

# John: The Word Became Flesh - John 10:1-21

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[ 0 : 00 ] 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 she just used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So 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. He 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.

[ 1 : 34 ] I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd who does not own the sheep sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees.

And the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own. My own know me. Just as the father knows me and I know the father, and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold.

I must bring them also and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.

No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my father. There was again a division among the Jews because of these words.

Many of them said he has a demon and is insane. Why listen to him? Others said these are not the words of a demon or one possessed.

[ 3 : 10 ] Can a demon open the eyes of the blind? We are going to be looking at a very familiar text. If you have walked with the Lord for any number of years, this is a precious text to many of you.

For some that were preachers at one point in time, I know that this is probably Doug Irisen's favorite verse, John 10-10.

Why don't we ask the Lord to bless our time and then we will dive into our study together. Lord, it is indeed good to be here this morning.

As we come to this beautiful passage, we are reminded of your care for us. Lord, we think of Psalm 23. We are reminded of the promise that goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our life because of our shepherd.

Lord, would you use this time to remind us of your heart for us, your presence with us, your protection upon us, and Lord that your plans for us are good?

[ 4 : 22 ] Father, if there are folks that are here and they have never trusted in Jesus as their Savior, would you draw them unto yourself today? Would you invite them into your fold? Lord, it is as simple as just believing by faith that Jesus indeed died on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins, that we could have friendship with the living God.

We commit our time now. This is an act of worship as we posture our hearts, humble beneath your word, Lord Jesus. And it is in your name we pray and all the guys' people said, amen. If we could start the sermon clock, that would be helpful.

If you have lived any amount of time, you have experienced different types of leadership in life. Some good, some bad, maybe a boss, maybe a coach, teachers. Some of you had, you decided not to play a particular sport because of the leadership of the coach.

And decided I don't want to place myself under their tutelage, under their instruction. This morning, we're going to be looking at the leadership of Jesus and I'm going to give you the conclusion here right on the front end.

So this is the punchline, but this is the takeaway. There is no better leader to follow in this life than Jesus. Amen? So today we're going to really see a contrast in leadership. Jesus versus the religious leaders of his day.

[ 6 : 00 ] And just to bring some context, if you recall, we just finished looking at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. Jesus is present there. He does some instruction, some teaching and he comes across a blind man that he heals.

And this blind man, as the story goes, then becomes a worshiper of Jesus. And it says actually in John 9.38, he says, Lord, I believe. And it says that he worshiped him. So this blind man experiences the kindness of Jesus and he says, that's the guy I'm going to now follow in life.

That man that healed me of my disease. And yet we see a different response from the Pharisees. They don't want to follow Jesus.

In fact, they declare he's not God. He's a sinner. He's evil. Sounds very akin to some of the atheists of our day.

Dawkins declares in his God Delusion book, God, the God of the Bible is the most unpleasant character in all of fiction, which is really rich coming from an atheist. God doesn't exist, but man, I hate him.

[ 7 : 18 ] Well, today Jesus tells us the type of leader that he is. And he gives us this image that really were to carry with us all the days of our life.

And it's an image that we can place right there in the memory palace of our imagination. It's one that we should carry as followers of Christ. And it's a beautiful picture of who the leader is that we're following.

Who is Jesus? He is the God that walks before us as a kind shepherd. The Bible loves this image of shepherd to describe the type of leadership that God employs.

The incarnation in Matthew 2.6 says, Oh, Bethlehem, from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel. We see this image on the return of Christ in Matthew 25.32 where it says, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

And just the everyday journey with the Lord were reminded of Psalm 23. The Lord is my shepherd. And that's how we need this reminder church. As we encounter disappointment, as we encounter trial.

[ 8 : 32 ] Eric shared with us about the fragility of life last week that we live with this and we need to be reminded of who our God is. That he's present with us, that he cares.

So let's listen to Jesus as he shares about himself in contrast with the spiritual leaders. He's speaking here now to these religious leaders that have just said he is a sinner.

And here beginning in verse 6, John records, 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 a 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 them all to 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.

[ 9 : 36 ] This figure of speech Jesus used with them but they did not understand what he was saying to them. Now I hope that we catch that these are forceful words.

Yes, Jesus is talking about being this kind shepherd but these are forceful words that he is sharing with these religious leaders. He begins by saying truly, truly, these are serious, true words.

And you spiritual leaders of the day, you claim to be good, you claim to see but you are actually blind.

You claim to be good shepherds but you are actually thieves, you are robbers. Now did the religious leaders catch the picture that Jesus is painting of himself versus them?

No, not at all because in fact in verse 6 it says they did not understand what he was saying.

[ 10 : 39 ] It's like imagine if you heard a loud crash in your home and it came from your children's room and you went to go interrogate them and you said, hey, what was that noise?

And it obviously came from their room and the house shook and they just look at you dumbfounded. Like if we just act maybe they'll just think they're hearing things, right?

I don't know. That's what we have here with these religious leaders. What are you talking about Jesus? I mean Jesus couldn't have used a simpler metaphor to show the divide between himself and them, right?

Shepherds, shepherding was a very familiar image in their minds throughout all of Israel's history. To be a shepherd was a humble task.

It was a dirty task. It was sometimes a dangerous profession. Shepherds were not these meek, sissy type individuals.

[ 11 : 49 ] This was a rugged blue collar job. Many of Israel's great leaders began life as shepherds, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David.

In fact God loves this style of leadership. In fact as pastors, as elders, pastor, poiman, this word is to shepherd. He loves this style of leadership.

Just a little bit about shepherding here because that's the context of our passage. A little shepherding 101 back in the first century. If you were a shepherd come evening time you would gather your sheep into a sheepfold, into a pen.

The sheepfold was often located nestled up against the face of a cliff face, maybe at the end of a canyon. Had waist high rock walls on whatever sides were exposed, potentially three sides.

On top of those walls were briars that would be placed, thorny branches to keep predators out. And often shepherds from the same village would share a sheepfold.

[ 13 : 02 ] They would all bring their sheep back at the end of the day to this pen. Why bring sheep back to a pen? Why not just let them free graze all night?

Well you would bring them back for what? For protection. Like if you have a mountain lion versus a sheep, right? A wolf versus a sheep.

Pretty obvious what's going to happen, right? Sheep are not menacing animals, right? We have a lot of children being born at fourth.

So young moms, like if you're going to paint pictures on the nursery sheep, go with the sheep, not the grizzly, right? It's a better option. They're not menacing out animals.

You can't sleep, count sheep. You don't tell your kid, count serpents. Count a few pythons, that will help you relax.

[ 14 : 01 ] Sheep don't have ability to defend themselves. There's no fangs, there's no claws, right? There's a whole lot of lanolin.

I mean, what? Your only option if you are a sheep is to outrun your buddy. That's your entire strategy for survival.

That's it. And although our section really isn't about describing believers as sheep, that's in Scripture, it's not the focus of this morning, but just as an encouragement, we're identified as sheep. So if you're not offended by that, there's a problem. Sheep are not bright. Sheep get stuck over and over again.

In the Highlands of Scotland, it's been known that sheep would be on a cliff and there'd be some sweet grass that just hopped 10, 12 feet down the cliff to get the sweet grass, and then they're stuck.

[ 15 : 06 ] And the shepherd comes and retrieves them a few days later, same thing, over and over again. Sheep are not necessarily the brightest animals.

Or sheep. Well, that's what would happen in the evening. In the morning time for the shepherd, there was a single gate for the sheep to enter and leave the pen.

There would be a hired, perhaps, gatekeeper who would recognize the shepherd and open the door. And the shepherd would then take and graze the sheep during the day on the surrounding countryside, find areas of pasture for them, water for them, and then at the end of the day, would bring them back to the sheepfold again.

And it was easy to identify false shepherds. False shepherds are the ones that were trying to climb in to the sheeppen. They would come in, try to harm, steal, destroy.

When we think about this image, our Bible, Old Testament is full of really bad spiritual shepherds that behave more like thieves.

[16:21] The prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 10, 21 says, For the shepherds are stupid and do not inquire of the Lord. Therefore, the flock is scattered.

If you want to read probably the premier text chapter on bad shepherding, it's from Ezekiel 34. We don't have time to read the whole chapter, but it's worth a study. Here in verse 2, it says, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel.

Prophecy and say to them, even to the shepherds, thus does the Lord God. Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves should not shepherds feed the sheep.

So that was a lot of the history of Israel. And no doubt, these religious leaders that Jesus is interacting with today, they're following in the same spirit as these bad Old Testament shepherds.

They promised spiritual life to their followers, but only brought them harm. In fact, Jesus says of many of them in Matthew 23, verse 15, He says, You travel across sea to make a single proselyte, and you end up making him twice as much a child of hell as yourself.

[17:36] Promising them protection, and yet exploiting them. Using for personal gain. Telling folks that if you follow our rules, you will be righteous.

Can't deliver on that. Salvation has always been about faith. Well, from this first six verses, we really get an image of a shepherd, and really I want to highlight a couple distinguishing marks of Jesus as the true shepherd.

What does he look like that's very different from the spiritual leaders of his day? And the first distinguishing mark we see comes from this statement, for they know his voice, a stranger they will not follow.

The sheep know the voice of the shepherd. Reminds you of a parent and a child, right? The child understands they hear the voice of mom, they hear the voice of dad. Some of you men, some of you grizzly men, you one point time you shaved and you came to your young child, and they heard your voice and they thought, that's my dad, and they looked, they're like, that's not my dad.

That's just an ugly man with the voice of my kind dad, right? So we kind of understand this image. They know his voice.

[19:02] What's remarkable is that a shepherd could come to this communal pen and they could call their particular sheep. And those sheep would separate from the mixed flocks and they would come out and follow their shepherd.

Beautiful. There's a man in Australia who was charged with stealing a sheep and the judge stood before the plaintiff and the defendant and trying to figure out, well, I don't know, who's sheep? It's my sheep, it's my sheep.

And the judge didn't know what to do. So he sent the plaintiff out into the hall and said, call the sheep. He did so, nothing happened. Sent the defendant out, said, call the sheep, call the sheep, the sheep went out.

Case closed. The sheep know the voice of the shepherd. What does this tell us about the relationship of the shepherd to the sheep? It's intimate.

That's the first distinguishing mark of Jesus' leadership in our life. It's intimate. Our faith journey is one of genuine, intimate, personal relationship with the shepherd.

[20:10] And the more time that we spend with him, the more we recognize his voice. Amen? And there's nothing more joy inducing than hearing the voice of Almighty God as friend.

Which is why as a church we continue to come back and remind ourselves, let's be a people that abide. If there's one grace that we can employ in life, it's that we would spend time in God's Word when we are scattered.

Not here in our own personal time, our own personal space, that we would be people that abide. Men, it's March. Every March I have an annual rhythm just in my life.

I march through the Proverbs. I don't know, I just thought I would play on words. March, let's march through the Proverbs. Men, if you haven't been reading God's Word, I encourage you, join me this month.

Read a Proverb, a chapter a day. Every one day. We encourage you with Bible apps. One of the spiritual disciplines over the years, and my kids know this about me, that I'm a little bit of a recovering gamer, and there's every now and then I will download some stupid word, connect the dot, Sudoku, something on my phone.

[21:31] And it usually lasts for about a week, and then I'm convicted, and then I delete it. There's no games on my phone right now. And I didn't delete them for the sermon. It's just, I, yeah, that

would be perfect, right?

I just, time is precious. We can use that downtime so much better than just mindless whatever. Man, get a Bible app.

Begin to work on memorizing Scripture. It will do something for your soul. And you will get to know the voice of your shepherd. He speaks.

And maybe some of you today are like, I haven't heard him speak. He's speaking. He's speaking. You know one of the ways God speaks is through the conviction of sin. When you feel conviction of sin, that's God's voice.

That's a shepherd. It's very personal. And don't harden yourself to that, because there may be a point in time when he stops speaking that way. The sheep, they hear his voice.

[ 22 : 34 ] They know it. There's an intimate relationship there. Second distinguishing mark of Jesus as a shepherd. It comes from this phrase. He says he goes before them and the sheep follow him.

Notice here, who's in front? The shepherd. Very different concept in the east versus the west related to how you shepherd.

In the west here, where's the shepherd? In the back with the sheepdog. And we're driving the sheep. And yet the image that we have of Jesus. And here in the east, I think I confused those, in the west we drive.

In the east, they lead. And here you have that, that Jesus is leading the flock. He's not driving the flock. And it's beautiful. And if you've been to Israel, you know, it's not like lush green hillsides and pastures.

This is desert. This is rocks. This is a plateau. And the shepherd is leading the sheep out into through much of this, not to destroy, but to find nourishment.

[ 23 : 48 ] And the sheep learn over time to trust the shepherd. His aim is for their good. And so the leadership of Jesus is intimate, but it's also kind.

It's intimate and it's kind. There's a kindness to the shepherd. And I love how Peter says it in 1 Peter 2 25 says Jesus is described actually as the shepherd of our souls.

And it's a kind leadership. Jesus allows us to follow. It's not a coercion.

We're prone to wander. And I think really life is about continually experiencing the kindness of the shepherd until we get to the point where we love to follow.

You know what Paul says in Romans 2, 4, it says kindness that brings us to that place of repentance. It says kindness. We love to follow.

[ 24 : 45 ] Because we've experienced something of the kindness of the shepherd. I love this image at the end of the Gospel of John. It's in John 21, I think it's about verse 7, where Jesus comes to the disciples, they're fishing.

Peter's there. He'd already denied Christ multiple times, but then he sees it's Jesus. Oh, I know who that is. And the scene is what it says that Peter throws himself in the water.

He's so thrilled. He wants to get to shore to see Jesus. He knows the kindness of the shepherd even after his failing.

And it's just a beautiful picture. The leadership of Jesus church is intimate and it's kind. Amen? Amen. Well, let's continue on.

Look at verse 7. It says, 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.

[ 25 : 50 ] 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, kill and destroy.

All came that they may have life and have it abundantly. So it's interesting because the metaphor changes a bit here.

We get the third of the seven I am statements that John records, right? We know the first one Jesus is I am the bread of life from from chapter six. He then says I am the light of the world and in chapter eight and here in verse or in chapter 10.

We actually get a couple of them and here the third is, you know what? I am the door. I am the door. I am the only way to access the flock.

How do you access the flock? Through the shepherd. And this is a wonderful image because actually at times the shepherd would lay across the entrance to the sheepfold, to the pen and function as the door.

[ 27 : 02 ] And it's a beautiful picture of protection. If they stayed out in the evening in particular, didn't return to the communal pen of the village, the shepherd became the door.

And it's this image of protection. You want my sheep? You come through me. Now I know that Tolkien was not into allegory, but Gandalf is this picture in Moria as the fellowship passes and gets over the bridge and the demon, the bullrog comes up and Gandalf gets in between the bullrog and his flock and says, you shall not pass.

Okay. All right, few Lord of the Ring fans in here, but it's a wonderful image. It's this image here. Jesus, I am now the door. You shall not pass.

John 6 39. I lose none of my sheep. Those who belong to me, I will raise them up at the last day. Eternal security. It's a beautiful picture here of protection. But what else does this image tells about Jesus? And this is really akin to the 6 I am statement in John 14 where he says, I am the way.

[ 28 : 29 ] Jesus is the door. You want part of the flock? Guess what? It's through Jesus. Peter says in Acts 4 12, there's no other name under heaven, given among men by which we must be saved.

Paul said to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2 5, there is one mediator between God and man. Jesus Christ. The false shepherds of the day didn't like this.

They didn't like his exclusive claims to access to God. Just nothing's changed in 2000 years. And it's been out in culture, right? Religious pluralism. It's celebrated. You see the the acres coexist, right?

Everybody's right. But what's shocking and sad is that this is becoming more common in one's gospel proclaiming churches.

[ 29 : 29 ] So progressive Christian movement. Elisa Childers writes, and she's written a couple books on progressive Christianity.

She says, often progressive Christians will tout the mantra, everyone has a seat at the table. Meaning all creeds and religions are true in their own way, and the people who embrace them are equally accepted by God.

All roads lead to the same God. Just be sincere. The object of your faith isn't really important. It's just inconsequential. Church, that's insanity. You don't function in any area of life with that sort of mentality. Hey guys, let's go ice fishing today.

I heard the lake. It's got about, I don't know, a half inch of ice across it. And if we really believe that we're going to be okay, we're just all, but you first just really believe.

[ 30 : 46 ] Well you are going to be sincerely wrong. The object of the faith is everything.

There's an analogy, the pluralist love, these days to promote this doctrine. And it's this image not of a shepherd but of a king.

A board Indian king wanting to amuse himself, he brings in five or six beggars, puts them in a circle, brings an elephant in, says everybody, touch this creature in front of you and describe and tell me what is an elephant.

And one individual says, it's a tusk. An elephant is a tusk. It's like a tail, like a broom thingy. Around the legs, like a tree trunk. And the king says, well, these are all very different experiences of the same reality.

[ 31 : 49 ] You're all describing the same thing, just from a different vantage point. And that's a comparison made of, man all religions, they're just describing God from different angles.

And it's very arrogant. It's not the Christian that's arrogant, it's the pluralist saying, I know enough about every world religion where I can safely say they're basically all the same.

Well Jesus is clear. You want to be part of God's flock? It's through Jesus. That's it. And it isn't harsh, it's actually a kindness that the shepherd would become the door.

Because the door looks a whole lot like a cross. Are these false shepherds kind? Not at all. And they really imitate their father.

Satan, in verse 10, it says here, the spirit they embody, which is true of Satan, the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

[ 33 : 02 ] Who do thieves target? People that don't have anything? No, there's nothing to steal. You target the wealthy. Who spiritually possesses much in this life?

It's believers. Part of God's flock. Who is Satan going after? Because he's already, it says in 2 Corinthians 4, blinded the minds of the unbelievers.

He's already taken care of that. Satan's agenda towards the believer is this, he wants to convince you and me that joy is not found in Jesus.

That joy is found somewhere else. He wants to distract, get us off mission, get us entrenched in sin, so we're not useful to the Lord anymore.

We're marginalized, we're sidelined. No, you gotta... Life, goodness, joy is found in possessing much, having the most stuff.

[ 34 : 14 ] Hooking up with whoever you want, that's joy in life. The abundant life that Jesus talks about, that's a straight jacket.

And this is the agenda of the enemy. He is a liar, John 8.44 says. That's who he is. And he launches arrows, these mental accusations, often as many as will stick to the believer saying, Jesus is not that kind shepherd.

Jesus is not good.

Here's the syllogism, the satanic syllogism that he brings. Premise 1, rules are oppressive.

Conclusion, God is oppressive. God's a straight jacket. Rules are bad, they're oppressive.

[ 35 : 30 ] Churchmen cannot live without rules. Churchmen can't play any sport without rules. You remove them and it just becomes rugby, or whatever sport you want to liken it to.

Oh, the fish. The water is a straight jacket. Man, life is on the shore. Get out of the water. Rules are for our good.

That's what he did. He came in the garden, Genesis 3. Hey Eve, you're not going to die. God knows when you eat of the fruit, your eyes are going to be opened.

You're going to be like God. And what's Satan doing? He's saying God is holding out on you. And once we bite church, we wander away from the kindness and protection of the shepherd.

And the consequence follows. Satan has no code of ethics, zero. And he would love to sell different ideas on joy in this life to whomever will listen.

[ 36 : 42 ] I drove a passenger recently who began to share some of her story and as she shared, she then talked about a brother who had just died, overdose, fentanyl, because he believed something about where joy was found.

Satan is that desperately evil. And despite the lies that Satan tells, saying Jesus is not good, he's not that kind shepherd, man, he's wrong.

He's nothing like our Savior. In fact, listen up, verses 11 to 18, Jesus describes himself. He says, you know what? I'm actually the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd who does not own the sheep sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees.

The wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me. Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father, I lay down my life for the sheep.

[ 37 : 53 ] 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 on my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.

So here Jesus now describes himself. In contrast to the religious leaders of the day, he says unequivocally, I am the good shepherd. This is that fourth I am statement that John records.

For many of you this is the best one. You love the fact that Jesus describes himself as the good shepherd. And it's a wonderful statement. I am the good shepherd.

I am, ego and me. It connects back to when God, when Yahweh reveals himself in Exodus 3. The great I am.

[ 38 : 55 ] The tetragrammaton. This is a wonderful statement of God's transcendence and His immanence. The great I am.

The one who dwells in eternity, who has been here forever, that we can't even fully comprehend is also the kind shepherd. And it's beautiful.

It's beautiful. I am the good shepherd. I'm the good shepherd. There's a couple of Greek words to describe good.

There's agathos, which is like moral goodness. There's also the word callos, which is a broader term, including personal qualities.

It connects that internal goodness, but it's really talking about the nobility, the activity, the external expression of agathos. And Jesus here is using that word callos.

[ 40 : 00 ] It's being expressed in how he conducts himself. I am the shepherd of a better quality than these false shepherds claiming to represent me today.

And my internal goodness, my agathos, is expressed in the ways that I choose to shepherd each of you. It's very personal. It's very relational.

I love that I get to serve with other shepherds at fourth that I think embody this agathos spirit. Our elders just met over this last weekend.

We spent the first hour of our elder retreat just praying for you guys by name, by name. That's that goodness.

I think of Scott when I think of this. I'm up here. I can embarrass you. You're welcome. But I think that character, it's experienced when you interact with him.

[ 41 : 06 ] He's generally very kind. And you guys love that about your pastor. And that's the word here. And this is what we... Jesus, it's relational.

How is he good? How does he demonstrate this goodness? In many ways, but most significantly, because he is a shepherd that what does what?

That lays down his life for the sheep. The spiritual leaders of the day, they were like hired hands.

They see the wolf coming and they're just like, well, you can have this one.

It's above my pay grade. You don't pay me enough to die for some smelly sheep. That's not Jesus. Jesus, his care for the sheep, it's demonstrated by his willingness to risk safety to care for the sheep church.

But it goes even beyond that. Because see a shepherd, they may lay down their life for the sheep fighting a lion or a bear.

[ 42 : 24 ] But they don't risk their life intending to die. It's just it may be the consequence for defending. Our shepherd did intend to die.

And there are very different levels of care. Jesus says, verse 18, no one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

That Jesus came to this earth, He says in Matthew 10, 45, I came not to be served but to serve and to give my life as a ransom. He intended to die.

Jesus exchanged his life for ours, for the sheep. That's what it says, for the sheep. There's a preposition there, for, who pair.

And it means on behalf of, in place of, it's substitutionary in nature in order to give us life.

[ 43 : 30 ] He became sin, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5. Some of you who think God is somehow against you, or that He has forsaken you, or He has forgotten you, you need this image in your mind, on your heart.

In the art gallery of this memory palace, as you think about who God is, right there, the masterpiece in the center, there should be this of the good shepherd.

Jesus is Yahweh, Rohi, the God who shepherds and loves His people day by day. Amen?

And we cannot be reminded of this enough. It says here towards the end of the section, it says that He gave His life, and He gave His life in order to build one flock.

Prior to getting to this section, the flock is very Jewish in nature, and now we have Gentiles being grafted in.

[ 44 : 45 ] In fact, it says in verse 16, it says, And I have other sheep that are not of this fold, I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. Other sheep.

He's talking about Gentiles now, right? That which Paul talked about in Ephesians 3, the mystery, the mystery that the Gentiles will be fellow heirs, they will be grafted in.

And Jesus is growing a flock here. And it's so interesting because He says, I have other sheep that have not yet trusted in Christ for salvation, but Jesus already says, I have other sheep.

There's a lot of sovereignty woven throughout the Gospel of John. Election, it's there.

Even before they trusted in Him, He calls them other sheep. I don't share that so that we can be proud. God selected me. No, it's confidence that God is going to continue to add to His flock, and to use our measly efforts in evangelism to do it.

[ 45 : 53 ] It undergirds as we share good news. But the fact that we're chosen for the foundations of the world here is reinforced.

And it's wonderful. The great preacher Charles Pyron, he said this, he says, I am sure that He chose me. I am sure that He chose me before I was born, or else He never would have chosen me afterwards.

And I love that. You know, the kind shepherd, he knew what he was getting while he hung on the cross. He already knew. He calls a sheep.

And we're prone to wonder. But we're learning the voice of our kind shepherd. And as you experience it, it draws you back, and as you experience the goodness and the forgiveness, it should heighten then our capacity and desire to worship in all of life.

Did those listening get it? Well, let's finish up. Look at verse 19 to the end. It says, there was again a division among the Jews because of these words. Many of them said, He has a demon, and is insane.

[ 47 : 05 ] Why listen to Him? Others said, these are not the words of one who was oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind? That's brilliant right there. That's very sound logic.

It's tragic for those that were present to have the kind shepherd before them and them to reject. Even after he has done a miracle, performed in their midst, heals a blind man, for them to love their life so much, to harden their hearts towards their Messiah, and then to miss it.

And then to miss it. And that hardness actually continues today. It says in Romans 11, 25, there's this partial hardening over the Jewish people.

And yet what I love about the way the story ends is, you know what? Some said no way. Others said, this is the guy. This is the Messiah. And it's a promise that God's still drawing Jew and Gentile into His flock.

It's amazing. I'll end with this testimony. The most famous Orthodox rabbi in Israel, recent days, Yitzhak Keduri, he died in January 2006 at the age of 108.

[ 48 : 37 ] I don't know what his diet consisted of. Probably not donut parade. Largest funeral in Israel's modern day history.

At the end of his life, he said that he had come to know the name of the Messiah. Said that he came to him in a dream and revealed himself.

And he wrote the name on a note, written in an envelope, and that was in September of 2005. So don't open this until after I die.

So a year later, and this story ran in April of 2007, it was opened, the son read the note, and what he had written there was, Jesus is the Messiah.

His son, who was 80 at the time, he didn't take kindly to it. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He's a Good Shepherd.

[ 49 : 38 ] So draw near to him today, church, and if you're in sin, repent, and enjoy his forgiveness. You've never trusted in him, and placed your faith in him today. He's the Good Shepherd.

And as I said at the beginning, there is no better leader to follow in this life than Jesus. Period.

Amen? Father, thank you for this reminder today.

Thank you for this image. Lord, some of us are here this morning, and we're just kind of speechless, quiet.

We consider the fact that you have behaved so well to us that you would lay down your life knowing that we would have days or seasons when we would wander.

And yet you're not a coercive leader. You're led by sacrifice. You lead us. You're kind. Father, thank you for the representation of your heart and the shepherds that I get to serve with here.

[ 50 : 53 ] Lord, I pray that all of us would grow in this posture of the kind shepherd. But Lord, we delight that you are who you are.

Lord, we count at the highest honor of our lives that because of your sacrifice, your death, burial, and resurrection, that we would be part of your flock.

Lord, it's too good to be true, and yet it is. And so we worship you, Jesus. We worship you today. In the senior name we pray. Amen.