God's purposes have explosively expand, not just from one little nation, but to the whole world. And I think we're a representative, representation of that this morning.

And we could take that vision on, not just into the mission of bringing people into his church, but we could go right ahead into the glory that's yet to be revealed.

And this is where we started off this morning. The lamb in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd and will lead them to springs of living water and wipe away every tear from their eye.

And that's what the shepherd is going to bring us to ultimately. The place where there is always grass to eat, where there is always water to drink, where there is always security.

[41:31] And there is never a tear because every tear is wiped away. And that is the lamb in the midst of the throne who will be their shepherd. And a plan which nothing can thwart, which surely gives us encouragement, doesn't it?

And I missed one bit. And I was going to say, make sure you're part of it. This is a big thing. This is the big thing.

And the invitation to everybody is you can be part of this. You don't have to be on the outside of it.

Ask Jesus to be your shepherd. Ask him to lead you so that you can go in and out through him.

Ask him to do those things. Surely he won't ignore what you're asking him. Well, what did we look at this morning? We went through the text. We saw this figure of speech. And we thought about the killer, the thief, the destroyer.

And that was the first thing, which was a negative thing. Saying that those who lead God's people should actually be God's people in the first place. Otherwise, they kill and destroy. And the sheep should recognize the shepherd's voice and run away from the stranger's voice.

[42:44] And then we looked at the middle section where Jesus said, I am the door. And we saw this promise. If you go in through him, you will be saved. And go in and out. That's the whole thing.

Jesus leads his people day by day. They're going in and coming out. I think that's a great reassurance for us. And then we looked at the good shepherd who knows us, cares for us, loves us with this eternal love and died for us.

He died and we go free. And it was done not sort of on the surface of things, but deep within the plan of the father at his command with his authority and bringing forth, if we put it this way reverently, the father's admiration.

And the son's assured success, I will do all this. There will be one flock and one shepherd. That's a good note to end on, isn't it?

Thank you.