

His Goodness Runs Red

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[0:00] Would you mind turning in your Bible to John chapter 10. It's on page 1065 of your pew Bible. And we've been out of the Gospel of John for a couple weeks, and now we're back into the Gospel of John.

The series we've titled Behold, Believe, and Live. Behold Jesus, Believe in Jesus, and Live for Jesus. As you're turning there, you know, we live in a time of great mistrust and skepticism regarding leaders in general.

Maybe you've lost confidence in the political leaders of our country. Well, the church is no exception.

It seems every other month we learn of some Christian leader who has failed or has drifted or has undermined the Gospel, who've compromised themselves.

A lot of Christians, even in this room, have been deeply hurt by compromised shepherds.

Throughout the Bible, shepherding is used as a metaphor of leading God's people.

[1:18] Shepherd lead people. And we shepherds get to lead God's people, His flock.

And throughout the Bible, God refers to Himself as a shepherd of His people. I mean, Steve started off this morning, called us to worship in Psalm 23.1, The Lord is my shepherd.

And what we're going to see from Ezekiel 34 this morning is that God is going to claim that title again, but in the context of a rebuke. In the New Testament, Jesus, God incarnate, is described as the great shepherd of the sheep.

It's Hebrews 13.20. He is the chief shepherd, 1 Peter 5.4. And in our passage this morning, in John 10, Jesus calls Himself the good shepherd.

So, I want to help us ask and answer this question this morning. What is so good about this good shepherd?

[2:33] What's so good about this good shepherd? And what difference will that make for us today? Throughout the passage we're going to be looking at, verses 1 through 21, there's this running contrast between the failed leaders of Israel, the Pharisees, and the good shepherd, the leadership of Jesus.

And what I want to help you to see this morning are three truths that Jesus claims about His leadership that should make you fully trust Him. And here they are. Truth number one, He is the legit shepherd.

Truth number two, He is the purposed shepherd. And truth number three, He is the committed shepherd. So, legit, purposed, committed. And all of these come together to make Him the good shepherd.

And what you're going to see is that His goodness runs red. So, let's look at this first truth that Jesus speaks of Himself.

What we're going to take is kind of piece by piece, make our way through this passage. And now I'm going to read John 10, 1 through 6. Let's look at this first truth where Jesus describes Himself as the legit shepherd.

[3:51] Jesus begins, 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 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.

Who? Verse 6. Who are these them, they, them? We need to understand who Jesus is speaking to. In chapter 9, Jesus heals this man born blind.

And it climaxes at the end of verse 9 where this man who now sees, sees Jesus for the first time, and he says, Lord, I believe, and he worships Him.

[5:03] But then in verse 39, we read, Jesus said, For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see me may see, may see, and those who see may become blind. Some of the Pharisees near Him heard these things and said to Him, Are we also blind?

And Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you would have no guilt, but now that you say, we see, your guilt remains. Now let's just pretend there's no chapter break. But now that you see, say we see, your guilt remains.

Truly, truly, I say to you, do you know who the you is? The Pharisees. Jesus is speaking these words to the failed religious leaders of Israel.

And so what we have before us is a bit of a confrontation between Jesus and the failed leaders of Israel. This is a passage about leadership, believe it or not.

Truly, truly, I say to you, Jesus says, we've bumped into this phrase, truly, truly, I say to you, a number of times in the Gospel of John, and what Jesus is doing is simply setting the record straight.

[6:15] He's like, listen up, let me just lay it clear for you. And He starts by painting a picture of a sheepfold. He says, He who does not enter the sheepfold, what is a sheepfold?

A sheepfold is like a sheep pen, a sheep corral. It's basically a kind of a walled-in enclosure, a fenced-in enclosure to bring sheep in during the night to keep them safe.

And the enclosure, sometimes sides of buildings were used, other times they'd weave like sticks and branches and they'd bring them really high so that nobody could get in and the sheep couldn't get out.

And it only had one door. Only one way in and one way out. And it's here that He begins the contrast.

Look what He says. He who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. Who is He talking to? The Pharisees. Do you know what He's saying to them?

[7:28] You're trying to come into the sheep pen kind of like in an illegitimate way, thief and robber. What He's contrasting is illegitimate leaders.

And so He begins this contrast. Illegitimate people trying to access the sheep and they've got ill intent. They're thieves and robbers.

They don't go through the gate. But in verse 2, the legitimate shepherd is known. He's recognized. He's trusted. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

To him, the gatekeeper opens. He's like an under-shepherd. He's kind of working the door of the sheepfold. Recognizes that this guy's legit. The sheep hear His voice and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out.

He's legit. The sheep recognize Him. They trust Him. They hear Him call their names and they follow Him. They go after Him. Literally, He calls them by name.

[8:33] He knows His sheep. He's recognized. He's legitimate. Did you notice the kind of language Jesus is using here?

He's saying, to Him the gatekeeper opens, the sheep hear His voice, and He calls His own sheep by name. His own sheep by name.

The shepherd, obviously, is Jesus referring to Himself. He knows His own sheep. He calls them by name.

Christian, if you're in the room and you've been like, does Jesus know me? Absolutely. He knows everything about you. He knows your name.

He called you by name to follow Him. You are not some nameless face in a crowd that Jesus poured out His blood generally for.

[9:34] He shed His blood for you. His goodness runs red. What He says here is striking.

He's saying something with clarity and confidence. He's saying, my sheep will recognize my voice. This is getting at what theologians call the irresistible call.

There's the general gospel call, which the gospel goes out to people, all people, and then God effectually is working within that to call a people and the elect to Himself.

those He's known from the foundation before the foundation of the world. His voice is recognized.

It's distinct. It's known. We've learned some things about Jesus along the way here. Remember John 1, 1, in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and He was full of grace and truth.

[10:48] He's full of steadfast love and faithfulness. He puts on God, God on display in an incarnate way. It's glorious. And then at the end of chapter 8, do you remember what Jesus says before Abraham was I am?

Do you know what makes Jesus the legit shepherd? He's God. He is the God.

So like Psalm 23, the Lord Jesus is my shepherd. I shall not want. He's the real thing.

In verse 5, Jesus comes back to the contrast. He says, a stranger they will not follow but they will flee from Him for they do not know the voice of strangers.

A stranger is unrecognized, unknown, untrusted. Do you see the contrast Jesus is doing here? And do you remember who He's talking to? He's talking to these Pharisees who He's calling thieves and robbers and strangers.

[11:54] Unrecognized by the sheep. His sheep. The sheep won't follow a stranger. They don't know His voice. They're illegitimate shepherds.

And so what Jesus is doing in verses 1-5 is emphasizing that He is the legit leader of God's people. The legit shepherd because He is God in the flesh.

He's no thief, robber, or stranger. His sheep recognize them. And then verse 6 we have something very ironic. The sheep read this.

This is John piping up. This figure of speech Jesus used with them, the Pharisees, but they did not understand what He was saying to them. Now isn't that ironic?

Because His sheep will hear His voice and follow Him. But these men do not hear His voice. They are not following Him. They are not His sheep. Who would you rather have as your leader?

[12:59] A thief, robber, stranger, or God incarnate? We move on to the second truth Jesus describes Himself with about Him and the purposed shepherd.

So let me just read chapter 10 verses 7-10. And Jesus 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. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. So the second truth is about the purpose of the good shepherd. And verse 7 begins with another, Truly, truly, I say to you, and again, He's speaking to the Pharisees.

And so it's like Jesus is like, I know you don't understand Me, so I'm going to come in from a different angle. I'm going to speak from the perspective of the door of the sheep pen. perspective of the gate, the sole entrance in and out of the sheep fold.

[14:27] Now, let's just ask a basic question. What is the purpose of a door? What's the purpose of a gate? The purpose of a door or gate is, generally speaking, to keep bad things out and keep good things in.

I have a grandson. His name is Hudson. He's 18 months old. He's mobile. We have a fenced backyard. We keep the gate closed. We don't want anybody coming in that shouldn't be there and we don't want Hudson getting out.

A door serves a purpose. And what we have here is Jesus describing Himself as a purpose, a function.

Jesus is presenting Himself as the door that both protects the sheep and provides for the sheep.

Let me point it out to you. In verse 8, there's this picture of protection. Let me read it. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

[15:37] I want you to turn to your Bibles to Ezekiel chapter 34. It's on page 857 of your pew Bible. This is kind of a lengthy section I'm going to read, but I'm going to read it so you get it.

What Jesus is saying here has roots in Ezekiel 34 that you will see. So in Ezekiel 34, God speaks to Ezekiel who also goes by the Son of Man.

And in 34.1 we read this. The word of the Lord came to me. Son of Man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, the human leaders of Israel.

Prophesy and say to them, even to the shepherds, thus says the Lord God, ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves. Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat.

You clothe yourself with the wool. You slaughter the fat ones but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened. The sick you have not healed. The injured you have not bound up.

[16:44] The strayed you have not brought back. The lost you have not sought. And with force and harshness you have ruled them. Maybe you've experienced a human shepherd's force and harshness.

So they were scattered because there was no shepherd and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered. They wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over the face of the earth with no one to search or seek for them. And down in verse 9 he says, therefore you shepherds hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God, behold, I am against the shepherds.

And I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths that they may not be food for them.

Okay, so this is a big rebuke of the human shepherds of Israel. They've failed. And then God says in verse 11, for thus says the Lord God, behold, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out.

[17:56] as a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep and I will rescue them from all the places where they've been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.

And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and will bring them into their own land and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel by the ravines and on all the inhabited places of the country.

I will feed them with good pasture. How about that for a contrast? You know what God is saying? I am the shepherd of my people. There's no accident in Jesus using this shepherding language with the Pharisees.

He is calling them failed shepherds without calling them shepherds. These Pharisees are thieves and robbers.

They're strangers. And Jesus is the gate. And he is protecting his sheep from these thieves and robbers.

[19:10] From going out and following them. From hearing their voice. They don't recognize it. They're not going to go. So, what we see going on in John 10 is this fulfillment of Ezekiel 34 happening in the coming of Jesus.

In verse 9, he says, I am the door. And now we have a picture of provision. Not only is he just protecting his flock as the gate, he's providing for them. Look what he provides.

Verse 10, the thief, no, excuse me, verse 9, if anyone enters by me, he will be saved. If anyone comes into the sheepfold through him, he will be saved.

The sheepfold is his people. The flock of Jesus, the good shepherd. And if you want to be part of his people, you need to come through Jesus. It's similar to what he says in John 14, 6.

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me. Jesus is saying, hey, you cannot be saved unless you come through me. I'm the gate. And the way that you come through Jesus as the gate is by believing in his name, by trusting in him.

[20:28] This is an exclusive claim of salvation. Salvation is found in no one else. The only way to be saved is to become part of Jesus' flock and to be part of Jesus' flock, you need to come through Jesus.

But once you join his flock, you come in and out and find pasture. You know what that's a picture of?

Life. If you're a sheep, it's a picture of the good life. You come in and out in safety. You eat green from green pasture.

The Lord Jesus is my shepherd. I shall not want. He leads me besides still waters. He leads me to good pasture. He restores my soul.

In verse 10, we have this emphatic contrast of purpose. Look at the purpose of these failed shepherds.

[21:28] The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. What's the purpose? Kill, steal, destroy. These failed shepherds are in it for themselves.

They're using the sheep. They're trying to advantage themselves through the sheep. But look at what the legit shepherd does.

He says of himself, I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. It's the complete opposite of what thieves and robbers do. He came to give life and to give abundant life.

It's his purpose and it's being pictured as dependent on Jesus. We're dependent on him for the good life.

He's the one. He's the gate. He's the shepherd. He brings us in and out and helps us find pastures.

The good life is in Jesus, the good shepherd. Let me just expand on that a little bit.

[22 : 37] The good life is a life that glorifies God. And it's not a life of independence from God.

It's a life of dependence on God. Later in John, we'll get there in a few weeks, John 15, Jesus pictures another way of talking about dependence.

He says in verse 5, I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me depends on me and I in him. He it is that bears much fruit for apart from me you can do nothing.

And then in verse 8 we read, by this my father is glorified that you bear much fruit. and so prove to be my disciples. That's the good life. Dependence on Jesus, bearing fruit for his name's sake, bringing glory to his father.

So what we have here in verses 7 through 10 is a contrast of purpose. We have these illegitimate leaders who are thieves and robbers, self-serving at the cost of the sheep, destruction, killing, stealing.

[23 : 52] And then we have the legitimate shepherd who is sheep-serving. He brings life to his sheep. Abundant life.

The good life. A life of dependence on God. What would you rather have from a lever? Abuse or abundant life?

which brings me now to the third truth that Jesus speaks of himself. And this is in verses 11 through 18 and I'm using the word commitment.

The committed shepherd. So we've seen Jesus speak about him being legit, about him being purposed to give life.

And now let's look at how he kind of spells out his commitment to his own. in verse 11 he says I am the good shepherd.

[24 : 50] And then if you look down in verse 14 he repeats it. I am the good shepherd. What is so good about this good shepherd? What what's his goodness?

What we're going to see is that his goodness runs red. in verse 12 he continues with this contrast between leaders and he he changes his language now.

He's no longer talking about thieves and robbers or strangers. He's talking about a hired hand. And so he says this he who in verse 12 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's a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. A hired hand is not a shepherd Jesus says.

In other words he doesn't own the sheep. He's just been hired to make a wage. And what Jesus points here in verses 12 and 13 is that this hired hand is out with the sheep and he sees a wolf coming and what does the hired hand do?

[26 : 15] He splits and leaves the sheep. He abandons the sheep. And if you've been around sheep which I try not to be I'm not one who likes sheep or goats but sheep they're defenseless beast.

Easy pickings for a wolf. And so what this hired hand does is in order to save his own skin he leaves the sheep these vulnerable animals to fend for themselves and they will not last.

I mean look what we read and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. Why? Why would they do this? Why would they bail on the sheep?

Well Jesus tells us in verse 13 he flees because he's a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. He cares for himself.

Now remember who Jesus is talking to. He's talking to Pharisees. And what Jesus in a veiled way is saying to them is he's calling them selfish and cowardly.

[27 : 32] because they're not willing to stick around for his sheep. And in contrast to that we learn that the good shepherd verse 11 lays his life down for the sheep.

It's the complete opposite. Verse 14 we're told why. I'm the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.

I know those who are mine from before the foundation of the world. I know them. I go out for them. I die for them. The question is what does it mean for him to know? I know my own and my own know me.

Look at the beginning of 15. He actually gives us an analogy of what this knowing is. So he says at the end of verse 14 I'm the good shepherd.

[28:33] I know my own know me. What kind of knowing? Just as the father knows me and I know the father. It is a relational knowing. It is a loving of one another.

If you swap out the word know with love listen to that. We read it. I'm the good shepherd. I love my own and my own love me.

Just as the father loves me and I love the father. This kind of knowing that Jesus is speaking about here is an intimate relational knowing like I know you by name and I love you.

I'm committed to you. That's why this good shepherd lays his life down for his sheep. He knows he loves his sheep.

It's an intimate knowledge. And so out of love for his own Jesus laid his life down.

[29:40] His goodness runs red. Verse 16 we have a bit of a surprise. We read and I have other sheep that are not of this fold.

Huh? What are you talking about? I must bring them also and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock one shepherd. So Jesus is in Jerusalem.

He's talking to the Pharisees. He's in a Jewish context and he's saying to them I've got other sheep that are not in the Jewish fold that are not ethnically Jewish.

Do you know who he's talking about? Gentiles. I have sheep from the Gentile world. That's good for us a room full of Gentiles.

He would come for us. And so what he's saying here this surprise is that he has a mission that goes well beyond the Jewish people to every nation of the world.

[30:48] Every tongue every tribe every nation he has people he has sheep that he has died for that he's going to call to himself and he's going to bring together in one flock with one shepherd it is a multi ethnic flock with Jesus our good shepherd his big plan for the fullness of time is to save many from every tongue tribe and nation and then to unite them all together to follow him our good shepherd this is a beautiful thing he's saying you know what my hope is for VBS in August I hope a whole bunch of people get saved that's what I'm praying and I'm praying that a whole bunch of people who are white brown and black get saved and people who are children and adults and that they find themselves in this room with us and we get to unite together as one flock with one shepherd the good shepherd who laid his life down for us all his goodness runs red in verse 17 we're told that

Jesus says this is the reason the father loves me because I lay my life down that I might take it up again it's bigger than what it sounds like what Jesus says God loves me the father loves me the son because I willingly have given my life for the sheep I willingly laid it down it's uncoerced God the father delights in it that Jesus would willingly give his life for us in verse 18 it's that willingness that gets emphasized no one takes it from me but I lay it down of my own accords you see his goodness ran red he shed his blood on the cross that's what he's talking about when he's talking about laying down his life his death on the cross where his blood flowed down and he died in order to bear all of God's wrath for all of our sins so that we could be brought into a relationship with the living God he he did did that willingly uncoerced because he loves us this is the authority that has been granted to the son of man to lay down his life and then to take it up again he's talking about his resurrection this is gospel this is Jesus talking about the gospel in different language he's talking about laying! it down and taking it up again you see the shepherd of the sheep not only laid his life down for us but he was raised three days later and do you know what that means? he's alive today the shepherd of the sheep who laid his life down for you is now sitting upon a throne of grace and he bids you come come in your need you shall not want!

I will lead you you know what this is? This is commitment his commitment to us if he was willing to lay his life down for you his goodness runs red how much more will he be willing to provide everything that we need for life and godliness what a wonder Jesus is the legit shepherd he is god Jesus is the purposed shepherd he has come to give abundant life and Jesus is the committed shepherd his goodness runs red it's his love for you his commitment to you he laid down his life for

us this is the good of the good shepherd that he would die and be raised so that we could be brought into his one flock so here's what that means for all of us in the room because your good shepherd is fully committed to you fully committed you can fully trust him you can trust him so for those of us in the room who have yet to respond to the call of the good shepherd you haven't become a

[35:50] Christian in verses 19 through 20 of chapter 10 we see this divided response to Jesus we have some people who think that Jesus is demon possessed and insane and then we have others who are saying a demon doesn't speak like this a demon can't open the eyes of a blind man and we have two responses to the words of God incarnate so the words of that Jesus is speaking to you today if you're not a Christian he is calling you out to come be his sheep to become one of his own so let me ask you if you're not Christian in the room do you believe that Jesus is God do you believe that he gives abundant life eternal life and do you believe that he laid down his life for you with your name in his mind do you believe!

that if you believe that today's the day that you enter his fold that you come to him that you confess him as your good shepherd he knows your name you say to him Jesus I have been wandering from you and trying to figure this out on my own but I have now come to see that you are my good shepherd you are my Lord my king and I will follow you I see that your goodness ran red for me and I will trust you that's how you become a Christian it's by trusting!

you can't earn it you receive it now if you are already his sheep but let's you say you've been wandering a little bit I want to remind you of his goodness towards you his goodness runs red he loves you Christian even in your wandering he has pursued you surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life you know what the Hebrew actually maybe better says surely goodness and mercy pursue me all the days of my life could it be wandering sheep that your savior has been pursuing you all along in your wanderings maybe it's time for you to fully trust him he's fully committed to you he laid his life down for you he took it up again he sits on a throne of grace maybe it's time for you to trust him fully third we join him in his gathering of one flock with one shepherd think about vacation bible school coming up on the first week of

August as the good shepherd calling his own sheep to himself and we can rest knowing that his sheep will respond we get to be part of that not just in one week in August but every week throughout the year we get to join him in what the good shepherd is doing finally I just want to wrap up with a word on leadership this passage is a contrast in leadership the leadership of the Pharisees who are thieves robbers strangers hired hands their motives were to steal to kill to destroy they were in it for themselves that's one kind of leadership we see that kind of leadership all over the place that's not Jesus kind of leadership the leadership of

Jesus runs red it's loving it knows his flock it's sacrificial he lays his life down and you know what here's some good news unlike the hired hand who bails on the sheep Jesus will never leave you nor forsake you he has bound himself to you through his blood he provides the ultimate example for all Christian leaders leaders whether you're a husband or a dad a pastor elder a deacon you're part of the women's ministry you're a life group leader you're overseeing some children's ministry you're teaching children whatever it may be Jesus is the ultimate example for all Christian leaders so as we follow Jesus the good shepherd shepherd we help other people follow

[41:08] Jesus the good shepherd if you've been deeply wounded by a Christian leader in the past you can trust your good shepherd now he's still your good shepherd and your trust in him will help you to begin to trust his under shepherds your trust can be restored you know what you're looking for you're looking for leaders who lead like him loving knows the sheep and give their lives sacrificially what is the good of this good shepherd in love he laid down his own life for us his sheep and he will never leave us nor forsake us and do you know how we know that because his goodness runs red will you pray with me

Lord Jesus we cannot thank you enough for what you've done for us willingly to bring bring us into your fold to unite us together with other sheep from all around the world to give us abundant life through your death and resurrection Lord Jesus we confess you as our good shepherd and for the balance of this day we gladly follow you in Jesus name we pray!
Amen