

# The Good Sheperd

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] I know we got a smaller group than we usually do and everything. They may have heard who was going to be speaking today. So that might be part of it. But I think a lot of us got that they were going to go to a family retreat, which is really nice because it's a great camp. My wife and I, we've been there before and we really enjoyed it and everything. And I see we got some visitors with us. So we are glad to have you all with us. So I want you to know this is like third or fourth string that's up here today.

And if anybody's got any complaints, Pastor John's sitting back there in the back. That's who you can go to and everything. You know, I have always enjoyed stories. I like poetry and everything. You wouldn't know it, but I do like poetry and I love music.

And there's an old song that came out in the 70s and I really like it. And I actually went and took the lyrics of the song and kind of changed them a little bit to kind of give you an idea of what we're going to be talking about.

The song that I played the little video up here has a little bit to do with it. We're in John chapter 10. We're not going to do every bit of scripture, but we're going to do part of it. We're going to be talking about different things in there. And of course, when you get in John chapter 10, you start looking at the idea of the shepherd and sheep, the door.

And so we're going to be discussing that. And I'm not going to say I'm going to give you any kind of deep theological study on this. I'm just going to kind of try to talk from the heart. But I want to share this, this, this kind of like a poem, lyrics to a song.

[ 1 : 3 0 ] It's a little long, but I wanted to share it with you anyway, because I think of myself and my journey when I come to know the Lord. And so, huh? Well, then everybody would leave if I started singing.

It says, I met a cosmic shepherd walking the starry range. He's a supernatural farm boy and he's dressed up kind of strange. At first, I didn't see him being out there on the run. Yeah, but that old staff he's carrying, it shines brighter than the sun.

And when my eyes adjusted to the flashing of his smile, hey, I saw his invitation. He said, come on, Glenn, we'll go walking for a while. We walked along together for more than half a day.

Right through the changing weather, the skies were turning gray. Chilly winds were blowing. Oh, the cold was cutting deep. Yeah, then it started snowing. The path was getting steep.

I was just about to turn around and head back the way we came. Somehow, without a sound, I heard him call my name. And looking up, I saw that we were high on this ridge.

[ 2 : 3 9 ] And he took me by the arm and led me right over to the edge. He says, hey, I was so scared, I couldn't find a single word to say. Hey, you know, there's 10,000 feet of empty air, and it's just an inch away.

But a million miles was out beyond the waving of his hand. I was looking through his eyes right into another land. He said, this is my father's pasture. As far as you can see, he made it out of nothing, every branch and every tree.

The stars, all the mountains, the rivers, streams, the oceans and the fountains. The valley of your dreams. I know that place you're looking for, that place you long to be.

Truth is, I'm the only door. You can only get there passing through me. Bending back, I tipped my head to look him in the eye. But he just smiled, gave me confidence.

Go ahead and try. It was now or never, and I knew I had to start. So I took that step, and I went falling straight through his heart. The first thing that I noticed coming out the other side, hey, all my fears had vanished.

[ 3 : 46 ] He had taught me how to fly. Oh, yeah, there's a cosmic shepherd, and he walks the starry range. He's a supernatural farm boy. He is dressed up kind of strange. To think, I nearly missed him being out there on the run.

But that old staff he's carrying is shining brighter than the sun. Yeah, when my eyes adjusted to the flashing of his smile, I saw his invitation, said, Come on, Glenn, we'll go walking for a while.

You know, for me, I have always journeyed with the Lord. I started my journey when I was 12 years old. And the Lord has always blessed me.

He's been there for me. And I'll be honest with you, sometimes I want a very good follower either. Sometimes I'd go straight, and he'd have to leave the 99 come looking for me. And so this morning, out of John chapter 10, we're going to talk a little bit about shepherds, doors, sheep, a little bit of everything.

So if you want to, go to chapter 10 if you want to follow along in your Bible. And we're going to start out with verse 1. We're going to read to verse 6 here in a minute. But, you know, in my Bible, it says, it calls this a parable.

[ 4 : 56 ] But, you know, I got looking around. It's more of an allegory, because an allegory is something that's kind of telling something about God and Christ. And that's what we get. And as we look at different sections here, we're going to be learning a little something about him.

And so it's not like you can put, you can kind of pigeonhole him into one particular phrase here. We're going to be learning a little bit of different things. Now, verse 1, the first thing he starts off, he says, truly, truly.

Now, what does that truly, truly mean? Yeah, listen, pay attention and everything. You know, my dad would just raise his voice. He had a certain way he would say things and get my attention.

But verse 1, he starts out, he says, truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber.

But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

[ 6 : 00 ] When he puts forth his own, when he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him because they do not know the voice of the stranger.

This figure of speech, Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what the things were which he had been saying to them.

So we're looking at this idea of a door and the fold of the sheep. Now the fold of the sheep is basically a pen. It was kind of like the shepherds would go out and have their sheep, and they would bring them back, and each shepherd would bring a sheep, and there was one door into this pen.

It could be a rock wall. It could be made out of, sometimes they were made out of briars or limbs or whatever. It was a structure to keep all the sheep in together and keep them safe.

And so they would bring them in at night and drop them off, and then they would go back to place, and there would be one person who was like the gatekeeper who would kind of keep the sheep in there, make sure they were okay. And so this is a physical structure, this fold of sheep, and there's only one door in.

[ 7 : 12 ] Now in my Bible, I was talking about this with someone the other day. My Bible says the shepherd. In some Bibles it says a shepherd. So you kind of get wondering.

I think we often look at the idea that this is where they're talking about Christ, but we can also use that as another way of thinking about the shepherds that we have here. Because you have to remember, Jesus is speaking to the people in Jerusalem.

He's talking to them and speaking to them about the idea of the Jewish people. And right now, he's trying to get them to understand that they have not always been faithful.

And so when we think of the doorkeeper, I like to think there's a lot of different ideas that the theologians had about the doorkeeper. Some people think it was Jesus. And we will see a place where he talks about being the door here in a little bit.

Others thought it was the idea that it might be it would be God himself. I have a tendency to think it was the Holy Spirit. Because you know, like the Holy Spirit has a tendency to be the one who brings us to the Lord.

[ 8 : 17 ] So I and he's the one who's there. He's that intercessory person that we see between us and God. So the the thing we do learn here is the flock knows his shepherd and the sheep knows their shepherd and the shepherd knows his flock.

The shepherd calls and he leads. In other words, when the shepherd calls out to him, they follow him. And the sheep follow him because they know the shepherd's voice. You know, as we accept Christ in our life, we learn to hear the voice.

But we also realize that there's different shepherds all around too. You know, the Lord, we often refer to a pastor as a shepherd of a flock and a church.

And so the idea, I think if you take this in your mind, you think what Jesus is speaking to these people, he's wanting them to understand that these Pharisees and the Jewish public that are listening, they're hearing what he's saying.

He's saying, listen, there's a reason that the shepherds should be doing what God has asked them to do. But Jesus also says that there's thief and robbers.

[ 9 : 24 ] See, the thief and robbers have alternative ideas. They don't come through the door. They climb over the wall to get to the sheep. They're looking for something. They try to go through any way but the door because they can't go through the door because the doorkeeper is there.

And the thief and the robber have to use another means to get to the sheep. Now, the sheep don't go to them, but they can be taken away from them. So how about us as shepherds?

When we think about the idea sheep and shepherds, I kind of feel like that God calls us, a lot of times, we're sheep. But you know, at some point, we become a shepherd at some point in our relationship with the Lord.

And as a shepherd, we're no longer an orphan, but we become part of the family of God. And it gives us responsibility. The thing is to think about, are you willing to be a shepherd?

Are you on guard about the thieves and the robbers who might come and try to steal and to attack the flock that you might be given responsibility?

[ 10 : 31 ] Do we act like a shepherd? And so, and as we go through this a little bit, we'll be talking about this idea of what the shepherd do. Will we seek out the stray that gets lost? What does it mean, this idea that the thief looks to see how he can steal our, steal?

Well, you know what? Each one of us have a witness. And as shepherds, as we're sharing, we have a witness that we can share with other people. Do you know a person that who's followed the Lord and has fallen away?

And they had a close walk at one time, but they fell away. And, and you know, it's not up to us to decide whether that person is saved or not. But, we do have a responsibility to help go and help bring that person back into the flock.

To bring them back into the fold. To, to go after them. To be a good shepherd. To help them understand. But Satan will try to destroy that witness. See, he can't destroy us, but he can destroy the witness that we might have.

He, Satan, will make, make that person or even us sometimes feel like we're not even worthy to be loved by Christ. The thing is, yet none of us are worthy to be loved by Christ, but he loves us as we are.

[ 11 : 42 ] All of us have fallen short and it's not only through, it's not through us that we get saved, but it's through his love, his grace, his mercy that we walk with him.

We have, we have to be careful and on the guard for those who will climb over the walls, who will lead apart. And you know what? The thing is, you see it happen all the time. I've been in the fold, I've been in, in the church, I've seen where people have come in and they cause a split in the church.

And I think what it is, sometimes Satan will find someone he can cause a rift. I've seen how people can be hurt and they would leave the church family. They would leave and say, you know, I'm not going to have anything ever to do with church again because of what so and so said about me or something that he didn't like.

And Satan puts that in them. Or it might be that there's a, it can even cause a person who feels like their walk has been ruined with the Lord and they may even do something extremely serious like take their life.

And sometimes it even destroys families. So we always have to be, understand that this idea of shepherding, the Lord is our shepherd but we also are required, we want to be shepherds too.

[ 12 : 52 ] We want to hear his voice and to follow him. I want to share a little thing with you. This guy's name is General Orlando Wilcock. He was a general in the Civil War from the, I believe from the state of Maine.

But he wrote, he wrote in there one time about, he said, he wanted to come to know the Lord and he wrote, I went boldly up into the front of the room, raised my arm with all the pride that infested my weakness.

I said aloud, I am an orphan but will receive Christ for my father. And burst into womanish tears. God had melded in my heart but had not poured out the flowing mass, the oil of his grace and heavenly strength.

Well, the problem is soon after his conversion, he slipped back into his old ways and started, and his life drifted away from the Lord. And he later wrote, I called the sweetness flower, drunk the purest fountains, listened to the warbling of the birds, basked in the unclouded sun, rolled into the honey of disdain for custom in the world, walked in the smoothest paths, bathed in the cleanest waters, and at the end of the year found myself, alas, again at the bars of indifference from which I first had started.

Ah, me, I cried, whither shall I go? If I go back from whence I have come, I shall find myself at the end of another year in the same spot which I now stand.

[ 14 : 25 ] And though I may pass many hours of sweet bliss, I shall gain nothing at the end. And an evangelist came to him and spoke with him. And the evangelist urged him to listen to the Lord and cry out to the Lord.

And Wilcox said he threw himself down on the ground and tossed himself in agony. And finally, Wilcox fell to his knees and sought the Lord in tears until he felt the peace of the Lord had forgiven him of his backslidden condition.

With freedom of soul, Wilcox said that he went on his way. He soon united himself with a local church until the leadership, under the leadership of George Dufield who was the pastor.

You know, one of the things, I share that because even as followers of Christ, things can happen in our lives and we can fall away. And it can be very difficult for us to, for us to understand that we have a father who loves us.

We have a shepherd who's sitting there willing to love us and care for us. And sometimes he has to send a shepherd to come and bring us back. I know a time in my life when I felt like because of what I had done some of the mistakes I had made in my life that the Lord would accept me back in his church but he didn't want me doing anything because, you know, I had made some mistakes.

[ 15 : 44 ] And finally, it took a shepherd to come to me and he told me, he said, Glenn, he said, you believe the Lord forgives you, right? I said, yes, I believe he forgave me.

He said, then what's the problem? He forgave you. You should remember, he doesn't remember these sins and these things that you did but you keep bringing them up and everything and that's exactly what was happening.

So we hear about this idea of a shepherd and what Jesus is doing, he's speaking to those Jewish leaders letting them know that, listen, you are the shepherds and you have to be the ones who God is calling but you're not being shepherds.

You're coming over the fence. You're trying to find a different way to get to the sheep and he said, what you're doing is wrong. So in verse 7 through 10 it says, so Jesus said to them again, 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 hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters through me, he will be saved and will go in and out, find pastors.

[ 16 : 50 ] The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. Again, he says here again, he says, truly, truly.

He wants us to pay attention. Jesus says, I am the door of the sheep. There's those two words, I am. He's letting us know who he is. He is the only way.

There's no other way to the Lord. And now, I know we talked about the sheep and the shepherd at one point, but now we're looking at it a little bit different. This is another description of our Lord. He is the one who protects in the fold.

He is the one who provides outside the fold. As we go in, he brings us to the pastures. He brings us to, he provides for our needs that we have. But the thief, he looks to destroy.

Jesus says, I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. But the thief, who is Satan, comes to steal, kill, and destroy. As a matter of fact, God got on to some of the leaders of the Jewish nation in the Old Testament.

[17:57] Jeremiah 23, 1 said, Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture, declares the Lord. In Ezekiel 34, verse 2, he says, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel.

Prophesy and say to those shepherds, Thus says the Lord God, Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves. Should not the shepherd feed the sheep? And we look back when we think about what John said in the very first part of, in chapter 1 of John.

He lets us know, in him was life. When he says him, in him is life. And the life was the light to men. So he is the light. And he is the one that we should be striving to go to.

He is the door. Jesus refers to the door when he speaks to the gate. He's speaking of the possibly of a beginning too. I don't know if any of y'all have ever read Pilgrim's Progress.

It's a really interesting book. I really, it was, it hasn't been that long ago that I read it. But what it is, each person who makes that decision to follow the Lord, they start out at a gate.

[19:08] And they walk the paths and everything. And the path that they're walking, when they get ready to go in the gate, they're told, stay on the path. Don't go to the right. Don't go to the, don't be tempted by somebody over there on the side.

Don't fall for any traps. And so, you're given instructions. And if you get in need, call out. And the Lord will be there. And all through the story as you're reading, there's people on this path.

Now, they went through the gate, but you know quickly that there's others who have come over the wall and trying to lead them away from the path. And when you read the story, it's all about their journey as they go through life and how their salvation as they're falling through there.

And so, we have to, we think of that. If we have accepted Christ, we're on that path. We're on that journey. He is the door to the Father and to eternity abundant life.

But, Satan is going to look for an opportunity to steal, kill, and destroy our witness too. And we have to, that's one of the big things about coming as a church family here.

[20:14] To encourage, to build up each other. Because, does everybody have a perfect week? I haven't had one this week. I'll tell you what, I had thought I was getting this kind of straightened out and then things went kind of crazy.

My week has not been what I had planned. And it's been one thing after another. But sometimes life throws different things at us. Sometimes it's Satan. And the sad thing that we have to be careful of, that it can just take a minute to destroy your witness or destroy your life.

You know, something bad can happen. And Satan will use just a small portion of your life to make things go bad for you. But the thing is, we have to remember we do have a shepherd who loves us so much, who will help us through all these things, who forgives us of everything that, whatever we've done.

If we go to him, he's going to give us another start. So we have to remember that he will do this.

And so now we're going to get to that good shepherd part. Verse 11 says, I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He is doing a little bit of prophecy right here.

We know what's going to happen. We've seen the story. We know what he's going to do. He says, I am the good shepherd.

[21:23] Now one of the things, you know, when I hear this, when I first looked at this, I was thinking this idea of a good shepherd. Well, you know, remember the rich man that came up to Jesus and was talking about him being good and Jesus said, who else is good but God himself?

Well, if he's the good shepherd, I think that's a way of him saying, I'm God. And it gives us an idea of knowing who he is and everything. And he's so good, the only person good is God and Christ is God.

And the good shepherd and there's a good shepherd and then there are shepherds. So think about it. Think of how when the rich ruler came up to him and asked about this and how he said he was the good shepherd.

But you know what? I was reading too that this word good can be translated or looked at in another way. This one person said that this idea of good shepherd in this particular spot can be used as a model shepherd.

And I thought, you know what? That makes a lot of sense to me. Because you know what? My goal is to strive to be like Christ. Not going to be able to get there but I'm going to strive to be like him and everything.

[ 22 : 32 ] And so the good is the model shepherd. So he does the good person the good shepherd who's trying to model them after themselves after Christ does what's needed for the sheep.

So we can we can take from this that he's identifying himself as God and he's both good and he's the good shepherd and he's the person that we should be modeling ourselves after as a good shepherd.

And so so what does the model shepherd do? What does the model shepherd demonstrate? Well we can look back in Psalms and get an idea of this. In Psalms chapter 23 it says the Lord is my shepherd I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul. He guides me in the paths of righteousness. For his name's sake even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I fear no evil for you will you are with me.

Your rod and your staff they comfort me. You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies. You have anointed my head with oil my cup overflow. Surely goodness and loving kindness will follow me through all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

[ 23 : 52 ] Then what should we be doing? We should be modeling ourselves after the good shepherd. We should be doing these things. We should be the hands and the feet of the Lord.

We should be out caring for those that have needs. Help get them to a good pasture. Get them to some still waters. Get the water that they need.

When they need healing help put the ointment on them to be there and to encourage them. And remember this conversation between Jesus and Peter. Remember at the end Jesus had already died on the cross.

He was resurrected and Peter gets the idea let's go fishing guys so him and some of the guys go fishing. Well they're out there on the boat and as they're throwing out the nets they ain't caught nothing all night long.

And in the morning the guy on shore yells throw it out the other side. Now Peter should have first I would have thought he would have thought oh I've heard that before but they throw it out and they catch a bunch of fish.

[ 24 : 49 ] And John says isn't that the isn't that the Lord? Well Peter puts something on he jumps on in and swims over there and Jesus is over there fixing breakfast. And so and just for any of you men who want to know that's why we eat breakfast because Jesus ate breakfast he cooked so that's why we do it.

So we do the breakfast. But when he got them after they had the breakfast listen to this in chapter 21 he talks to Peter he says so when they had finished breakfast Jesus said to Simon Peter Simon son of John do you love me more than these?

And he said to him yes Lord you know that I love you and he said tend my lambs. He said to him again Simon son of John do you love me?

He said to him yes Lord you know that I love you. He said to him shepherd my sheep. He said to him the third time Simon son of John do you love me?

Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time do you love me? And he said to him Lord you know all things you know that I love you. And Jesus said to him tend my sheep. So you know just like Peter is being reminded he is to be a shepherd.

[ 26 : 03 ] He is to take care of the lambs. He is to take care of the sheep. He is to be there to meet their knees. We are called to do the same thing. In other words we are to be a good shepherd. We are to model ourselves after Christ.

Now if you're being a good shepherd then you're modeling Jesus Christ. So you do it in your personal relationships. Wife husband children moms dad we should be good shepherds to each other.

We should remember that that we should be shepherding each other. And I think that's especially important men for us. I feel like men are supposed to be leadership in the household and to be good shepherds and we should do that.

And it doesn't mean that we don't make mistakes. I was just making sure my wife would want to say amen to that. But we should be good shepherds. In the community are we good shepherds in our neighborhoods?

We should be good shepherds in our neighborhoods and our town. At the place we work if we're an owner if we're a boss if we're a supervisor if we're just an employee we are to be good shepherds.

[ 27 : 08 ] And it can be difficult I know. And in the fold of the church in this place that we have the walls and everything that we feel protected. We should be good shepherds to each other.

We need to shepherd and care for each other. So he goes on in verse 12 and 13 he said he who is a hired hand and not a shepherd who is not the owner of the sheep sees the wolf comes and leaves the sheep and flees.

The wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. See the hired hand is the one who doesn't really have skin in the game.

He has an alternative motive and we get that sometimes. Sometimes we have people that are not necessarily a shepherd in the church or even in our lives but they are really a hire them because they've got an alternative motive.

It might mean you know I like to put on my resume that I'm a deacon at the church or it might mean you know I'd like people to know that I'm really important in my community and such. But the thing is it's in the heart and everything.

[ 28 : 14 ] And this is what was happening in Jesus' time. There were many of the Pharisees who were really nothing but hirelings and everything. They were there for a career or a position of power and so they didn't lead like they should.

His concern and their concern was for self. And so we need to watch out for that. We need to watch out for those that are hirelings and we need to make sure we don't become one ourselves. So in verses 14 through 18 he says I am the good shepherd.

Here we go again. I know my own and my own know me. When we come to know the Lord when he is there we hear his voice we know him. 15 says even as the father knows me and I know the father I lay down my life for the sheep.

I have other sheep which are not of this fold. I must bring them also and they will hear my voice and they will come one flock with one shepherd.

For this reason the father loves me because I lay down my life so that I may take it up again. No one has taken it away from me but I lay it down on my own.

[ 29 : 25 ] My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it up. This commandment I receive from my father. Notice he starts off here again. He says I am a good shepherd.

I am the good shepherd. He knows his sheep. He knows who we are and we should know him too. We should be hearing. Now you can't know his voice if you don't be listening to him.

You've got to be listening to him. You've got to be paying attention and he says it's the same with him and his father. They know each other and he is willing to give his life for sheep and he actually does do that.

I think his followers at that time after his crucifixion they begin to realize what he's talking about.

There are other sheep and this is the thing that he God's intent was for the Jewish people to always be spreading the love of God and to be a witness for God throughout all people but they had a tendency to close things up and what he's saying here he says I have other sheep.

These other sheep are us the Gentiles. He says I'm going to bring them all together and I'm going to have one flock and so he says he will call to these sheep and they will hear and they will come to him and there will be one flock and one shepherd and this is God's plan from the very beginning.

[ 30 : 45 ] He had a plan that his son would come to earth that he would die and the son does this well because of the father and the father loves his son and Jesus will even lay down his life as we've already heard and he will take it up.

Now the thing is if you notice here it says he does it willingly. He doesn't do it because he's forced to or he plans. He realizes what this is and he's doing this himself. You know it's one thing to know that you're going to die.

It's another. I don't really to be honest with you I don't have that problem with death. The problem is that little transition period in there. That's the part that kind of scares me and Jesus knew what he

was going to have to do but he was willing to do it because of his love for us and everything. And then I'm going to finish this up with just verses 25 through 30 because I want you to know I started to stop here but I thought this is really important I want us to hear this. It says Jesus answered him answered them and says I told you because what had happened I'm regressing here a little bit the idea was the Jewish leaders of people they're kind of arguing over what's going on they're not understanding they're getting upset so Jesus answered him and said I told you and you do not believe the works that I do in my father's name these testify of me but you do not believe because you are not my sheep my sheep hear my voice and I know them they follow me and I give eternal life to them and they will 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 is able to snatch them out of the father's hand I and the father are one now what greater promise what greater thing of encouragement can you have than this he is saying listen now I don't know if y'all ever did this with your daddy when I was a kid my dad put something in his hand and he'd have three young'uns seeing if we could get it out of his hand we couldn't ever pull his hand apart and that's what it is he's saying once you have been placed in me you'll never be snatched away

[ 32 : 55 ] Satan cannot snatch you away from God Satan is not the opposite of God because there is nothing of equal to God God is ultimate in all things Satan what Satan does he tries to mimic God he tries to find something way to destroy what God's going to do but it's just like a person who's playing a good chess game every time Satan thinks he's getting that good move God makes an alternative move he's got a plan he's going to make that plan work and Jesus the signs and the miracles he was doing was evidence and proof it's evidence and proof for us the hostile Jews that were fussing and trying to cause problems they were self-centered they weren't God-centered and we should be God-centered in our lives too his sheep he says knows his voice they acknowledge him and they follow him his sheep will experience eternal life his sheep will never perish you understand that guys we will never perish we may transition from this world but we'll transition to the world of eternity with him and this cannot be taken away anyone that has given their heart to the Lord they have that promise that it can never be taken away and this is God's plan this is God's authority

God is ultimate and God is greater he and the father are one and so when we speak of Christ we're speaking of the father Jesus and the father know each other they are one Jesus' death and resurrection as part of the father's plan was part of the plan for salvation and it was all under control by God God had it all planned out he knew what was going to happen they knew what was going to go on but no one could kill Jesus without his consent Jesus allowed this to happen because he knew this was what was going to save mankind because he and the father were one they had this was part of this was their plan Jesus the shepherd protects his sheep from eternal harm you may not you may suffer in this world you may have terrible things happen in this world but eternity is a different story there have been many great Christian leaders Christian families Christian people who have traveled this world have gone through terrible deaths but their eternity is promised to them and that is the eternity with God

Satan cannot take it away from us our eternal life with him and the saved in Christ have have eternal life with him so let me just say as I close up here remember we have a good shepherd we have a model shepherd let us try to be a good shepherd and model ourselves after him and let us remember that no matter how bad things go or how things kind of fall apart sometimes there is a promise of eternity this world is not it and everything if nothing else if I could if I could have done that I'd have put a string across this room and put a little tiny dot right up here and said that's our life eternity is that just keeps going on and on forever and we have a promise of being with the father so I hope each and every one of you have made that decision that each one of you know my savior Jesus that you have been out on the in the pasture lands wandering this world and at some point he came to you and he said listen come on walk with me a while and you accepted the invitation and so I pray that each one of you have done that and if you haven't then I encourage you to make that decision before you leave today because none of us are promised any kind of time and it may be any moment that the Lord will say okay that's it so always remember that he's there and he's listening so if you could if you would make that decision today let's bow our heads for prayer and I'll ask our our musicians to come up

Father we thank you Lord so much for all that you have done Lord you have been the rock for me all my life you've always forgiven me you've loved me you've shown me that no matter how bad

sometimes dumb my mistakes are that you love me Lord I know I have a promise in you and each one here Lord who truly knows you knows there is a promise of eternity with you Lord we look forward to that day but we pray as we are here that we are good shepherds Father if there's a sheep that's wandering this morning that hasn't come to know you yet or needs to make a decision to come back to the fold I just pray Lord that this morning would be that time to do that that they can come up to the front I would be glad to pray with them if they want to pray with the pastor we'll get the pastor to come up front we also have those in our prayer team  
Lord that are here you know Miss Teresa and Pat and I know they would be glad to pray with anybody too so Father let us examine our hearts and let us see how and where we stand with you and Lord let us prepare as we leave here to go out and be good shepherds as you were the good shepherd in the name of Jesus Amen that is that is that is that is that is that is that is