

We The Church: One Flock, One Shepherd

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Date: 16 February 2020

[0 : 00] Christ the King Church. We as a church have an unprecedented opportunity in front of us. We have been uniquely placed as a church in this city at this time with all of us to make an impact for Jesus.

We are uniquely positioned to make a compelling case to the people of our city that God the Father has sent God the Son to die in the place of sinners and to gather a people, a diverse people unto himself.

The case that we have to make as a church is not a logical argument for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, though that may come in time. The case that our Lord Jesus, our Good Shepherd, is calling us to make is to love one another.

It's what Francis Schaeffer calls the final apologetic. As we love one another across differences and cultural divides, as we love one another as Christ has loved us, we're going to communicate to our city, the world, that yes, God has sent his Son.

[1 : 31] And yes, Jesus does change people to live in love in ways that don't make any sense to the rest of the world. At the end of last Sunday's service, one of our elders, Brian Whittington, closed with this question.

With the revelation that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, has laid down his life for his sheep, how does that inform, shape, and change our understanding of all the people who gather in this body Sunday after Sunday?

How does that inform our understanding of the church? We the church. For the month of February and March, we are looking at the Bible to understand what God says about the church, and our prayer is this, that we would think about the church the way that God our Father thinks about the church, that we would feel about the church the way that Jesus feels about his church, and that we would prioritize the church the way that the Holy Spirit prioritizes his church in reaching a world for Christ.

So we're looking at different New Testament pictures of the blood-bought people of God. The church is the blood-bought people of God indwelt by the Holy Spirit on mission for Christ.

So all throughout the New Testament, we see different ways that God describes his people. The church is the bride of Christ. The church is the body of Christ.

[3 : 13] The church is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The church is a royal priesthood, a holy nation. The church is a family of God. The church is a bunch of refugees, strangers and aliens, living in a foreign land.

The church is salt and light in a dark place, a city on a hill. And last week, we started to look at the church as the flock of God.

We are one united flock following one exclusive shepherd. All of these images of the church communicate the relationship between God and his people at this time.

And when we turn to John chapter 10, there's one little phrase that stands out in verse 16.

We are one flock, one shepherd. We are one united flock following one exclusive shepherd. And so last week, what I tried to show you is I tried to make a case for how our good shepherd is a one-of-a-kind good shepherd.

[4 : 27] One-of-a-kind in his authority over his sheep. One-of-a-kind in his relationship, his knowing of his sheep. One-of-a-kind in his care for the sheep.

Remember, he's the door. One-of-a-kind in his sacrifice for his sheep. He laid his life down for his sheep. One-of-a-kind in his mission of gathering sheep from different sheepfolds together into one flock, one shepherd, following one voice.

And he's one-of-a-kind in the promise he makes to his sheep. Nobody can snatch my sheep out of my hand or my father's hand. He is our one exclusive shepherd.

There's nobody like him. But this morning, in part two, what does it mean for us to be one united flock following him?

How does that inform, shape, change the way that we think about ourselves in this time and in this place?

[5 : 33] So here's what I'd like to do. Let's look at John 10, and we're going to see five unifying truths about being a flock, one flock with one shepherd.

And what you're going to see as I get to point five, there's a lot riding on this. So five unifying truths of being one flock following one shepherd.

I just want to let you know, if you want to amen, amen. The first unifying truth is this. We see it in chapter 10, verse 3, chapter 10, verse 4, chapter 10, verse 5, chapter 10, verse 6.

It shows up in the word voice. We are united as one flock by one voice. The voice of our good shepherd.

Read with me, John chapter 10, verse 3. To him, the gatekeeper opens, the sheep hear his voice. And he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

[6 : 48] When he's brought out all his own, he gets before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice. Verse 5, for they do not know the voice of strangers. Verse 16, I must bring them these sheep from different non-Jewish folds, the Gentile sheep from Gentile folds and subfolds of Gentiles.

I must bring them and also and they will listen to my voice so there will be one sheep, one flock, one shepherd. Here's the claim.

The good shepherd, Jesus, the risen Christ, is speaking today. He's calling a people out to himself. A people out to himself and he's gathering them as one flock.

And his voice doesn't stop with you, your conversion of getting called out to him. We follow his voice ongoingly. He is the sheep who leads in front of his flock.

Do you remember in John 6, Jesus has just said some really hard things to a bunch of people who are saying they want to follow him. He says things like this, hey, you've got to eat my flesh and you've got to drink my blood and people were just disgusted.

[8 : 13] And so you know what happens in John 6? People stop following Jesus. And Jesus turns to his 12 and he says to them, hey, do you want to go as well?

Now's the time to get off the Jesus train? And Peter responds, he says this, Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life, your voice. And we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God, the Messiah.

Your voice. We follow your voice. all who the Father has given the Son will come to recognize, believe, obey, follow the voice of their good shepherd.

And if you look down to verse 16, we read, and I have other sheep that are not of this fold.

Remember, Jesus is speaking John 10 to an audience of Jews and he's saying to them, I've got sheep not here in the Jewish fold, I've got sheep in the Gentile fold, and I must bring them in also, and they will hear my voice.

[9 : 38] When we think about the city of Kenosha, I don't know if you've driven around the city, y'all, there's a bunch of different neighborhoods, and these different neighborhoods are marked by a variety of different things, different kinds of homes, different kinds of people living in those homes, different crime rates, different school kind of quality.

It varies from neighborhood to neighborhood, and here's what I want to put in your minds. Think about a neighborhood as a neighbor fold, a little fold of sheep.

And what I believe God is calling us to, and many in this room believe, is that the good shepherd shepherd is calling to himself sheep from a variety of different neighbor folds in our city to form one flock with him as his one shepherd, and we all together follow his voice.

We obey his voice. Have you ever played the game Marco Polo? Summertime? Oh, I would love to be in the summertime right now. In a pool, playing with your kids or your friends, and if you're it, you're Marco, and you've got to close your eyes, and you're like, Marco, and then the people you're playing with, they say, Polo, and the idea is if you can locate the voice and go after and tag them, they're it.

We locate and go after Jesus by his voice. And do you know where to go to listen to Jesus?

[11 : 21] Do you know where the primary place is to hear the voice of Jesus? The definitive place to go for the voice of Jesus? The final place to go to hear the voice of Jesus?

You go to this book. You don't look inward, you look to the book. You go to the words. All of these words in this book are breathed out by God and profitable.

Each one is authoritative because they originated in the mind of God. And all of these words, in some way, some fashion, point to Jesus. And the Gospels in particular, they record his voice. And ironically, we're reading a passage where Jesus' voice is recorded talking about his voice. And his words are living and active.

Today, in his words that call us to lay down your lives, come after me, they are living. And when his sheep hear that, they respond.

[12 : 33] His voice unites us together to follow our good shepherd. Our ears are turned to him and tuned to him.

I want to just make one other point before we move on. One of the ways that you can discern Jesus' voice, he's always calling you to come to him, come after him.

It's all about him. Come after me. All you who are weary and heavy laden, come to me. So the question I want to ask you this morning, Christ the King Church, is are you listening to the voice of Jesus?

Are you seeking out his voice in the word? Go to him. God. It's a great case to be regularly planting yourself in one of the gospels.

We are united together by his voice and he's going to lead us by his voice. The second unifying truth is that we are united by our relationship with him.

[13 : 52] In verse 14, Jesus says this, I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me. And so the question becomes what kind of knowledge?

What kind of knowing? Well, if you look at verse 15, he explains what kind of knowing he means. He says, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father.

Do you know what kind of knowing he's describing right there? Being in personal relationship with someone. Just as Jesus is in personal relationship with his Father, we are to be in personal relationship with our good shepherd.

There's no one like him. Here's how that relationship works. If you observe Jesus' life throughout the gospels, there's so much you'll learn about him.

There's no one like him. And you see Jesus interacting with his Father and he's regularly pouring out his heart to his Father. It's informative for us because we are to pour out our hearts to our good shepherd.

[15 : 06] Because we know him. We're in personal relationship to him. And so when we all are pouring out our hearts to the good shepherd, it unites us.

We're united not just on an individual relationship, but we relate to him as a flock too in our gathering Sunday by Sunday. Have you ever been to like a party?

When you're showing up to the party and you're drinking some punch and some other person kind of walks up and you start making small talk and then you're comparing notes a little bit and you're like, wait, you know George?

And you're like, I know George, do you know George? And so all of a sudden you realize you have this common friend. And then you start comparing notes on your common friend and you start laughing a lot because George is a freak show and you both know it.

All of a sudden those people who share that friend are united. And brothers and sisters, we all share a common friend, a common Lord and the good shepherd.

[16 : 17] We're united by our being in relationship to him. I have found myself for the last two weeks, I was telling Billy and Matt, I've been doing a lot of good shepherd praying because as I've been seeped in John 10, I just can't, I can't get around how amazing he is.

And it informs my praying. Oh good shepherd, oh good shepherd, would you call this man to yourself? Oh good shepherd, would you provide my brother with the help he needs?

Oh good shepherd, I'm scared. Oh good shepherd, I'm exhausted. Oh good shepherd, I don't know what to do with my child. Oh good shepherd, oh good shepherd, lead me, help me, help me to hear your voice.

Yes. Do you know and love your good shepherd better than he did a year ago? We are in a personal relationship with him.

Each of us, we share him together. We're united in our relating to him. And he knows us in and out. The third unifying truth is this.

[17 : 38] We all, we're united by his care for us. In verse 7, Jesus says, truly, truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

All who come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to my, 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.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they might have life and have it abundantly. I tried to explain to you last week that back in the first century, in the Middle East, sheep folds were not this very impressive architectural event.

So you would have like a wall in a village or a wall in a house and the shepherds would build this kind of twisted kind of stick, kind of bulky kind of wall to form a sheep fold.

And then there would be an entryway. And not every entryway had a door. So it wasn't unusual for a shepherd to put himself in the entryway of a sheep fold as the door.

[18 : 49] And in so doing, that shepherd would keep out the bad guys, verse 8, and he would also love his sheep by letting them out and in to out to find the verdant pastures, the green, rich pastures, and to come back in and to find shelter.

It's a picture of provision and protection. It's a picture of life. Abundant life.

The good shepherd is constantly providing for and protecting his sheep. His sheep. And it raises a question. Well, how does he do that today? It's 2020. I don't see Jesus outside in front of this building.

What's up? Well, the good shepherd, who is also the chief shepherd, he appoints under-shepherds to shepherd local flocks to provide and protect his sheep.

You remember in John 21, Jesus is reinstating Peter. I mentioned this last week three times. Do you love me, Peter? Lord, you know I do.

[20 : 14] Feed my lambs. Do you love me? Lord, you know I do. Feed my sheep. Do you love me?

Three times. Peter denied him. Three times. Do you love me? Lord, you know everything. Feed my sheep.

My sheep. If you flip back in your Bibles to 1 Peter 5, this same Peter is writing to a bunch of elders of some churches in a particular region and this same Peter says, so I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed.

Shepherd the flock of God that is among you. Exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly. So God, as God would have you, not for shameful gain, but eagerly.

Not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

[21 : 27] If you turn to Acts 20, verse 28, the apostle Paul is heading back to Jerusalem from his second missionary journey. He's trying to make as much time as possible and so he's going to land in a port town called Miletus and he sends for the elder team of the church of Ephesus and he says, guys, you've got to meet me here in Miletus.

I've got to tell you some things because I'm not going to see you again. And so when he lands and they gather, one of the things he says in verse 28, so this is the apostle Paul to this Ephesian shepherd team, elder team.

He says, pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to care for the church of God which he obtained with his own blood.

Today, the good shepherd cares for his sheep through the humble oversight of a team of qualified under shepherds, a.k.a. elders, pastors, overseers.

And the New Testament norm is that these elders serve together on a team in a plurality for the health of the sheep because elders need to be shepherded too.

[22 : 55] One of the things I love about my New Testament are the qualifications of elders for elders in 1 Timothy 3, 1-7, Titus 1, 5-9, 1 Peter 5, 1-4, what we just read.

They're pretty rigorous. Do you know why those are in there? Because Jesus, the good shepherd, loves his flock. And he doesn't just let anybody at him.

He wants men of proven character who are humble, who are trusting in him. So the authority an elder team has to exercise in a church, that's not their own authority.

That's a derived authority from the chief shepherd. That's why Peter says when the chief shepherd appears, you're going to give an account to him. Now the result of having a healthy and humble team of elders is that a local flock is protected against people with bad intentions and it happens. And that same flock is faithfully fed green pasture and is faithfully led following after the voice of Jesus. We are united by the care of the good shepherd by his under shepherds.

[24 : 20] It's not the only way he cares for his church but it is a primary way. The fourth thing that unites us, the fourth unifying truth, we are one flock following after one shepherd.

we are united by his blood. I pointed this out last week. Every time Jesus calls himself the good shepherd in John 10, he explicitly links him being the good shepherd with laying down his life for the sheep.

You see it in verse 11, I'm the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Verse 14, I'm the good shepherd. I know my own. My own know me just as the Father knows me and I know the Father and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Five times in this passage, Jesus references laying down his life. Two times, he talks about taking it up again. It's a reference to his death and his resurrection for the good of his sheep.

And when Jesus lays down his life at the end of John, it is a bloody mess of an event. He sheds his blood for his sheep.

[25 : 33] That's why Paul in Acts 20, 28 calls the church the blood bought. Those whom he purchased with his blood. His blood made it possible for you and me to become his.

And it's the greatest unifier of them all. The cross levels the playing field.

It is the great equalizer of the flock. Not only does his death and resurrection unite us to him, it unites us to one another.

So not only are we blood bought, we are blood bound. We were all straying sheep that Jesus, the good shepherd, came and found and laid his life down for.

We were all united in our running away from God and there was no way we could save ourselves but because of the grace of God and the mercy of the good shepherd, he laid his life down for us.

[26 : 48] We all have that in common. We are all united by the fact that we have this promise that no one can snatch us out of the good shepherd's hand or his father's.

We are united by his blood in that unity that we share. It rightly must bubble up as gratitude.

United gratitude over our good shepherd who laid his life down for us. That's why we love to sing so much Sunday after Sunday.

We love to sing of what he's done. Do you know what this means for us as a church? Here's what this means for us as a church. We must begin seeing each other first and foremost as the blood bought sheep of the good shepherd.

We must see one another with eyes of faith not eyes of flesh. Eyes of flesh they focus on differences.

[28 : 03] Eyes of flesh they make judgments move to judgments like this is what they're not. eyes of faith they don't ignore differences. Eyes of faith recognize blood bought first and foremost.

And when you begin to see other people in our church as blood bought sheep of the good shepherd it makes you careful.

It slows you down. this person belongs to the good shepherd purchased by his blood. So if you've had a disagreement with someone who some other sheep of the flock remember your blood bought their blood bought you both belong to the good shepherd.

Or maybe one other sheep really rubs you the wrong way. Blood bought first and foremost. Or maybe there's another sheep that just kind of took a bite of you and took a chunk out of you.

Blood bought. It's not okay but we're all blood bought followers of the good shepherd. His blood is greater than anything that could divide us.

[29 : 31] Greater than anything that could divide us. We have been united by his blood. We are blood bought blood bound.

He laid his life down for us. Which brings me to the fifth point and the point that I've been looking forward to most. The we are united for his mission.

In 1016 Jesus says 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.

We have been united for his mission. Jesus is very clearly saying here that he is calling to himself sheep from a multitude of sheep folds in order to gather together as one flock one shepherd.

Of course he was talking about the Jewish sheep fold and going to the Gentile sheep fold but there are sub folds of Gentile sheep.

[30 : 56] Do I have an amen? What you may not realize is that we're part of his plan. That must be a missional must.

I must bring them also. And he has us in mind to fulfill that purpose. I started with Brian Whittington's quote.

Here it is again with the revelation that Jesus the good shepherd has laid down his life for the sheep from different folds. How does that inform shape and change our understanding of all who gather in this body?

We have people gathering Sunday after Sunday sitting next to each other in the same pew with very significant differences between them.

In one pew you could have someone who is very wealthy sitting next to someone who is dirt poor both are blood bought.

[32 : 18] In the same pew you could have someone who just got out of prison sitting next to someone who has never had a parking ticket and both are blood bought.

You can have someone sitting within people within feet of each other one is an ethnic minority someone black Latino they have been disadvantaged by an imperfect system and they're sitting right next to someone from an ethnic majority white middle class who has been advantaged by an imperfect system both blood bought.

And it goes on. You can have someone who's mentally sharp sitting next to someone who's mentally ill both blood bought. Someone highly educated sitting next to someone who did not finish middle school both blood bought.

Homeless person sitting next to someone who owns multiple properties in the city both blood bought. Someone who's bathed this morning sitting next to someone who hasn't bathed in two weeks both blood bought.

How are we going to unite around these kinds of differences? How are we going to get through this? things to us? Because I am convinced it is an opportunity that Jesus intends for us as a church to make a statement.

[33 : 48] Well, here are a number of suggestions. When we're faced with these differences, first remember this.

You need to be convinced of something. Jesus the good shepherd is actually purposing to unite together in his flock sheep from various and different backgrounds.

It's his purpose. He intends to do it. It's not optional. And we are uniquely positioned as a church, as a people in this location to be about that.

So, the first thing you need to be convinced of is this one flock, one shepherd means multicultural gospelism. The second thing that you need to keep in mind is this.

How are we, how does this inform us? How does this shape us? How does this change us? We've got to reach back into the last point I just made. We are united by the blood of our good shepherd.

[35 : 03] It's got to be at the forefront of our minds. We've got to be keeping that as kind of the defining thing of who we are. For the sake of our unity, we need to keep the cross in front of us because it humbles us.

The cross levels the flock. It equalizes us all. There's no one in this room who deserves what Jesus has done. The cross keeps us humble.

So you've got to remember the purpose of the good shepherd is to unite a diverse people and the cross keeps us humble. The next thing is it's the point that I hope gets traction in you this morning. we need to start learning each other's stories out of love for one another. Later on in John, in John 13, just a couple days before Jesus lays down his life, he says this, a new commandment, this is 1334, a new commandment I give to you that you love one another.

Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. And the one another, regardless of your ethnicity, regardless of what fold you're from, regardless of your criminal record, your neighbor fold, the last time you bathed, regardless of all these things, love one another.

[36 : 48] And he says, just as I have loved you, you know what's on his mind. He's about to lay down his life. In John 15, Jesus says, greater love is no one than this, that someone lays his life down for his friends.

The kind of love that Jesus has in mind here for us is not theoretical. It's experiential. It's costly, risky, inconvenient, uncomfortable, sometimes unsettling, more often than not, messy. It's a sacrificial love we're to love one another with. But let me help you think something through. You might be thinking in your mind right now, well, who am I supposed to love like that? When Jesus laid down his life, he laid down his life for you, he already knew you. He wasn't giving his life for a blurry-faced mass of people he didn't know.

He was laying down his life for specific individuals given to him en masse by the Father. His substitutionary death was in the place of each of us.

[38 : 20] He died for me, he died for you, and he knew us before we were even born. So Jesus didn't give his life for people he didn't know, but for those whom he already knew, even those who are yet to be born.

He this may be a little bit of a stretch, but I think it'll make sense. So when he calls us to love one another, sacrificially, just as he has loved us, he's calling us to lay down our lives for people we know.

let me ask you this question. Right now, who are you willing to be inconvenienced for?

Who are you willing to change your schedule for? Who are you willing to take risks on? Who are you willing to share your resources with? My guess is the people you're willing to do that with are people you already know, people you have a relationship with, people you care about.

A love for one another that will span the divides of race, of politics, of neighbor folds, of employment and income, it starts with getting to know one another.

[40 : 05] It's one thing to get to know someone of the same skin color, who's been living the same lifestyle, with a similar kind of history. It's another thing to get to know someone with a different skin color, living a different lifestyle, with a very different history.

heart heart heart heart heart heart complications, not having answers to things, but we move forward in love.

So loving one another starts by seeking to understand one another, and I want to free you all up to take a courageous step towards one another in a specific way.

it's this. Will you tell me your story? Hey, Josh, can we get together for coffee?

Man, I'd really love to hear your story. You want to come over for dinner? Because I know you've got a story, and I want to hear it.

[41 : 15] We move towards one another. It takes some courage to invite someone who's unlike you to do something like that, but what's driving that is love.

A Jesus kind of love. I think the best place to start are informal relationships around tables, in homes, and in coffee shops.

Nobody's asking you to welcome someone who's been homeless for three years to come live in your basement. What we're talking about though, sorry, that was my brain, what we are talking about though, is moving towards people, blood-bought people, and love.

love. We love one another, and it starts by getting to know one another. Does that sound reasonable? But there's even a bigger why.

In John 13, 35, Jesus, after saying this new commandment, just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another, says this, by this loving one another, this sacrificial love, all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

[42 : 43] It's the distinguishing mark of every follower of Jesus. And if you flip over to chapter John 17, the high priestly prayer, not only do we realize that this is a command to love one another, it is strategic.

Jesus is praying for us in verse 20 and 21, he says this, I do not ask for these only, his disciples that he was with, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one united together, just as you father are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, and here's the phrase, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Do you see what's riding on our love for one another? Look at verse 23, I in them and you in me that they may become perfectly one, unity, so that the world may know that you sent me.

Our loving one another sacrificially is what Francis Schaeffer calls the final apologetic, the greatest case we can make to a watching world.

And if we are unwilling to love others who are unlike us, we fail the command, and we give reason for the watching world to say, ah, they're like everybody else.

[44 : 17] But for those of us who are taking these words to heart and stepping outside of our comfort zones, what people start doing is this, it's like, oh, whoa, he's a believer in Jesus, he's not living for himself, he's moving across, she's moving across boundaries, look at who their friends are.

That ain't natural! That's the world. Because when they see our love for one another, that's resulting in this new and uncommon unity, it ends up making a convincing case that God has actually sent Jesus to not only save people but radically change them to be in new kinds of relationships. Let me ask you this, where in our city are people voluntarily moving towards other people outside of their comfort zone right now?

you see the opportunity we got. We got a great opportunity, Christ the King Church. I hope you're feeling the weight of these words.

I hope you're feeling not just the command but the strategy of it. we are a test case in this city to demonstrate that God has really sent the Son.

[45 : 33] You can't argue with a supernatural unity among a naturally diverse people and it just starts by hearing people's stories. Get it?

We are united for His mission. Better said, we must be uniting for His mission because it's essential to His mission.

We are one united flock following our one exclusive shepherd and there's a lot riding on it. One flock, one shepherd, it informs, shapes, and changes the way that we think about ourselves and our reason for being in our city.

So brothers and sisters, fellow sheep, we have an unprecedented opportunity to make a statement for Jesus in our city by our love for one another.

Do I have an amen? Let's pray. God, thank you so much for Jesus. Jesus, thank you so much for giving us ears to hear your voice this morning.

[46 : 52] This is not an easy way, Lord Jesus. This is risky, it's uncomfortable, but we believe it's true. We believe you're calling us to this.

God, would you give us the strength to do it? Would you give us the courage and the boldness, the confidence in you, our good shepherd, that you're with us all along the way? God, we ask that you would do a work in Christ the King Church, that through our love for one another across various differences, that you would draw to yourself more sheep from more folds to form for yourself a whole new flock of lovers of one another who are all attuned to your voice for the glory of your name.

In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.