

# The Good Shepherd

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Date: 08 May 2022

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[0:00] If you will open your Bibles to John chapter 10, it's on page 1065 of our Pew Bible.

! Some of us have just arrived from Southerton, PA late evening yesterday, early evening depending! But we'll give you more of a report during the announcements about our Synod this year.

It was a wonderful time of worship with brothers and sisters in Christ. We were exalted, we were encouraged, we were challenged. And if you, I encourage you to ask anyone that went.

We have a few, at least four of us, five of us here that are here this morning that went. So ask us about it, we'll be able to tell you more about it as well.

If you've noticed that in the past three Sundays, our sermon text has gone from the Gospel of John to Revelation, and then we're back to John again this morning.

[1:12] Now the strong theme, even though this seems like we're just jumping back and forth, the strong theme of these passages is a strong Christological emphasis.

Christology is just a word that simply means the study of the nature and work of Jesus. In John 20, we saw three Sundays ago, we saw Thomas' confession concerning Jesus, that he is both Lord and God.

In Revelation 5, last week, we saw the host of heaven confess his Jesus Christ's preeminence and give him the worship that is duly hold him.

They refer to him as redeemer and accomplisher of God's plan of salvation. And in our text this morning, in John 10, we will see Jesus' own claim of himself as the good shepherd.

And the implication of this claim for those he has called into his fold. How the sheep are to respond, how the response is to this person who calls himself the good shepherd.

[2:23] And who are those in Christ's sheepfold? It is you and me, those that have come to Jesus Christ, knowing that he is mighty to save.

If you have come to faith in Christ Jesus, if you've entrusted your whole self to his keeping, he calls you a sheep of his own fold.

But the question is, what then does it matter to our salvation that Jesus is our shepherd? And how are we to see ourselves as sheep in his fold?

In the text we have before us this morning in verse 22 to 30, Jesus is in Jerusalem. It's around December. We're told it's winter.

But we know it's December because it's around the Feast of Dedication. We know this because this is what we now know, the Feast of Dedication.

[3:26] We know as Hanukkah, when you know your Jewish friends celebrate this also around Christmas time. So that's what's going on here.

Jesus is in Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of, that we commonly know as Hanukkah. And the holiday, this holiday, this particular feast was established during the intertestamental period.

That just means that the time between the Old Testament and the New Testament. So there is no, actually if you read the Old Testament, there's no prescription or law given by God in the Old Testament to celebrate this feast.

Because it was during the intertestamental period. It was under the rule of, you might have heard of them, they're called the Maccabees.

They are not from the line of David, but during this time they became kings in Israel. This is after the exile and the resettlement.

[4:32] And there was a Seleucid Empire. A man by the name of Antiochus came and desecrated the temple. And made the temple offering animals that would have been forbidden at the temple.

So there was sort of a warfare that went out, a guerrilla warfare really. Where Israel stood up against this king and God gave them the victory. So this is part of the celebration, commemoration of God's deliverance during this time.

So Jesus being a faithful Jew is here, observing this feast in Jerusalem, along with his nation.

Jesus will in fact declare that he is the one with God the Father at the end of our passage. He will say, I and the Father are one. But even in this small opening detail in verse 22, we also see that he is man.

He is very human. He is the creator of the universe, yes. He came for us and for our salvation. And he came down from heaven to be born, though, into a human family.

[5:43] Into a specific ethnicity. Into a particular place and time. Jesus grew up from a Jewish boy into a man. He learned learning the history of his people.

Knowing their struggle and triumphs. Their collective desires and hopes as a people. He is not a landless or history-less person.

He was very man of very man. He lived in a particular time and participated in the life of his people. Now, I want to stress the humanity of Jesus to us in these small details.

To present his life as an example for us as Christians. Jesus Christ, although creator of the universe, although God, came to human flesh. Was enfleshed not only in body.

He was enfleshed in a particular time and place. He was enfleshed in a particular time and was enfleshed in a particular time and was enfleshed in a particular time. He learned his history.

[6:46] He knew his people. And this might seem obvious to us. But it is worth elaboration.

When we also become Christians. All things that make us who we are. When you come to Jesus Christ. All the things that make you who you are. Your distinctives.

Your nationality. Your ethnicity. Your family. Interests. Preferences. They don't just disappear. And they're not meant to disappear. What changes though, when we come to Jesus Christ.

Is that those things don't take first place. In our hearts. Christ becomes first and foremost. His word becomes primary.

And all other things remain on the periphery of Christ. Taking the center seat of our heart. We see that with Christ. Jesus Christ in his life. The word of, he came to fulfill the words and the will of his father.

[7:50] But he remained. And is a Jewish man. Throughout. Even while he was doing that. This is part.

I think this is part of the wisdom and beauty of our God. That he makes it this way. That when he calls us. He doesn't strip us of. What the things he. What he created us as.

He doesn't strip us of our ethnicity. He doesn't strip us of our. The gifts and the talents and the preferences he's given us. This is part of the beauty. And wisdom of God. That he will call us to himself.

With all our differences. And fashion us. With all those differences. Into his precious family. So Jesus was. A Jewish man.

In first century Palestine. And he's here. We see here. He's observing the practices. And customs of his people. While remaining faithful to God. And on mission.

[8:52] To save all of humanity. So if you're here. This morning. Thinking perhaps. That coming to Jesus. Means. That you have to join.

A mind melt. A brainwashed. Bug collective. That's a Star Trek joke. And so. Some of you. It's okay. If you don't get it. But if you think that's what Christianity is.

It's like this. Just. You know. Collective. Obscene mind. Brainwashed people. You're wrong. Stick around a while. Look around at the people here. And you'll still find out.

That this is a church. Full of people. Who love Jesus. Yes. But. Very different. Different interests. Different. Different backgrounds. Different.

Preferences. But. What unites us. Is our love for Jesus. He's the one that has brought us together. Despite all those dissimilarities.

[9:46] Making us one family. In his household. Because we love Jesus. We love one another. Even when the world will look at us. And say.

Impossible. I don't get it. Why are those people. Getting along. All together. In the same. In the same building. In the same. Community.

But that's what Christ does. That's what unites us. And this is why we ought to extol. And elevate Christ. First and foremost. In the church of God. In what we do.

So that. All those other things. Now. Again. Remind. Be mindful of what we've just been saying. They're not meant to disappear. But they're meant to be secondary. To Christ.

Being centered. In our hearts. And in among us. In our community. So. I wanted to. I like that.

Because that's what. That was really interesting.

[10:41] To see Jesus. Celebrating the customs. Of his people. Here. In the beginning of this verse. But it continues though. In verse 24. We see here.

That these Jews. John tells us. Came to Jesus. To ask him a question. These were likely. Jesus's enemies. Now. Just by reading the word.

Jews. You might not be able. To see that. But if you had read. The previous verses. In verse 19.

You would know. There's already a debate. Going on. About Jesus. And that this debate.

Even isn't new. It's been going on. Earlier. These Jews came. These particular Jews. Came and said to Jesus. How long will you keep us. In suspense. Tell us plainly.

If you are the Christ. That's the question. They ask. And on the surface. That question actually. You know. Doesn't. Doesn't really. It could. It could be. With good intent.

[11:37] Tell us. If you're the Christ. But we realize. That these people. Have ill intent. Because the debate. That's been going on. Is that. They've accused Jesus.

Of being possessed. By demons. They've called him insane. And that. That's the one faction.

Among the Jews. This man. Is possessed by demons.

He's insane. But the other factions. Saw. And say. Well no. These words. Don't sound like. The words of an insane person. His deeds. Don't seem like. Ones that are being.

Controlled. By the demons. Demons don't. Uh. Heal blind people. They're insane. Remember. Early in the gospel. This same accusation.

Had come. To Jesus. And. This is the same defense. That Jesus himself gave. Says. Look at my works. These are not the works.

[12:29] Of. Of the devil. And here. You see. You see the same debate. Now. Going on. Outside. Among the people. But I think. It's the factions. Of the people. Who are accusing him. Of being demon.

Demon possessed. Here. That come and ask him. Tell us. If you are the price. Really. What they want to know.

Is for him. To tell them. Something. By which they can. Prosecute him. They were. They've already. Rejected Jesus. They've. They've rejected him.

They saw. Just like everybody else. The evidences. In his word. Jesus has said. Shown that the works. That he was doing. Was attributed to the work.

Of the Holy Spirit. And Jesus has said. Earlier too. That those who deny. That his work. Were the works. Of the Holy Spirit. And attributed his work. To Satan. Are damned.

[13:23] So we can see. The spiritual condition. Of these people. Who came to ask him. Tell us who you are. If you're the Christ. We see the same division.

In our day. Those who reject Jesus. Even today. Haven't seen. All the evidences. That testify. To the fact. That he is Savior.

And Lord. They ridicule. Those of us. Who follow Jesus. They might ridicule you. As insane. As crazy. As brainwashed. Maybe even bigots.

Have you heard that. Recently. Because you follow Jesus. Or worse. Well. You shouldn't be surprised. That the world. Will do that. To you. You shouldn't even be shocked.

When it happens. Because. As you see here. Even. Our Lord. Jesus Christ. Was accused. In the same way. But Jesus rightly.

[14:21] Tells them. You've heard. You've heard enough. You've seen enough. To know. That I am the Messiah. Of God. My words.

Bear witness. About me. My deeds. Bear witness. About me. Yet. You have not believed. And Jesus is saying to them.

You have no excuse. And Jesus will say the same thing. When he returns. That is second appearance. To all those who have seen the evidences. And refuse to believe.

You have no excuse. When he returns. As Lord and judge over all. The evidence is clear. And so just as in Jesus' day.

Many will persist. In unbelief. Will say the very words. And acts of Jesus. They will see it. And they will say. That's the problem. The works of Jesus. The acts of Jesus.

[15:19] That's the problem. The very words. Which are meant to. The very words of the gospel. Which are the words of our salvation. Many will hear it.

And see it. And will say. That's a stumbling block. For believing. They will turn their back. On Jesus. Because he claims to be God. But I want us to see here.

That ultimately. The problem isn't. That Jesus hasn't been clear. About who he is. That's not the problem at all. And this should be.

Give us confidence. In our proclamation of the gospel. It's clear. Who Jesus is. It's clear. The claims he made about himself. We can. We can. We can. Put confidence in that.

We're not trying to make Jesus more clearer. We're just trying to proclaim him. So the problem isn't that. Jesus. The evidence isn't there. Or that Jesus hasn't been clear. The problem is that of belief.

[16:17] Ultimately. Dave just refused to believe. Despite all the clear evidences. To doing so. Jesus says to them. In verse 26. You do not believe.

Because you are not among my sheep. He says in verse 27. My sheep. Hear my voice. And I know them. And they follow me.

Jesus is. Evidently saying. You are outside the sheepfold. The very. You've. You've already shown the proof of that. In your words. And your accusations.

And the disposition of your heart. You're outside the sheepfold. Notice the personal way. In which Jesus describes. Those who are outside. And those who are in.

Especially look at the way. He describes those who are in the sheepfold. He says. My sheep. You can only know Jesus. In a personal way. You can know about Jesus.

[17:16] You can know of Jesus. But to truly know him. To be. His sheep. You must come to him. In a personal. Saving way. Faith in him.

Requires. A personal encounter. And this is what Jesus is saying here. My sheep. If you are a believer. You are Christ's possession.

That's what Jesus is saying. You are his possession. He has bought you. With his most precious blood. So that he can say. You are mine. That's the claim he makes.

To all of us. And he has committed himself. To shepherding you. Such is the picture. That is given by our Lord. In these verses.

Of what life in him is like. I hope this is a source. Of comfort and hope. As you reflect. On the hope of heaven. Jesus. Remember last week.

[18:12] We talked about. He is the conquering king. Who is Lord and God. But he is also your shepherd. Look at the assurances. He gives.

To those that are. A sheepfold. In verse 27 and 28. He says. They hear my voice. That's what's characterized. The sheep. They hear the voice.

Of their shepherd. And not only do they hear it. They know. The voice of their shepherd. Able to recognize. The voice of their shepherd. As a sheep. He hears the voice.

Of a shepherd. And is completely dependent. On the shepherd. So as a believer. In Jesus Christ. We are called to hear. His voice. And to be completely.

Dependent on him. But not only. Do we hear him. And know him. Jesus also says. I know them. I have special knowledge.

[19:05] About who my sheep is. I am interested. In them. He knows you. Personally. If you're in him. He knows. You're coming out.

And you're going in. He knows everything. Concerning you. Nothing about you. Is hidden from his eyes. Or his concern. Or his care. What else does he say?

He says. My sheep. They follow me. Right? We're not used to. You know. Having shepherds. Grazing around. And looking around. This will be very vivid.

To the original hearers. Of Jesus. But if you know anything. About eastern shepherding. They don't use dogs. To corral their sheep. Like we do now. The shepherd leads.

In front. With the staff. And you've seen the bishop's. Staff. Right? It's very much like that. And all he does. Is to gather. And corral the sheep. But he leads from the front. And so here.

[20:01] Jesus is saying. As I lead from the front. The sheep follows. Me. But what else does he say about them? I give them eternal life.

Look at the assurance there. Of the shepherd. To you. I give them eternal life. And they will never perish. And no one.

No one. Will snatch them. Out of my hand. I don't know about you. But that is comforting.

No one. Will snatch them. Have you ever thought. As you walk in your faith in Christ. Have you even thought to yourself. Well. How do I stay.

Faithful. How do I hold fast. To Jesus Christ. How do I hold on to him. And not lose him. You've come to faith in Jesus Christ. But that question is always nagging at you.

[20 : 58] Am I truly in him? Here's the word of your savior to you. You're not the one holding on. He's the one holding on to you. On what basis. Do you base your hope.

And your assurance. Brothers and sisters in Christ. Is it on your ability. To live up to his laws and commands. We were talking about it downstairs. In our study in the gospel. According to Moses. In Deuteronomy. We really can't hold on. And keep his laws and commands. We're sinners. We can't do it perfectly. If that's the measure. By which we think.

We will hold on to Jesus. We will fail. But do we trust. In the salvation. Christ Jesus.

As secured for us. Do we trust. That what he has accomplished. For you and I. Those who are in him. Who are in his sheepfold. Is. Is.

[21 : 53] Is. Is satisfactory to God. Is. Been accepted by God. And is. Effective. And enough. To. To present you. Holy and blameless.

Before God. On the last day. Who's holding on. To who. I want us to see here. That Jesus is saying. I am the one holding on.

And look what he says. No one will snatch them. Out of my hand. But it goes even more than that. He says. My father. In verse 29. Has given them to me.

Remember. We said before. We are Christ's. Own. Possession. If you are a believer. If you are a believer. In Jesus Christ.

You are Christ's. Own. Possession. Do not be in doubt. About what he has accomplished. In saving you. Hear the words. Of assurance.

[22 : 47] Of your savior. Jesus Christ. This morning. You have been given. To the son. By the father. And the triune God. The father.

Son. And Holy Spirit. Will keep you. Will keep you. Secure. Until that last day. That is the promise. That you have been given. My father.

Who has given them to me. Is greater than all. Jesus says. And no one is able. To snatch them. Out of the father's hand. So not only are you. In Jesus's hand.

You are also in the father's hand. Is that comforting or not.

Brothers and sisters. Who will snatch you. Out of the father's hand. Who will snatch you. Out of his hand. Who is more powerful. Who is greater than him.

[23 : 44] That can come up. And do that. No one. You are safe. You are secure. You are safe. So.

What do we do in response. Do we still try. In our own effort. To. There is a response to this. Good news. Of comfort and assurance. The response for us.

Is to. Remember last week. We talked about it. Stick with the winning side. That's still the call for us. As believers in Jesus Christ. Stick. To the winning side.

Do not lose focus. We. We've been seeing this. Even as we. We're celebrating the resurrection. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. We see. The matter in which.

We will have to follow. The path. Of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The path that he followed.

There will be suffering. In this world. There will be persecution. People will ridicule you.

[24 : 39] For your faith. People will ridicule you. And you will lose influence. Increasingly more so. In the world that we're in now. You will lose influence. You will lose clout.

You may even lose jobs. Because. You've said. I am Christ's sheep. But this is the comforting word. Of your Lord and Savior. No one will snatch them out of my hand. They are mine. I know them. I've given them eternal life. They will never perish. So.

When all of those things come. As they came to our Lord. And the apostles. We see it. The persecution. When the great serpent. Rears his head.

And the world persecutes. And reviles. Those who are Christ's own. Do not. Lose focus. Do not lose hope.

[25 : 38] Do not lose your confidence. In the person that holds you. Stick to the winning side. And if you're here today. Yet to believe in Jesus Christ. Today is the day.

Now is the hour. Hear the words of Christ. To Thomas in John 20. Stop being an unbeliever. But believe. Come to him.

This is the assurance. That no matter what the word. Can. Can. Can. Can. Bring before you. You have the assurance. Of. Eternal security.

With God. That's an immovable. Irrepressible hope. That's what we stand on. As the church of Christ.

Let us pray. Amen. Amen.