

The Good Shepherd

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Date: 06 May 2018

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- [0 : 0 0] We have a problem with the text today, and just take my glasses off. How many people here own sheep? Gary just said that. You don't really own sheep, do you?
- You do? His wife says no, so there you go. Nobody here owns sheep. How many people have ever owned sheep? Oh, look at that. Three people here have owned sheep.
- That's pretty neat, actually. How many people here know a shepherd? You know a shepherd. There you go. Okay, you have one person. And just as a, you know, I mean, this isn't a big stretch.
- Between now and going home, probably none of us will see a sheep as well. So we have a Bible text about sheep, like what's up with that? It's a bit of a problem if you think about it, isn't it?
- In fact, it sort of struck me all week. If I had some of my non-Christian friends, if this was to be the Sunday that they were going to come, I could just imagine them saying, George, what's up with the sheep?
- [1 : 0 4] Because it doesn't seem like a very 2018 post-modern urban Ottawa type of analogy. And there's a really big cultural distance here.
- And my family will tell you I am not good with animals. We have animals because I have a wife who's good with animals and loves animals. If it was just up to me, and I guess my kids are good at it.
- If, you know, if my daughter moved out of the house and my wife died, all of our animals would die just because of my incompetence. Not on purpose. I'm just not good with animals.
- And here I'm going to have to talk to us about sheep and shepherds. So I need your help. We need to all be a little bit, you have to be a bit patient with me. And we need a little bit of help to try to bridge this cultural difference.
- But just before we get into it, what might seem like a weakness that Jesus is going to spend a lot of time talking about sheep and shepherds, what might seem like a bit of a weakness, if we think about it for a second, is actually a bit of a strength.
- [2 : 0 6] Well, how does that work? Well, it works in this way. This isn't a George book. And this isn't just a book written for 2018 people who live in Ottawa.
- It's a world book. And it's a history book. It's a book that this biography of Jesus has spoken to people for 2,000 years almost and in many, many, many different cultures.
- And because the words of Jesus address not just people in Ottawa right now, but many, many people throughout the world and throughout time, it means that sometimes we're going to come to parts of the Bible that don't resonate with us very well.
- There's just a big cultural gap. But for many other people, they would resonate with this very, very well. They might have problems with other parts, but this part, they'd really latch on to it. They'd catch some of the shock of what Jesus says.
- And even the analogy, it's funny, he doesn't say, I am the shepherd of the llamas. I'm not a llama herder. I looked this up in an encyclopedia, so it must be true.

[3 : 15] And in the encyclopedia, it said that sheep are probably the very first four-legged domesticated animal in the history of human beings.

Very first. And that basically, wherever the Bible has gone, there's always been sheep. And there's a billion sheep in the world right now.

Other than a few little islands in the Pacific where it's very, very hot, sheep are very common. It's the most common four-footed domesticated animal. And so it's very interesting, isn't it?

Because if you've been following along, if you're a guest here, you might not know, but if you've been following along with the way Jesus teaches, he teaches with very, very simple, basic words and concepts and ideas.

He gives them very brand-new meanings, and he touches our hearts with them, but he talks about a word. He talks about light. He talks about life. He talks about bread. He talks about water.

[4 : 11] And now he talks about sheep. A bit of a stretch for us, but for many people throughout the world and throughout history, it would be something to go, oh, I know all about sheep. I know all about animals like sheep.

What's he going to be saying about it? So it's a bit of a stretch for us, but let's look at it. And the first thing we have to understand in this text is that Jesus is critiquing religion.

That's the first thing. Believe it or not, the very first thing he does is he critiques religion. So if you turn in your Bibles to John 10, verse 1.

Actually, we're going to start looking a few verses before this, because it's only if you see what went on before this that you realize that he begins by critiquing religion. I love telling my skeptical friends this when I finally get a chance, those who are very, very skeptical about religion.

I saw a great line about religion the other day. religion is foolish questions, foolish answers to foolish questions. And I love trying to tell my skeptical friends that actually that Jesus constantly critiques religion.

[5 : 20] Like they can't actually surpass Jesus in his critique of religion. And so if you look at what just goes on right before what we're going to be looking at, look at verse 35 of chapter 9.

And what's just happened here is Jesus has performed a miracle. I know for many people in our culture, they have a hard time believing this, but this is Jesus performs a miracle. He performs it, and it's investigated by skeptics.

And the religious people just rejected out of court, even though there's compelling evidence that Jesus has really performed a miracle. For religious reasons, they just refuse to accept the evidence, and they react to the evidence by casting abuse on the people who've been giving the evidence.

And so here's how it goes then. Verse 35 of chapter 9. Jesus heard that they had cast the man out. And having found him, he said, Do you believe in the Son of Man? And the man answered, And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?

And Jesus said to him, You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you. And the man said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. He worshipped Jesus. Verse 39. Jesus said, For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.

[6 : 32] He's really referring to those who believe they see. They're really blind. We talked about that last week. I'm not going to go into it. But here's the key thing coming up.

Verse 40. Some of the Pharisees, those are like experts and very, very religious people, and just very religious, very knowledgeable, very devout. And so some of these very devout religious people heard him say these things, verse 40, and said to him, Are we also blind?

And as I talked about last week, it's a sneer. It's not a sincere question. It's sort of a put-down question. And Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you would have no guilt. But now that you say we see, your guilt remains.

And now, what happens next? Now, the way John writes, it's not clear if this is immediately after that, or maybe it's a day later, and he's just talking to his disciples, or an hour later.

But immediately after that, what does Jesus say? Right? He's just said to these people, the religious people, the devout people, the spiritual people, the people who are experts and knowledgeable, they've just been sneering to him.

[7 : 38] And what does Jesus say? Truly, truly, verse 1 of chapter 10, Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs in by another way, that man, that man is a thief and a robber.

That man is a thief and a robber. It's a direct challenge to the religious people. It's a direct challenge to the religious people. And, if they had been there to hear it, they would have understood that he was directly, I mean, he was calling them thieves and robbers, violent people who steal.

They look like they're really good, but they're not. They're not. So, but what's up, George, with the sheep thing?

You know, that's very good. Okay, so Jesus is critiquing religion. You know, my skeptical friends always look a little bit puzzled at me about how I would say that Jesus is critiquing religion when they would say that I'm religious.

And sometimes I get a chance to talk about that. Sometimes I don't. But they might be saying here, well, George, what's up with that? I mean, Jesus is a religious figure. And, I mean, maybe, George, the way he's a religious figure is he just says absurd and fantastical things.

[8 : 58] He answers foolish questions with foolish things. And he starts talking about sheep. And we don't relate to sheep here in Ottawa, George. It's just sort of not part of our life. So what's going on?

Well, let's look. Like, is there something here that Jesus is saying, which is very pointed, that helps to understand, help us to understand our lives?

And why it is that he would critique religious people? Well, let's read verse one again. Truly, truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs in by 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's 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 the sheep. The voice of strangers. This is so cool, then, what John puts in here. This figure of speech, Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

[10 : 02] I love that little aside, because there's lots of times I don't understand the Bible. In fact, I puzzled over this whole text of chapter one, chapter 10, verses one to 20.

It took me a while to sort of figure it out. And it was very helpful that John just says, by the way, the people who were with Jesus right then, they didn't understand what he was talking about.

But one thing he says, you have to understand, he's talking in figurative language. He's using something like a parable. And so, John mentions this, and maybe if you'd gone back in the time machine, Jesus could have just told by the glazed look in the eyes of the disciples that they weren't getting it.

Maybe one of them asked a question, and John just doesn't record it. But Jesus now makes it clear to them what he's talking about. Look what he says in verses seven to 10. 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. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out, and find pasture.

[11 : 11] The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

And just sort of pause there. Just before I make my first point, the way this is written in verse 10, verse 10 is like a hinge. It connects the sort of the imagery of the sheepfold in the door with an other set of images that Jesus is going to give in a moment.

And so in a sense, verse 10 summarizes those first images, and verse 10 also helps us to understand the following images. It's like a hinge. And it's a very important hinge, because while Jesus critiques the religious people, he doesn't critique religious people or spiritual people because he hates them.

He's for you. He's for me. He's for us. His goal and his desire is that we will have abundant life. And so even when he says things which are a bit offensive to us, even when he says things which are confusing, even when he says things that we don't like, everything he says and everything he does is motivated by the fact that he's really for you.

He's completely for you, and he loves you. Everything. It's one of the reasons why it's always worth your time to try to puzzle over what on earth is going on, because if we puzzle through it, and pray through it and try to obey it, it will take us to a place where Jesus begins to give us more abundant life.

[12 : 48] So, what's up with all this stuff, George? You said it sort of makes some sense, but there's sheep flocks and gatekeepers and all of that type of stuff.

Well, I'm just going to warn you, the first thing that we're going to see when we actually think about this is that it's going to be very offensive to us, to Canadians, but if we just take a moment with it, because it's all about abundant life, and think about it for a second, we'll realize that what begins to offend Canadians is actually something which is profoundly good news.

It's very, very wonderful, important news. If you could put up the first point, Andrew, what is it that Jesus is talking about here? The first point is this.

There is a great unbridgeable wall between God and me, and Jesus is the door by which I can enter into God's realm, and his realm can enter into me.

There is a great unbridgeable wall between God and me, between God and you, and Jesus is the door by which I can enter into God's realm, or you can enter into God's realm, and his realm can enter into you and enter into me.

[14 : 08] That's what he means. Look at it here in verse, the very first few words of verse 9. I am the door. Now, this is a, this is a very, very big claim that Jesus is the door, and there's no other way to enter into God's presence than by him, and there's no other way for God's presence to really enter into us except by him.

And part of the problem we have, I mean, it's offensive to us, especially in Canada. We're very, very used to pride and arrogance.

We're very, very used to favoritism. We're very, very used to exclusive claims that causes all sorts of violence and all sorts of wars. And so, the initial way that we hear something like this is actually very frightening.

But once again, it's very, very interesting what Jesus says here. The door is, in fact, one of the most common things we can come across, isn't it? He is the door.

I mean, the door is the way we get from outside of the building into the world outside. It's the way we entered into this building. It's a passageway. And in movies and in stories for centuries and centuries, not obviously movies for centuries, but in stories and in movies, it's a very, very common idea, isn't it?

[15 : 32] Like, just about every fantasy novel, doesn't just about every fantasy novel involve some person who gets to enter through a door and through entering a door goes into some other type of world?

Maybe there's a person, a young girl who's just, I don't know, she's having sort of a miserable life and someday she goes, she gets a ring or she gets a staff or she gets a diamond or she has some old keepsake from her great, great granny and she comes to something and she enters through a door and in that other world, she's not just a nobody, but in fact, she's some very special person, some very, very powerful person, absolutely essential to that world.

How many science fiction movies involve, I mean, right now in Netflix, you could go to Lost in Space and watch Lost in Space. It's a common trope that there's some terrible tragedy afflicting Earth and there's going to be some way into another place which is safe, but once again in that, it's not that everybody on Earth gets to go, but only a special person or a special few, only the best, get to go on the spaceships to get through it in a sense a door into that better world.

And so it's a very, very familiar idea that Jesus talks about. It's something that we are very, very familiar about and it's funny because on one level, when we see the same idea in fantasy, we don't find it problematic, do we?

When we see the same idea in science fiction, we don't find it problematic. And part of the reason is is that the way the movies and the stories are designed is for me to think, yes, I'm that unimportant person that nobody really matters and I can enter into this world and I can pretend that I'm very, very special and I get to go into this different world.

[17 : 14] But you see, here's the thing about this story. Those stories might be all right. We might think, oh yeah, I'm that special person that goes into that special world, but after we close the book and go about our daily life, we go back to our job at Starbucks or we go back to our job at Tim Hortons or we go back to cubicle land and our boss thinks we're a nobody and doesn't like us, like we come back to real world.

But here's the thing, Jesus is, Jesus, this, he really lived, he really existed and his death upon the cross and his resurrection vindicates what he says.

And he doesn't just say, like, in this world, in this world, for many of us, we're often passed over and maybe if we're blessed to have a wife or a husband or some really good friends who think we're special, many, many people in our world don't feel very special and are constantly passed over.

And Jesus says, he doesn't say, I'm just the door for the special people. I'm the door for the unique people. I'm the door for the exceptional people. I'm the door for the beautiful people, the rich people, the powerful people.

He is the door. And the implication is that ordinary people like you and me, if we respond, he wants us to come through. Ordinary people. And this whole idea, I mean, it's, we would rather hear Jesus say to us that we have the spark of the divine in us because we're all special and wonderful, but that flatters our vanity.

[18 : 48] But we know it's not true, don't we? Like, we know it's not true. And in our culture, we don't really like the idea that there's this inseparable, unbridgeable wall, a wall that we cannot climb, that we cannot dig under to be into God's presence.

But on one hand, isn't that what we experience? Like, Jesus isn't saying something which goes against our experience. He speaks to what is our experience.

There is this great divide between God and human beings. And the wonderful news here is that Jesus says, I am the door. Yes, there's this unbridgeable wall, unscalable wall, a wall that you cannot batter down and a wall that you cannot dig under.

And it keeps human beings from God. But I am the door. I am the way by which when you enter through the door, you enter not just into God's presence, but into his realm.

And that God's realm enters into you and to me. Jesus is going to talk more about this in a couple of chapters. But it's a very, very important world. You see, it would just be like a refugee in a refugee camp.

[20 : 03] And maybe they don't speak any English or any French, one of the two official languages of Canada. But one day, they get the good news that they've got this means by which they can come into Canada.

And they come to Canada to be Canadians. They come to Canada and they usually want very, very quickly, as fast as they can, to start to learn English or French and to learn how to drive on the right-hand side of the road and to learn how to fit in with our culture.

You see, that's what God does with us is that Jesus causes us not to enter through the door where we enter into God's realm and we start to learn his language. We start to breathe his air.

We start to eat his food. We start to learn his customs. We start to learn his character. We start to learn his habits. We start to become citizens of his realm. And Jesus isn't just a door by which we enter into God's realm, but he is also the means by which God's realm enters into me and into you.

But there's more here than this. And here, just before we say about this other part, before we move on to the latter part of the story, here's a full disclosure. And for those of you for this, this is Church of the Messiah is your church home.

[21 : 23] This isn't a surprising statement, but if you're a guest, I have to say this because of the very next thing. We are a very imperfect church. And I am a very imperfect pastor.

And if you're a guest here and you've come here because you're looking for a perfect church with perfect people, you're going to be very, very unhappy with us because we are an imperfect church with imperfect people with an imperfect pastor.

And I mention this because of the other powerful image that Jesus uses here as he gives a description of the church. If you could put up the next point, Andrew, that would be very good. Jesus says, Jesus calls you to be led by him and belong to a good local church as his sheep in his flock, in his fold, with a shepherd led by him, the good shepherd.

See, Jesus begins by critiquing religion. He begins by critiquing the spiritual people, the religious people. And he does it because at the end of the day he wants them to understand that what they're doing is endangering their souls and it's robbing them of abundant life.

Everything he says is connected to his desire that even the religious, even the spiritual will have abundant life. That they'll actually know God. That they won't just sort of invent religions on one side of an unbridgeable wall, which is just what religion and spirituality is.

[22 : 52] It's inventing stories to give themselves power on one side of an unbridgeable wall that doesn't actually take them to God. But once we enter through the door and enter into his realm, well, there's this other very powerful image, which is the image in verse 8.

Verse 7, we'll read it. Truly, Jesus said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. Verse 7, I am the door of the sheep. So Jesus isn't just the door by which we enter into God's realm.

He's the door by which we enter into the sheepfold. How we become his sheep who are part of his flock, who enter into a sheepfold. It's an image of the church.

It's an image in a sense of what the local church is supposed to be, that we are to be, understand that, well, I'm a sheep. I'm part of a flock.

I'm both, the images get a little bit mixed up here, but I'm also a shepherd. In the original language here, if you look at verse 2, he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

[24 : 01] In the original language, there's no the. And when they write it into English, they have to add something there, otherwise it doesn't make any sense. But what it's describing isn't the good shepherd, it's just describing a shepherd.

It's describing a pastor. The word we get pastor from is the same word that we get shepherd from. And so Jesus says that we become saved by entering through him into the presence of God and into his realm, and his realm begins to enter into us.

And Jesus doesn't call us just to follow him all by ourselves, all by our lonesome. We're not saved alone, but that he always leads us into a good local church.

You see, being part of a good local church isn't an option for Christians. Sheep don't survive in the wild by themselves. Domesticated sheep don't survive in the wild by themselves.

They die. It's a general rule. They die very quickly. Sheep have to be part of a flock, and they need a shepherd to care for them, and they need to have a fold. And so this is an image of the church.

[25 : 06] Jesus calls us to know him, and it's the way that we enter into the sheep fold as sheep, part of his fold. And his intent is that Christians are in a fold, a local church, with other sheep as part of a flock, and the shepherd is to be led by him.

That's why at the beginning of this I prayed not that you would want to hear more of my voice, but want to hear more of the voice of Jesus, because it's the voice of Jesus that we need to follow. And we hear that by hearing the scriptures.

So, some of you might say, well, George, that's all very, very interesting, but there's one thing I do know about sheep, George, is that, as a general rule, George, sheep aren't pets.

And the little I know about farmers is that farmers are very practical people, and if they have a dog, it's probably a dog.

I mean, it might be that they're affectionate towards the dog, but the dog has some things that they want the dog to do, and if they have chickens, well, George, those chickens will eventually be on their table. even if they let the kids name the chickens, the chickens will be beheaded and plucked, and then eventually cooked and eaten.

[26 : 44] And the cows, and, well, George, sheep are for the, first they'll be shorn, and then eventually they'll do something that involves eating, and some aren't even really for shorn very much.

They're just really, so we can have really tasty lamb chops. So it's a bit of a gruesome image, George, isn't it, to think this? I mean, that all sounds very, very nice, and probably when you city people are all, we're all, we city people, we're all listening to this image, and maybe we think of our pet puppy or our cat, which, of course, here in Ottawa, we don't generally, in fact, not generally, I don't think anybody in Ottawa eats their dog or eats their cat, and so, George, this is a very, very, this is a gruesome image, really.

It's not very helpful image to think that I'm a sheep, and, in fact, George, this just sort of fits with what often goes with religion. Doesn't often religion involve some people thinking they're special and they use all these religious languages, but all it's doing is leading sheep to the slaughter.

George, isn't it true that in much of Indian history there were these Hindu princes and religion sort of validated that they could live unbelievably rich and opulent lives where most of the rest of the people just suffered.

George Buddhism, I mean, it's very popular here in North America, but didn't functionally, Buddhism, and in most of the countries that were Buddhist, once again, allow some people to live very, very, very, very opulent lives while the rest of the people had to just suffer with what they were doing.

[28 : 17] If you've read, if you've seen that thing on Netflix yet, the Wild Wild Country about the Bogwan, George the Bogwan had 94, I looked it up just to check, some debate is whether it had 93, 94, or 96 Rolls Royces while his people worked 12-hour days in bunks.

And George, we don't have to go that, isn't it? You know, George, haven't you been corrected about speaking a little bit about financial giving in the church and how for many French Canadians it's a hard thing to hear a priest talking about giving money because for so many generations in Quebec the priest kept the people poor so other people could continue to be rich.

And I could add my own stories. I've had to counsel lots of different women who've talked to me when they found out that I was a pastor because they've come from very, very conservative churches where they were in an abusive marriage.

The man was abusing them and the elders of the church told the woman she couldn't leave her husband or divorce him that even though he was terribly abusive she had to go back to him.

And those are often from people who are very reformed and believe the Bible is God's word. And George, you know, George, what can you say to that? George, the images just don't work.

[29 : 44] Well, that's, you know, it's so amazing. Jesus is just so wise. And because he begins with these images and remember, I mean, I say these things but all of the people who are there, they know sheep, they know that sheep are for sacrifice and for eating.

And some of those things must have been going through their mind. They say, Jesus, why don't you call, this is me, not, I mean, I don't know what they would have said. Like, we would be much more comfortable if he said, you know, I am Dr. X and I'm going to make you mutant superheroes.

Or, you know, I am Steve Job and I'm going to make you all Google engineers cool with lots of money. You know, or, you know, I am whatever and I'm going to make you all supermodels.

Or, you know, I am, I am, I am the Bill Belichick of the New England Patriots and I'm going to make you football stars. I'm going to make you all into Tom Brady's. Like, that's what we'd like, not defenseless sheep that just get eaten.

But listen to how Jesus goes on. Look at, look at, we'll read verse 10 again. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

[30 : 58] He knows that that's what religious people do and spiritual people, and not just religious and spiritual people. I mean, if, if what I sometimes say to my, my secular friends is, you know, listen, I, I know that Christianity has a pretty terrible history but I just have to mention Mao and Stalin and Hitler and Cambodia and the great carnage that's going on in our own country around life issues as well.

So it's a human problem and Jesus is very familiar that there's this problem powerful human problem of thieves and robbers and wolves.

And he says again in verse 10, the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. Then listen to what he says, I am the good shepherd. Verse 11, the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

He was 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 has a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

Just pause. Jesus knows the world is filled with thieves and robbers and wolves and he knows that there's thieves and robbers and wolves and that they're present in universities and they're present in churches and they're present in religion, they're present in spirituality.

[32 : 21] to think that being spiritual means that you'll never come across a thief and a robber and a wolf. Jesus says that's foolish. There are people, hired hands are people who are only in it for themselves.

And thieves and robbers are people who are only in it for themselves and they'll take it from you in whatever way they possibly can. And wolves, they just seem to like to wreck things. And then he says it again in verse 14.

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.

He says it twice. He lays down his 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 four times.

[33 : 30] I have authority to lay it down five times and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father five times. He says I lay down my life five times to make sure we hear it five times.

Andrew, could you put up the point please? sheep are killed for the good of the shepherd. Jesus knows this. Sheep are killed for the good of the shepherd but the good shepherd died for the good of the sheep.

See, that would have been the shocking thing. We don't catch the shock of this as much because we don't have sheep. This would have been the shocking thing to them. I mean, for Jesus' hearers in many cultures they would want to have more and more sheep because the more sheep you have the richer you are.

And for many, many cultures you use sheep for a sacrifice to appease the gods. You appease the gods so that after you've paid off the gods it allows you to live the life that you want to live and to be as rich and powerful as you want.

And so the sheep have this double thing. On one hand it pays off the gods so they don't punish you. On the other hand you have the sheep so you have lots to eat. You can get nice and plump and you can sell the extra sheep for money and you can have lots of really, really good things.

[34 : 49] The sheep die for the good of the shepherd. But Jesus says you have to understand the whole point of this analogy, the whole point of me being a door by which you can bridge this unbridgeable wall between God and human beings by entering through me and come into his realm and into his presence and have his presence come into you and the fact that I am going to call people who have come into my presence into understanding that they're sheep who are to be part of a flock who are to be part of a fold who are to follow a shepherd who is following the good shepherd and the good shepherd will lead his church and you need to be sheep who are always calling out to know Jesus to hear his voice to hear his voice to hear his voice and to hear his voice and you have to understand that this is not an analogy of me doing anything so that it's going to please me where it's I am not a hired hand I am not a thief I am not a robber I am not a wolf how do you know that I die for the sheep I die for the sheep how is it that you know that you can trust that my words that even if my words seem a bit offensive or a bit hard or a bit of a stretch that they're actually leading me into abundant life

I die for the sheep I die for the sheep well Jesus do you know that I'm a bit of a failure do you know that do you know that I'm same sex attracted do you know that I've had lots of abortions do you know that I'm not very religious and not very spiritual I died for the sheep I know all that I died for the sheep look what he says again in verse 14 Andrew could you put up verse 14 and 15 on the screen that's the fourth point I am the good shepherd I know my own I know my own if you come to Jesus and say Jesus I've had I've had five abortions you can't toss be possibly talking about me Jesus I've tried so many times to find somebody who would just find me attractive and nobody finds me attractive you know some of us we're scarred by maybe the fact that we never could make a sports team we fail just about every

Jesus knows us he also knows if you're success he knows you and he knows you and he laid down his life for you verse 14 I am the good shepherd I know my own and my own know me and just as the father knows me and I know the father and I laid down my life for the sheep I have other sheep that are not of this fold he's speaking to Jewish people and he's when it's such a wonderful thing when he says here I have other sheep that are not of this fold he's speaking about you and me who aren't Jewish I must bring them also and they will listen to my voice it's one of the reasons why missionaries go to Angola and it's why we should have missionaries that go to the gay and lesbian community and the transgendered community and the Rockcliffe community and the Google community and the community maybe in Perth because there are sheep there that Jesus knows there are sheep they don't know that they're going to be a sheep they don't know that they've been longing to hear his voice but he knows that they're there longing to hear his voice and he wants to take really imperfect and impossible people like you and me to be the ones by which his voice is heard and it's not your voice that they hear it's Jesus' voice that they hear it's not my voice they hear it's Jesus' voice and then look at this still verse 17 for this reason the Father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it up again it's a prophecy of his resurrection this isn't just a fantasy tale this is something that actually happened in history on a day in the spring in either the year of 30 or the year 33 in the spring

April probably of 30 or 33 outside a city in Jerusalem Jesus was crucified by Roman soldiers with charges written above his head and he was crucified in real time in real history between two thieves and because of the approaching feast they went to kill as an act of mercy they went to kill the the the victim so that because the crucifixion could last for days and they broke the legs of the two thieves but they found out that Jesus was already dead and they pierced his spear with a his side with a spear and and the guy who records that he doesn't know what medical science now knows that what he records is what doctors now know showed helped to show that his heart had failed when he says that blood and water ran out and he really did get put in a grave he was embalmed he was handled he was embalmed and and on the third day the people who didn't believe that

Jesus would rise from the dead start going to the tomb and discovering that the tomb is empty and he starts to appear to them as alive and Jesus really does in real time in the spring of in April of 30 or 33 he really does rise from the dead and when it says he lays it down with authority it means that it's not just some random act but it's an act of power that's right that fits that's authoritative and authoritatively he can give us life it's this wonderful story that we are known by God and that we can begin to get to know him please stand Jesus is the good shepherd and he lays down his life for the sheep and we are to hear his voice and we are to learn what it means to live together as a flock hearing his voice following him we don't just live the Christian life by ourselves

[41 : 15] I mean one of the things that we are going to be praying for in a moment not only is that we would be more courageous in telling others about Jesus and that we would be more fervent and regular in prayer but also that the Lord would put within our hearts a desire to connect with each other as a flock to be part of a community maybe to be part of a small group or the men's group or just in other ways just in friendships but those are the things that we can pray into let's just bow our heads and let's pray Father thank you for Jesus thank you that he died on the cross thank you that he laid down his life for the sheep thank you Father that the closer we get to Jesus the closer we are to abundant life thank you Father that Jesus will never hurt us he will never demean us he will never Father frighten us that he will only be our shepherd who guides us and feeds us and protects us Father we will have many we know that we will have very very hard things to endure in this life sometimes but we thank you Father that we can live each day with Jesus as our good shepherd that he can lead and guide us each day that he will be with us even when we are in the valley of the shadow of death that we will we can fear no evil for he is with he is with us he is with me he is with you

Father draw us to Jesus as our good shepherd who cares for us and this we ask in the name of Jesus your son and our savior amen is with he is with you