

AM John 10:11-42 The Good Shepherd

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[0 : 0 0] at verse 11. John chapter 10, reading from verse 11. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me. Just as the father knows me and I know the father and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep fold. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it up again. No one takes it from me but I lay it down of my own accord.

I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I receive from my father. The Jews who heard these words were again divided. Many of them said he is demon possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him? But others said these are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind? Then came the festival of dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered around him saying, how long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly. Jesus answered, I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice. I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. My father who has given them to me is greater than all. No one can snatch them out of my father's hand. I and the father are one.

Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, I have shown you many good works from the father. For which of these do you stone me? We are not stoning you for any good work, they replied, but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.

Amen and may God add his blessing to this reading from his word. A word of prayer. Amen. And gracious Father God, as once again we bow before you, may your word be our rule, your spirit our teacher, and your greater glory, our supreme concern. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[3 : 3 4] Now you may like to have your Bible open at John chapter 10 because we're going to be picking up just some of the issues that are brought out in that chapter. It's a chapter we could spend a whole series of sermons on and we're just going to be sketching in our outline this morning.

The Gospels weren't written to satisfy our curiosity but rather to draw us to Jesus. They're written to help us to believe in him, to worship him, and to follow him.

John in fact gives us the reason for his Gospel towards the end. In John chapter 20 at verse 30 we're told that Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book but these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah the Son of God that by believing you may have life in his name. And so basically John says I have written this for three reasons. That you might understand who Jesus is as the Son of God.

that you might understand why he came into the world to be the Messiah, the Saviour. And that understanding who Jesus is and what he came into the world to do you might believe in him.

And John tells us that's his reason for writing this Gospel. And so in a sense everything in the Gospel we've got to look at in the light of what John says is his purpose for writing.

[5 : 25] That we might understand who Jesus is, the unique Son of God, understand why he came into the world to be the Saviour.

And understanding these things we might put our trust in him. That's what John's Gospel is all about. And with that in mind I want to come to John 10 with you.

It's a chapter which I'm sure we are familiar with. Lots of familiar pictures. I suppose it's best known because of Jesus the Good Shepherd.

And in this passage Jesus picks up much of what the Old Testament says about God. And simply applies it to himself. And we began our service by singing Psalm 23.

Where David wrote about the one who was his shepherd. Who led and guided him. Who comforted and renewed him.

[6 : 32] And we go further back in David. We go back to Genesis 48. We find Jacob saying the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day.

And if we think of what David is saying in Psalm 23 and of what Jacob says. We note the personal terms. The Lord is my shepherd.

David doesn't make an abstract proposition. But rather states a vital personal reality. The Lord is my shepherd.

He leads me. He restores my soul. He guides me. And here is one of the great truths of scripture.

That almighty God comes to the individual. And would enter into a personal relationship with them. And there is a lot of imagery in the Old Testament of God as the shepherd.

[7 : 38] And Jesus simply takes that and applies it to himself. And in applying all this to himself. Jesus makes a sequence of interwoven claims.

Claims that as we read through the chapter we find provoke a strong reaction. Some for him. But many against him.

And so let me just pick out some of these claims that Jesus makes in this chapter. If we go to the beginning of the chapter we have Jesus saying in verse 7.

I tell you the truth. I am the gate for the sheep. I am the gate for the sheep. And he is being quite dogmatic here.

He is saying I and I alone am the gate. There is simply no other way into the family of God. No other way to receive the blessings of God.

[8 : 47] And it is through Jesus of course we find access to God the Father. Jesus is the gate, the doorway to the Father. Paul notes in Ephesians 2 and 18.

Through him, that is Jesus, through him we have access to the Father. Access to the Father's care and comfort.

To the Father's love and peace. Jesus claims I am the gate. And then down in verse 11.

Of course the well known I am the good shepherd. And this shepherd comes and calls each personally. Those who are his are not just a flock.

They are individuals. Known by name. Back in verse 3. The sheep listen to my, sorry, the sheep listen to his voice.

[9 : 50] He calls his own sheep by name. And leads them out. And that reminds us that God is interested in us individually.

Not as a crowd. But individually. And what a wonderful truth that is. Not that God loves people as some sort of abstract proposition.

But he loves you and I as individuals. And so he calls each of us by name. And leads each of us personally.

Jesus says I am the good shepherd. And of course we link that back to Psalm 23. And think of all that the Lord promises us.

In that Psalm. In verse 1 of the Psalm. We find the promise of provision. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. I shall not want.

[10 : 54] Because the shepherd is going to provide. For all my truest needs. In verse 2. The promise of rest. He makes me lie down in green pastures.

Leads me beside quiet waters. We live in a world that is anything but restful. People rush here and there. We're bombarded by noise.

By activity. Well in the midst of all the hustle and bustle of life. Jesus promises to give us rest. He makes me lie down.

In green pastures. And in that restoration. He restores my soul. Verse 3 of the Psalm. And here is the promise of renewal.

For all who are wearied. Sometimes you can actually see folk in the church. Running out of steam. As they go through the years. As they become submerged.

[11 : 54] In all sorts of activities. That make demands upon them. And you need the restoration. The renewal. That comes from turning aside in quietness.

Before the Lord. And that verse also has the promise of guidance. He restores my soul. He guides me. In paths of righteousness.

In verse 4. The promise of protection. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. I will fear no evil. For you are with me.

Jesus will guard us from evil. And the temptations that would harm us. Verse 5. Is the promise of our lives being enriched. You prepare a table before me.

In the presence of my enemies. God will supply our needs. Even in the midst of the battlefield of life. And in verse 6.

[12 : 51] The promise of eternal security. Surely goodness and love will follow me. All the days of my life. And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Well that's what the psalm paints the picture of the shepherd. Giving us provision. Rest. Restoration.

Guidance. Protection. Enrichment. Security. And in a sense. When Jesus says I am the good shepherd. He's taking all that to himself. And in John 10.

He sort of simply calls him life. John 10 and 10. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life. And have it to the full.

Verse 27 of chapter 10. My sheep listen to my voice. I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life. And they shall never perish. No one can snatch them out of my hand.

[13 : 55] Jesus is the good shepherd. Who gives us life. In all its fullness. So Jesus claims to be the gate.

He claims to be the good shepherd. And he claims that he's going to lay down his life. In verse 11. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life.

For the sheep. And so there Jesus is saying that he gives his life. For the protection. For the salvation of the sheep.

And that's repeated in verse 15 and 17. And that repetition drawing our attention to its importance. Of all that the shepherd does for us.

Perhaps this is the most critical. He gives his life. So that we might have life. Gives his life that we might be saved.

[14 : 56] And so we're reminded that all the promises of the gospel. Hinge on the cross. I lay down my life. For the sheep.

But here Jesus also claims. Remarkably. To have authority over death. Verses 17 and 18. I lay down my life.

Only to take it up again. No one takes it from me. But I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down.

And authority to take it up again. Now that's really quite a remarkable claim. Not only does Jesus give his life on the cross.

And you'll notice he says. No one takes it from me. Jesus' death. At the end of the day.

[15 : 56] Is not because. He was betrayed. By Judas. Not because Pontius Pilate washed his hands off him. Not because of the hatred and the opposition.

Of the Jewish religious authorities. At the end of the day. Jesus died on the cross. Because he chose to die on the cross.

He chose to lay down his life. No one takes it from me. But I lay it down of my own accord. But then. Remarkably. He goes on and says.

I have authority. To take it up again. He has the power. And authority. Once he has been put to death.

To come back to life. Power to defeat death. And so here. Jesus reminds us. That he is no powerless victim.

[16 : 54] In the hands of evil people. But the Lord in control of events. I have authority over death.

And. This claim to give us eternal life. Verse 28. I give them eternal life. And they shall never perish. No one can snatch them out of my hand.

Jesus is the source of life. As creator. Along with the father. But he is also the one who grants eternal life.

And here. Christ assures us. That nothing can ever come between us. And that promise. We are his. And he holds us. And will never let us go.

There is an old hymn. And I like this verse from it. My name from the palms of his hands. Eternity will not erase.

[17 : 55] Impressed on his heart. It remains in marks of indelible grace. Yes I to the end will endure. As sure as the earnest is given.

More happy but not more secure. The glorified spirits in heaven. He gives us eternal life.

And that is sure and certain. No one. Jesus says can snatch them out of my hand. Now we can spend time in each one of these.

But I'm just sketching in with a broad brush this morning. These claims of Jesus. A final one here in verse 30. Verse 28.

I give them eternal life. And they shall never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. My father who has given them to me is greater than all. No one can snatch them out of my father's hand.

[18 : 52] I and the father are one. I and the father are one. And we might think ahead to John chapter 14.

Where at the last supper. Philip says to Jesus. Show us the father. And Jesus says. Philip don't you know me? If you know me.

You know the father. If you've seen me. You've seen the father. Well here. Jesus says. I and the father are one.

With stark simplicity. Jesus claims to be one with God the father. And so as we read through these.

And as we reflect on these claims of Jesus. We should be drawn into a deeper understanding. Of who he truly is. The doorway. To God the father.

[19 : 52] The good shepherd. Who leads. And guides. And restores. And renews. The shepherd who gives his life. That we might have life. The one who will keep us safe.

For eternity. The one who is himself. One with God. And so Jesus makes these claims.

And we are told. In the chapter. That as Jesus makes these claims. The Jews were divided. They couldn't make up their minds about him.

It seemed to them that. Well. Is Jesus really the Messiah? Or is he some sort of lunatic? John 10 verse 19.

At these words. The Jews were again divided. Many of them said. He is demon possessed. And raving mad. Why listen to him? But others said.

[20 : 58] These are not the sayings. Of a man possessed. By a demon. Can a demon open the eyes. Of the blind? Jesus claims.

Are. On any reading of them. Quite extraordinary. And as such. They are either true. Or false. And I suppose.

That is the choice. That Jesus forces. Upon people. Either they decide. That he is a megalomaniac. Or the son of God. The claims.

Are either the claims. Of true divinity. Or insanity. At the end of. This section. We are told. That the Jews.

Reacted violently. They understood the claims. Correctly. Verse 31. Again. The Jews picked up. Stones to stone him.

[21 : 53] But Jesus said to them. I have shown you. Many great miracles. From the father. For which of these. Do you stone me? We are not stoning you. For any of these. Replied the Jews. But for blasphemy.

Because you. A mere man. Claim to be God. They understood the claim. Correctly. They simply were not prepared.

To accept it. And in that. We are introduced. We are introduced. I suppose. To a darker note. In the chapter. Because as well as the chapter.

Setting forth Jesus. Who he truly is. And what he came into the world. To do. We are introduced. To the enemy. Of the sheep.

This chapter. Also speaks about. False shepherds. Those who would. Leave the flock. To danger. And Jesus.

[22 : 52] Is no doubt here. Attacking the false religion. Of the Pharisees. And the Sadducees. Describes them. Verse 5. As strangers. As thieves.

In verse 1. And 8. And 10. And higher links. In verse 12. And 13. The enemy of the sheep. And still today.

Of course. There are. Those within the church. Who would lead it astray. Those in the church. Who would deny. The divinity. Of Christ. I remember.

When I went to my first charge. My only charge. In the church of Scotland. And my first Kirk session meeting. And I discovered.

That they had. On the table. For discussion. Was Jesus. Is the son of God. Or not. And I promptly.

[23 : 47] Told them. That they weren't. Discussing it. Because it wasn't. Open to discussion. By a court. Of the church. The church. Confesses. That Jesus. Is the son of God.

That is not. Open to question. That was his claim. That is the truth. Of who he is. But there are.

Those within the church. Who would seek. To deny that. Those who would. Deny. The reality. Of the resurrection. Those who would. Have us believe. That all roads.

Somehow or another. Lead to God. But Jesus. And only Jesus. Is the way to God. The father. Anything. That would diminish. Our worship of Christ.

Anything. That would detract. From. A total allegiance. To scripture. Is false. And needs to be. Resisted. God. And so. We are warned.

[24 : 41] About these enemies. Of the sheep. But then. I suppose. Another. Player in this chapter. Is the sheep. Themselves.

The focus is clearly. On the good shepherd. Lord. But as we draw to an end. This morning. Let's note. What is said. About the sheep. About us. And this is just.

The corollary. Of. What we've already seen. Who are the sheep. The sheep. Are those. For whom Christ. Died. Verse 11. I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd. Lays down his life. For the sheep. And we're reminded. That there is no other way. Into a restored relationship. With God the father. But through the good shepherd.

Who died for us. Who are the sheep. They are those. Who are given life. Verse 28. Jesus says. I give them eternal life.

[25 : 40] And they shall never perish. No one will snatch them. Out of my hand. I give them. Eternal life. The Christian is given.

Spiritual life. Before we trusted in Jesus. We were. Spiritually. Dead. Cut off from God. And life. Real life. Only comes. When we come.

To God. In Christ. And this life. Will have no end. For the Christian death. Is simply the doorway. Into the nearer presence of God.

And this life. Life. Is secure. No one can possibly. Disrupt or destroy. What we are given by Christ. And throughout.

The whole of the chapter. We have a wonderful picture. Of security. I give them eternal life. Says Jesus. They shall never perish. No one will snatch them.

[26 : 39] Out of my hand. God. And in verse 9. We have the picture. Of going in and out. And finding pasture. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me.

Will be saved. And they will come in. And go out. And find pasture. A picture. Of provision. And protection. And security.

Who are the sheep. The sheep are those who hear. And who follow. Verse 4. He goes on ahead of them.

And the sheep follow him. Because they know his voice. In verse 27. My sheep listen to my voice. I know them.

And they follow me. They pay attention. Put into practice. What the shepherd says. The sheep not only hear.

[27 : 38] They follow. They obey. The things commanded. By Jesus. So Jesus then. Is the good shepherd.

He is the door. That leads to the father. He is the one who lays down his life. For the sheep. And yet the chapter. Paints a picture.

That is not one. Of unmitigated tranquility. For there are those. Who would. Seek to lead astray. Who would. Peddle.

Error. And corruption. And so as we. Think in this chapter today. We ask ourselves. Am I following. Today.

The good shepherd. Are being seduced. By the siren voices. Of false shepherds. Do we listen to. Follow. And obey. Absolutely.

[28 : 35] The good shepherd. And do we rejoice. In the provision. And the security. That he alone brings. Let us pray. Father God.

We thank you. For. The gift of your son. To be the good shepherd. To lay down his life. For us upon the cross.

But not only to lay it down. But to take it up again. In glorious victory. Over sin and death. And we.

We know something. Of the presence. Of the risen. Good shepherd. With us. Now. And day by day. May we know. In our lives.

Personally. His provision. His rest. His restoration. His protection. His enrichment.

[29 : 33] And that. Eternal security. That he. And he alone. Can bring to us. In his name we pray. Amen.