

I AM the Good Shepherd

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- [0 : 0 0] I'm reading this morning's John chapter 10, first 30 verses. So if you'd like to open your Bibles and devices. 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 gatekeepers open. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by their 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 name, they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they 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. So Jesus again said to them, Truly, 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.
- [1 : 2 2] The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. 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 and my own know me, just as the Father who 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.
- [2 : 3 3] 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 one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?
- At that time, the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the colonnade of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, How long will you keep us in suspense?
- If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me.

But you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish.

[3 : 42] And no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. Greater than all. And no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand.

I and the Father are one. Thank you. Well, first, I just want to thank Dave for sharing the pulpit with me today.

It's a great privilege to be able to preach. And it's something you don't take lightly. But what a great text. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for his sheep.

In 2008, June and I were looking after, at least I was preaching up at Walker. And while she was getting settled into the manse, I went over to the church building.

And I sat down behind the pulpit. And here, in large letters, was facing me these words. Sir, we would see Jesus.

[4 : 47] Let's pray. Father, we come together today with much expectation. We come to worship you in spirit and in truth.

Because they are the ones that you desire to worship you. But, Father, we come today and we want to see you. We want to hear you speaking to us.

And we want to know that you love us with that everlasting love. And so we ask that you guide and direct us today in Christ's name. Well, what must we see in Jesus and hear about Jesus this morning?

Just three points with a few subheadings. Firstly, we want to look at his deity. I am, he says.

Not I was or I will be, but I am. I always was and I always will be. The Jews glorified, gloried in Abraham as their father and as being part of and upholders of his covenant.

[6 : 02] But Jesus told them, before Abraham was, I am. He also said, in verse 24, the last part of this verse, if you do not believe that I am, he, you will die in your sins.

He told them in chapter 8 and verse 58. It's hard for anyone really, I think, to grasp the enormity of Jesus' divinity.

I don't know whether you've tried to think about it, to think. We often sing the children's song, my God is so big, so strong and so mighty. But do we really believe it? He is very God of very God.

He's the creator of the heavens and the earth and the seas and all the things that are therein. He's the one who upholds all things by the word of his power.

The one before whom we shall all one day kneel and confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father. But I believe that is exactly what Isaiah saw in the year King Uzziah died.

[7 : 22] In Isaiah 6, Isaiah said, in the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord lifted up. He was seated on his right and his train filled the whole of the temple.

And here were the cherubim and seraphim around him calling out, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts. And Isaiah fell down before the Lord.

And he says, why am I? He said, I'm a man of unclean lips and I live amongst a people of unclean lips. But Isaiah saw the risen, glorified King of kings seated on the throne.

In John chapter 12, you'll find that that's what Jesus says he saw. Others heard his voice. Some spoke with him face to face.

One man wrestled with him. One had seen the back parts of him, felt his presence. But no one saw him in his glory seated on his throne.

[8 : 40] Nor seen and heard the declaration of heavenly hosts as Isaiah saw and heard. Jesus is declaring here in our text that he is the I am that told Moses of the burning bush to take the sandals off his feet.

For the ground on which he was standing was holy ground. He told Moses to tell the people of Israel, I am sent you. I am whom I am.

Jesus is divine. He is that second person of the Godhead. But we also want to see him not only as divine, but we want to see his humanity.

Because in our text it says, I am the good shepherd. We want to see him as the good shepherd. Not only is Jesus the door to the sheepfold, as we see in the beginning of this chapter 10 of John.

As the only way to get to heaven is through him. To be part of his heavenly family, you must come through Jesus. But there in verse 7, as Jesus said, most assuredly I said to you, I am the door of the sheep.

[10 : 04] There he's pictured as an object. A way. A guardian. A guardian. But here in our text he is the shepherd. Indeed he's different from all the other shepherds of his flock.

There are wicked shepherds as we see in our text. There are false shepherds who try to get into heaven some other way. And the faithful shepherds, like our own pastors here.

But he is above all. He is the good shepherd. What he can do and does that no other shepherd can do.

What is it? I think David described it best in Ellen Stoll, my thunder here. The Lord is my shepherd.

That's a big statement. The Lord, the divine one, the control of all things, he is my shepherd.

[11 : 15] And he says, I shall not want. Shall not want anything. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

And yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I'll fear no evil. For you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. He says, my cup overflows.

And he says, one day, he said, I know, I shall be in the house of the Lord forever. I wonder if that's your understanding, your statement, your assurance this morning.

You know the Lord is your shepherd and you know you're going to be in heaven. If you've lived very long. Only Arthur's lived longer than me, I think, here today.

But there's some rough patches in our life. It's not all a bed of roses. Not all a bowl of cherries.

[12 : 14] There is this valley. We sometimes think we'll never get through this valley of the shadow of death. These tough times. But one thing we know, or two things we know. We know the Lord.

And we know we're going to be with him forever. He is good. He is good. There are none of the fallen race of humanity since Adam sinned in the garden of Eden who are good.

I mean good in the perfect sense. Because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And only the sinless son of God, Jesus Christ himself, is good.

But how good? How good is this good shepherd really? And I think that we see this in that third part of our study today.

We see it in his love. He says, I am the good shepherd. Good shepherd gives his life for his sheep. Good shepherd.

- [13 : 22] And the first thing we want to know about this is that Christ's love is sufficient. When the Virgin Mary was expecting the Christ child by the Holy Spirit, Joseph, her husband, was told to call his name Jesus, for he will save everybody in the world from their sins.
- Every man, woman and child that ever entered into this world from their sins? No. He said he will save his people from their sins.
- And here he is in John 10, at the height of his earthly ministry, telling his fellow countrymen that he would have to die to save them.
- He gives his life for his sheep. No one took his life from him. He gave it freely. How generous is that?
- But it was planned from all eternity. It was prophesied in Isaiah 53 clearly and applies precisely. Look at the verses 14 through 18.
- [14 : 50] I am the good shepherd and I know my sheep and am known by my own. As the Father knows me, even so I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.
- And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold, them also I must bring. And they will hear my voice and there will be one flock and one shepherd. Therefore my Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again.
- No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down. I have power to take it again. This commandment I have received from my Father.
- It wasn't Judas Iscariot or Pilate, the Jewish rulers and the mob, nor the soldiers who took Jesus' life.
- He laid it down himself. He could have called on 12 legions of angels to deliver him, as we see in Matthew 26, 53, but he didn't.
- [16 : 01] Greater love has no man than this. And that he lay down his life for his friends. His born-again friends.
- His life. The Lord Jesus Christ gave his life.
- The sinless son of God. Lay down his life. What a cost. The hymn writer, Cecil Francis Alexander, an Irish woman wrote, There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin.
- He only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in. Jesus is telling his hearers who he is and what he is going to do.
- But we're in such a marvelous position this morning, aren't we? Because we're on the other side of the cross. We know that what he said he was coming to do, he actually did.
- [17 : 11] He did die on the cross to save his people from their sins. He did rise again. He did ascend into heaven. And he sits as the King of kings and Lord of lords. Redemption has been accomplished and applied to those already saved.
- And to those who will be saved before the Lord Jesus comes again. But the sheep. Who are they? Well, what distinguishes them from the goats?
- Because on the judgment day, the Lord says when he comes, he'll sort out the sheep from the goats. The wheat from the tares. The believers from the unbelievers.
- But some clearly were not his sheep. Look at verse 26. Or 25.
- Well, let's go back to 24. The Jews surrounded him and said to him, How long do you keep us in doubt? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.
- [18 : 20] Jesus answered him and said, I told you. And you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.
- But you do not believe. Why don't they believe? Because you are not of my sheep. It is very clear that some people are going to be in heaven and some are not.

Can we thank the Lord and say, Well, we know who they are that are not and we can just not worry about them and we'll just speak to the ones that are going to be. But we're not God. We are to preach the gospel to every creature.

But the Lord himself is the one. He is the judge of all. And he tells these Jews who are opposing constantly, You're not my sheep because you do not believe.

The Lord knows, as David told the kids, he knows them by name. They know him, not just about him.

[19 : 41] Anyone can read the scriptures and have an intellectual understanding of who this Jesus is. But they know him because they have a personal relationship with this one true and living God.

This saviour that laid down his life for them and who loved them. They have a personal love for him. And they have a dependence upon him and a hopefulness of life with him forever.

Having loved his own, he loved them to the end. And heaven awaits them after this earthly life. And my friends, is that what you're talking about?

Is it like after I looked on my wife that morning, 21st of January 2011, and sure she was dead, but I knew she was absent from the body and present with the Lord.

Is that how it's going to be for you? Is that your hope? Nicodemus, the head man we heard in chapter 3 of John's Gospel.

[20 : 57] He was the one that led the Jewish nation. He was the Pharisee of the Pharisees, if you like, the leader. But he knew he wasn't right with God. And he comes to Jesus by night and he says to him, no one can do the works that you do except if you come from God.

Jesus didn't even answer him. He said, Nicodemus, you must be born again. The woman at the well.

She said, I perceive that you're a prophet. And then Jesus reveals himself to her. And what about the blind man last week?

David was talking about, here he was. And they keep pestering these leaders of the Jews and they want to know, tell us plainly what happened. He said, he said, one thing I know, once I was blind, but now I see.

These people entered into this personal relationship. They hear his voice and Jesus gets their attention. Verse 16, I just put praise the Lord after this.

[22 : 14] And other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring. Isn't God good? I don't think anyone here is a Jew, maybe.

We used to have one who was part Jew, once a time. But where are those others? And Jesus said he must bring them from every nation, tongue and tribe.

He'll get your attention. Has he got my attention? No matter what we are doing or where we're going, whether our sport is our great God, whether gaming is the thing that takes us all our time, whether scrolling, we can't resist it, or whether we're just depressed and we can't cope, when the Lord says, listen, listen, when he calls your name, he gets your attention.

And his sheep believe what they hear. That's what he says here in verse 27. But my sheep hear my voice. My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

Matthew 5, 24 says, he who hears my word and believes on him who sent me has everlasting life and will not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life.

[23 : 56] Have you had that experience? Do you know that you've heard Christ calling you by name and you've believed on him and he's given you that assurance that you have eternal life now?

How do we hear? Well, it's by the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus has ascended but he sent the Holy Spirit too in John chapter 14 through 16.

You'll see that Jesus says, it's right for me to go so that the Holy Spirit can come. And he's omnipresent. And he guides us into all truth. But what do they hear?

What do you and I hear when he calls us by name? Well, we hear that we have sinned against this holy God. And that's the big difference.

We've all done things wrong. Don't kid yourself. I can point to say, yes, I know you've done something wrong but there's always three pointing back at me. But it's when we see that we've sinned against a holy God, this I am, we see this.

[25 : 14] and we see that we deserve to be condemned. And we see the need to repent of our sins.

And we need to believe that Jesus has come to give his life as a substitute on the cross of Calvary and that he rose again the third day and ascended into heaven to be with his father and to intercede for his people.

Is that you this morning? Dave mentioned this lady, Rosaria, I think it was, the converted lesbian, professor of English.

She said, in April of 1999, I felt the call of Jesus Christ upon my life. It was both subtle and blatant, like the peace inside the eye of a hurricane.

I could in no way resist and in no way understood what would become of my life. How does this affect such repentant sinners as you and I this morning who have believed?

[26 : 40] In verse 27 again, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. We follow Jesus. And how do we do that?

Well, we need to be reading his word constantly, daily. We need to be meditating on it day and night. We need to be those who are able to speak about the word of God, to be able to share the word of God, to be able to be with other believers and to be encouraged and chastened from the word of God.

We follow Jesus. But the thing that I've noticed is that Christ's love is not only sufficient, but it's very divisive.

Divisive. His love is divisive. And this is obvious, I think, from the reaction of the Jews as Chris read to us this morning.

Look at verse 19. Therefore, there was a division again amongst the Jews because of these saints.

[28 : 03] And Melinda said, he has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to him? Others said, these are not the words of one who is a demon.

Can a demon open the eyes of the blind? There was a division. If you're one of Christ's chosen people, you will have already had a similar reaction from your friends and from your families.

Are you a Christian? Are you one of Christ's sheep? If you are, then you know the reality and the cost of what I'm saying. June and I won't convert until our late 20s.

But when we come to understand and have this relationship with Christ, we want to speak about Christ, our friends seem to drift away from us.

They didn't want to hear about Christ. When I left the Masonic Lodge, after being 15 years a master in the Masonic Lodge, and I put in my resignation, I was cut off from all these people.

[29 : 23] But on a church scale, and this is what we're looking at here, we're looking at Jesus amongst these Jews, these leaders who want to get rid of him, there's a great division.

Thanks. And you can see here, this is from a young child, this is what was confronted me every Sunday. Why is this draped over the pulpit? What do you notice in the middle of it?

What do you notice nobody knows anything? I'm going to take my glasses off, I can see it. It's the burning bush, isn't it?

That draped over the pulpit of the Presbyterian church that I was in all my life. It's still up at Charlestown, the same, I think it's still in St Andrews. But in St Andrews, they had the most popular minister when I was a child for many years.

He married June and I and it was just amazing how many people just flocked there. But he, like me and my father and a couple of my brothers, we were Freemasons.

[30 : 33] It was a liberal Presbyterian church. The gospel was not preached as we hear here every week. And after this man died, there came along eventually an evangelical Christian, a Dutchman, part of our Reformed Minister's Fellowship.

And he started to preach the gospel that people were sinners and they needed to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved. There was such a division in the church that one quite wealthy man offered quite a sum of money to get rid of him.

I don't mean to bump him off. I mean just to get him out of the place. We don't want to hear him. However, Christ's love is sufficient but it is divisive.

but I think the wonderful thing about it it's decisive. Verse 27 through 29 or through verse 30 if you like.

My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish.

[32 : 06] neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand. My father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of my father's hand.

I and my father are one. I just think that's a marvellous passage don't you? If you're one of his sheep you can say praise the Lord I'm safe forever.

none can snatch me out of the great I am's hand and if you like none can snatch us out of the father's hand who's greater than all he talks about but he's saying from the whole trinity no one can separate you from the love of God that's in Christ Jesus.

You're safe for all eternity. but I've heard and I think some misguided Christians who think that they can pluck themselves out of his hand.

I'm just amazed. They can talk about the sovereignty of God they can talk about him being the I am they can talk about him upholding all things by the word of his power and yet they think they can take him with their own free will out of his hand.

[33 : 25] My friend that's impossible. That's saying that you are above and stronger than the almighty himself. But what's the object of Christ coming into the world to save his people?

Did you notice as Chris read you have a look at verse 10 the thief does not come except to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come says the Lord Jesus that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly.

Abundant life. Is that what you've had after? That's what I've had despite all the ups and downs. Abundant life.

Fancy me being here this morning. Abundant life. I wonder if that's your experience or are you just struggling along hoping that you'll get to heaven.

The Lord has come to give us life. I don't want to make light of the fact that we all have struggles and we all have our mental struggles and physical struggles and financial struggles or whatever it might be.

[34 : 44] But in Christ is abundant life. It's life to the fullest. and with all these problems and all these difficulties we face we have to look away from them and look to him.

To see him for who he is and what he's done and what he will do. And no one can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Why would he leave his throne of glory?

Why would he humble himself and take on the form of a man and endure such suffering at the hand of sinful man kind? Hebrews 12 verse 3 tells us for the joy set before him he endured the cross and sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.

So therefore brethren seeing we're compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses let us lay aside the sin that so easily besets us and run with endurance the right set before us looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

Let's pray. Father we thank you that you are the good shepherd the good shepherd that laid down your life for people like us and Father if it please you that you might speak to people today you call them by name and you call them to yourself that might have this great experience of being in a relationship with you the one who loved us and gave his life for us amen