

John 10:1-21

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Preacher: David Helm

[0 : 0 0] Again, the scripture text is John 10, 1 through 21, on page 993 of the White Bibles. Please stand for the reading of God's Word.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs in another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers. This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So Jesus again said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

[1 : 0 9] I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the father knows me and I know the father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason, the father loves me because I lay down my life that I may 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 I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my father.

There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. Many of them said, he has a demon and is insane. Why listen to him? Others said, these are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind? This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. You may be seated. The tragedy of the text is right there in the hard truths put down in verse 6. Let me read it again.

This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying. These words put down reveal the seriousness of a problem. Imagine Jesus is speaking, but they are not understanding.

[3 : 3 2] Given that, I've been thinking this week that the singular purpose of the sermon has to then provide the point of the parable.

I want to reveal what the figure of speech means so that we can hear Jesus' word, or as the writer to the book of Proverbs puts it, proverbial wisdom, figures of speech, parables as it were, are that you would have understanding so that you would gain guidance. So, simply, why did they not understand the figure of speech?

What significance is there to where this figure of speech comes? And what are you and I to make of it? Why didn't they understand this figure of speech, which talks of a sheepfold and a shepherd and sheep in ways that contrast those who are overlooking the welfare of the sheep?

I went as a city guy online to see what is a sheepfold. I didn't really know. Or a sheep pen. I suppose if we were agriculturally inclined, you would already be aware of this, but you can go and purchase online your own sheep pen, your own sheepfold. It will be made probably of some kind of galvanized metal. It will come in sections that are 10 to 12 feet long. You can order whether you want it to be 4 feet high or 5 feet high.

It's easily assembled according to what you can find online. And you can create an entire pen in which you can keep your sheep.

[5 : 37] Of course, they would have been able to pick up on that more easily. I get why we might not understand the figure of speech, but why did they not understand the figure of speech?

Simply this. They missed the fact that the words of Jesus are often rooted in the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus uses words that are related to Old Testament imagery.

There are no fewer than 60 occurrences in the Old Testament where you find language and imagery where God is a shepherd, the people of Israel are the sheep or His flock, and that they are uniquely His fold in relationship to calling them out among all the nations.

But they missed it. They missed that His figure of speech was rooted in their historical and biblical context.

Psalms 80 puts the imagery nicely. Give ear, O shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock.

[6 : 57] Or Psalm 95 and verse 7. For He is our God, we are the people of His pasture, we are the sheep of His name. I mean, the very notion of God in relationship to His people as a shepherd and those that He appointed as under-shepherds goes as far back as the calling of Moses at Exodus 3 where it indicates that while He was keeping care of His father-in-law's flock, God raised Him up to tend Israel as His people.

In fact, He actually went into Israel with His shepherd's staff. Or David in 1 Samuel, the youngest of the brothers is the tender of the sheep.

And David will lift up the shepherd boy to be the king over all of Israel. The entire Hebrew scriptures are loaded with the figure of speech with God as a shepherd, Israel as belonging to His own in contrast to the nations, and the people as a flock.

They missed it. It's a tragedy really when you consider the primary audience that He's speaking to are the religious leaders who were responsible for that people.

What about where this passage fits? how can that help us understand it? What does John mean by putting it here? I think it will help you get it.

[8 : 59] This text sits between the healing of a man born blind on the front side and Israel's celebration the festival of lights on the back side.

In other words, this text sits between the man having just been cast out. Verse 34, do you see it? Of the previous chapter? Or verse 35, he heard that he had cast him out.

This picture, this figure of speech sits between the image of one who was cast out and the festival of lights which was a celebration of Judas Maccabees who cast out the intruders in the city and in the temple who were not ruling on behalf of God's people.

So you have this image of Judas Maccabees on the back side delivering God's pen, his fold from those who had gotten in and defamed his name.

And the one on the front side who had been thrown out of the church, shown the door by the Sanhedrin because he continued to give glory to God.

[10 : 18] Now that is a fascinating moment because when you get this, all of this they didn't understand. What we're seeing then in verses 1-7 is a figure of speech where Jesus is distinguishing himself from the religious leaders who cast the man out.

And notice his language. Verse 3, the sheep hear his voice, he calls his own sheep by name, and he will lead them out. He leads people into a right relationship with God, he provides for them, he protects them, he brings them in, and he goes out that others might enter in contrast to the religious leadership of his own day.

There is an uncanny connection in the first four verses of our text to what Joshua did in following Moses. You might want to look, I won't have you turn back in any other place in the scriptures today, but numbers 27, you have Moses himself going up high on the mountain and he is not going to be able to bring the people into the promised land because of his disobedience and he is going to raise up a savior, a Joshua, a deliverer and when you look at it, it's amazing to see the language that's placed on Joshua.

Verse 15, Numbers 27, Moses spoke to the Lord saying, let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh appoint a man over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep that have no shepherd.

Or verse 21, and he shall stand before Eliezer the priest who shall inquire of him by the judgment of Urim before the Lord and at his word they shall go out and at his word they shall go in both he and all the people of Israel with him the whole congregation.

[12 : 24] What Jesus is picking up on when he says there was a shepherd who would lead the people, he would go out before them leading them, he would come in, he would provide for them, he is in one sense picking up on the notion that I am, according to Jesus, the Joshua in its full-fledged form.

I'm salvation, my word is what all people need. They missed it. But where John has put it helps you understand it.

In other words, Jesus is the genuine point of entry. So in the figure of speech, he says they enter the sheepfold by the door. Or in verse 7 now, he moves from figure of speech to bald-faced explanation.

So Jesus said again to them, truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. And all who come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them, I am the door.

If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and he will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they might have life and have it abundantly.

[13 : 49] In other words, if you didn't get the figure of speech where he was speaking in third person, there's a shepherd out there and he, he now says, let me just blow the doors off this.

Let me take this first person. You who are slow of hearing, not able to gain all of the biblical imagery that I'm speaking from, I am the door. This is like a teacher in a classroom that has a student who can't understand the concepts and finally sits down with them and says, let me make this as plain to you as possible.

I am the door. Verse 7, look at verse 11, which moves all the way through verse 18, I am the good shepherd.

I'm the door. I'm the gate. I'm the one who leads. I'm the one who provides. I'm the shepherd. I'm not just a shepherd, I'm the good shepherd.

I'm the good shepherd in contrast to the ones you have presently running the temple in Jerusalem. What is the mark of the gate?

[15 : 01] What is the mark of him being the door? Notice again, it's this going in and coming out. Jesus provides for the sheep.

It is not the other way around. shepherd. The false shepherds, the leaders of the church of his own day, placed on the back of the people to whom they were ministering all the burden for their provision.

What Jesus is saying is that's not the way a shepherd works. A shepherd goes out in front and actually finds the pasture in which the people will be provided for.

He's the entrance. And if leading and opening is the mark of the gate and Jesus alone is that one, he is telling you and me, if you want to be rightly related to God, he's the way.

He's the truth. He's the life. He's the door. He's the provider. He leads.

[16 : 30] And look at the notion of himself as a shepherd. How many times in the reading did you hear this morning that the mark of the shepherd is that he lays down his life for the sheep?

Verse 11. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Verse 15. I lay down my life for the sheep.

Verse 17. For this reason the father loves me because I lay down my life that I might take it up again. Verse 18. But I lay it down of my own accord.

Lord, I have authority to lay it down and to take it up. This is the mark of the shepherd. Not only that he provides for the flock and leads them where they ought to be going for their own welfare, but that he sacrifices himself on their behalf.

he is protecting them from the evil one and the wrath that would come upon them by laying down his own life for them.

[17 : 52] This idea of the whole 21 verses then sits firmly on Jesus as provider and protector. which is why the illusion in the story is rooted back in Ezekiel's prophecy in chapter 34 where God says very clearly by prophetic discourse, I am tired of the shepherds that are running my people into the ground.

I am tired of under shepherds that are placing the burden of all provision on the back of my people and they do so for their own welfare.

I am tired of under shepherds who will neither provide for the flock nor protect the flock. And God says in Ezekiel 34 I'm done with those shepherds and then he says I will come and be their shepherd and Jesus is saying that day has fully arrived.

Woe to the shepherds. why they missed it, where it fits and how it helps us understand it.

What are we to do with it? What are we to do with it? Today the Lord Jesus Christ sits as the chief shepherd at the right hand of the father.

[19 : 23] And like Old Testament times, he has placed in the church under shepherds that are responsible for the oversight and welfare of the community.

And if you look out at the church at large, you and I are both seeing massive abuse within ministry given those who are under shepherds.

people who are and what you're looking for is someone who will provide and someone who will protect. This is what you want as a pastor or an elder.

Someone who will keep Jesus as the door and call out anything that climbs in over the side wall. someone that will keep him the way and the truth and the life and will not permit other teachings to crowd out Jesus.

Did you notice in the text how he went by figure of speech third person singular to first person singular? Today we have a problem in the pulpit where many that are leading the church are consumed with first person singular.

[20 : 40] I this, I that, my dog, my house, my life, my stories, me, me, I, I. And what we actually need are people that are leading the church that are willing to go not from first person singular but to third person singular and begin to talk about him.

Let me see Jesus. Guard Jesus. Provide for us the way Jesus does. Protect us from teachings that will move us away from Jesus.

This is all there. Jesus is the central figure. Be wary of any who will place the firm burden for all things spiritual on the back of the sheep.

Paul ran into the same problem Jesus ran into later. fear. I was thinking of Paul confronted false teachers who were manipulating the flock for their own welfare.

prayer. And the same thing happens today. Let me read you the way Paul puts it when he has to address this same kind of subject where people were questioning whether he had the authority to be leading the way he was leading because the church at Corinth was nonplussed with the way he went about it.

[22 : 13] But what Paul says very simply is this. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted you put up with it readily enough.

Indeed he says I consider I'm the least I am not in the least inferior to those super apostles. I might be unskilled and I might not have all knowledge but in every way we have made this plain to you in all things.

Or he says that I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted because I preach God's gospel to you free of charge. I robbed other churches by accepting support for them from them in order to serve you and I went in need and didn't burden you.

Not worried about my needs being supplied but yours. I mean Paul takes on the whole element of provision for the flock. In chapter 12 of 2 Corinthians he puts it this way.

This is the third time I'm ready to come to you. I will not be a burden. I seek not what is yours but you. For children are not obligated to save up for their parents but parents for their children.

[23 : 49] I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. This is what he's facing. He was facing a constituency that did not want his provision for their welfare.

but rather was offended by it. And Jesus faced the same thing. The role of the under shepherd is to provide for the people the right pasture to go into for the welfare of the whole.

Did you notice how Jesus says I have sheep that are not of this fold? He means Gentiles. In other words he knew that the religious leadership of his own day had become a club to the point of well we're just here for ourselves and we don't really need to be thinking about anybody on the outside.

And Jesus said look that's not what I'm on about. I'm going to get up in the morning and I'm going to go out because I have all kinds of people that I want to bring into the fold. Find an under shepherd who's not willing to spend and be spent for the welfare of the whole and you have a false shepherd.

find an under shepherd who's not concerned for the welfare of those who don't yet know Christ but only wants to secure the simplicity of life for those that are already in Christ and you've got another kind of shepherd.

[25 : 20] Imagine imagine with me living in a day when local churches weren't receiving the word of Christ weren't wanting the word of Christ weren't grateful for the provisions of Christ weren't concerned for the glory of Christ weren't willing to get out and go for the name of Christ imagine imagine what happens to the church it just stops Jesus had a figure of speech but he knew how to make his speech plain may we live under his word and orchestrate our lives for his glory and may you know and always know the provision and the protection of Christ through those who lead in his name here's the picture he gave of himself entirely may we partake of his life today our heavenly father we thank you for this story in the midst of John's gospel where

Jesus distinguishes himself from the Sanhedrin who were so intent on casting people out that they never knew Jesus was the one who had come to lead people in we thank you for this story wherein the people celebrated your deliverance from intruders may Jesus have full reign within our house thank you for the sacrifice he made in his name we pray amen