

The Good Shepherd And His Sheep

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Preacher: Pastor Andrew

[0:00] I have to say it's a blessing to be at Maranatha Baptist in so many ways.

! At least half a dozen or more different occasions this morning, somebody greeted me with, hey! Pastor, we're praying for you today.

Let me tell you, there's nothing that makes me rejoice more as a person who is to bring the word than to hear that you're praying.

Not only praying that the word of God would be brought in the spirit in power, but I'm sure also praying for your own hearts that God would do a work there.

That God would begin the process before you even come to this moment. That he would prepare a heart that is ready to hear the word and not just be hearers of the word, but doers of the word.

[1:02] And I tell you, I get the sense from this church that it is a church that loves to know God and loves to make God known. And that makes, this makes me happy as a person who brings the word.

But also, I guess, it makes me a little humbled. Sitting in a Sunday school class and hearing the word being taught and being challenged for myself, what are the answers here?

How do you answer that question? It's great to be a part of a church that knows the word and can sharpen the pastor as much as I am seeking to sharpen you.

And that's refreshing to me. It's great to be in this church. And I tell you, if you missed the theme of the songs this morning, you must not be awake because what we were singing about today is what we're going to learn about in the message in John chapter 10.

Our continuing message as we're working through this gospel narrative and as I have been trying to catch up to where you are in John chapter 10, I've been listening to messages going back to November of 2014.

[2:25] That was John 3. Yowzers. So I've had a lot of work to do these last few weeks and a lot of sermons to listen to and a lot of reading to do as I've been reading and marking the gospel of John and trying to catch up.

Where are you in terms of this gospel narrative? And what is the flow of this passage? And how does the gospel writer develop his thoughts?

And why is John 10 important? And where are we in the story? And I can tell you, it's been a great study for me. And I trust this morning as we look into the word, it will be encouraging and challenging as we get to see the shepherd put on display.

Our good shepherd. Put on display for us to see. So that I, my prayer for us this morning is to fall in love with the Savior in a whole new way as we look at the good shepherd.

Just yesterday I got a text from a friend of mine. He's a friend who lives in Illinois. He's an elderly gentleman about 67 years old. And for the last several weeks he's been experiencing some difficulty physically.

[3:52] The kind of difficulty that kind of puts you out. He's been kind of checked out of life. His back pain has kind of crippled him for the moment and kept him from being productive.

At least from a physical standpoint. But what he has not been able to do in a physical way he has made up for in terms of spiritual activity.

About a month ago I was talking to him and encouraged and challenged by his statement to me that says, I'm falling in love with the Savior in a whole new way.

And through the course of these last four weeks, this quietness in his heart has helped him turn down the volume of life and turn up the volume of his good shepherd.

Just yesterday he sent me this text and in this text he says this. He says, Continually in longing for my first love. Content with that.

[4:56] And no burden. I hope that's where we are today. But my guess is that you're a little like me. That it's easy to get distracted by life.

It's easy to turn up the volume on all of the other things in life that are good things. So that the still small voice of God, the whisper of God is inaudible.

You can't hear it. You can't quite discern what the Savior's path or direction for you in this moment is. And we listen to the experts. You listen to the philosophies of this world that says, Certain things are expected of you in your parenting.

Certain things are expected of you in your being a good spouse. Certain things are expected of you in terms of being a good student. And we turn up the volume of all of those good things in our life. And for this elderly gentleman, it was turning up the volume on the news. And turning up the volume on the political environment. And turning up the volume on the talk radio.

[6:03] And letting the voices of the world speak to his heart. And essentially set the direction for how he felt and how he thought. The frustration that can come when you listen to the world.

But over the last three or four weeks, he's turned off the radio. He's turned off the news on the TV. And he's allowed that still small voice of God to speak to his heart.

And it has led him to refreshment and joy and new love for his Savior. This morning I want just the theme of this message to stand.

Are you listening to the voice of your good shepherd? Are you listening to the voice of your good shepherd? Now maybe you're wondering, Okay, he speaks to you audibly, pastor?

Or is there some other way that you're referring to here? And so this morning as we look into John chapter 10, I want us to fall in love with the Savior in a whole new way.

[7:13] So that we can see him for who he is. And we can understand what are the dangers of not following him? What are the dangers of turning up the volume on this life? What are the dangers of following after all of those other worldly influences?

But what are the blessings of turning up the volume of God in our life? Of listening to his word? Of pulling back? Of finding a place of retreat? Of making the good shepherd preeminent in your life? What are some of the benefits of that? And how does that play out? So if you will, please turn with me to John chapter 10. And I want to just read for you the first five verses.

But we'll cover the first 18 verses of this passage. So let me read verses 1 to 5. If you're a guest with us this morning, the Pew Bible in front of you, page 896.

It says this, 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.

[8:22] 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 sheep by name and leads them out.

When he has brought out all of 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 a stranger.

So this morning as we're looking at the good shepherd, and as we're looking through this passage, the first thing that stands out is there is only one legitimate shepherd.

There is only one voice that you are obliged to listen to. It is the voice of your good shepherd, the voice of Jesus Christ as he speaks to you.

There is one voice, and on one hand, that should be comforting to us, to know that we don't have to have multiple voices speaking into our ears, but there is just one singular voice that matters.

[9:28] Are you captured by his voice? Are you marveling at his goodness? Are you listening to his call? Are you listening to the voice of your shepherd today?

There is just one legitimate shepherd. Jesus, here at the outset of this passage, wants to call attention to his audience. Now, we've been away from this for a couple of weeks, and I just want to remind you that we're still connected to the context of what preceded it in chapter 9.

And actually flows all the way from chapter 7. So chapter 7, 8, 9, and 10 all kind of stand together as one continuing setting for us.

As Jesus is in Jerusalem at the Feast of the Tabernacles. And maybe different days, but still kind of in this same week of festivity. And in the moments before, Jesus, if you remember, just heal the blind man.

And I love that story of the blind man. Talk about a guy of sarcasm. I mean, he is bold, and he is quick with his tongue, and here he is, this blind man, uneducated, probably not able to go into the

temple, probably not even able to hear the Word of God, has such discernment, has such perception, that he is actually instructing the Pharisees and the scribes.

[10 : 54] It's truly remarkable. And here at the end of chapter 9, the Pharisees are a little begrudging. They're complaining. They're frustrated at what's taking place.

And notice with me at the end of chapter 9 what they say. Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things and said to him, Are we also blind? Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you would have no guilt.

But now that you say that we see, your guilt remains. And now Jesus is picking up this narrative, and he wants these Pharisees and these scribes and religious leaders to understand who he is categorically, definitively.

He is painting with bold strokes. The gospel is exclusive. The gospel is differentiating. And here we find Jesus painting in bold strokes and in a loving touch and a willingness to speak clearly and boldly to this group of religious leaders.

He says here in verse 1, Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the sheepfold but by the door, but climbs in another way, that man is a thief and a robber.

[12 : 11] There are two groups of leaders. There are the illegitimate leaders. There are the counterfeit leaders. But there is the one shepherd. Notice, it says there is one door here in verse 1.

Notice in verse 2, there is one shepherd who enters by that one door. Notice in verse 3, his sheep, singular, recognize his name and follows his lead, singular.

When he has brought out all of his own, singular, that is one shepherd leading his flock, there is only one legitimate Savior.

What surprised me about the gospel of John is that we find that Jesus is making several trips to Jerusalem. If you were to look at Matthew, Mark, and Luke, you would find that the vast majority of his ministry is spent in Galilee.

But here, Jesus is showing up on the scene. Jesus is showing up in Jerusalem. And at least seven times, six or seven times, we find specific mention of Jesus in Jerusalem through his ministry.

[13 : 24] I believe Jesus is doing that because he's not just a minister on the fringe. He's not just willing to speak bold things on the perimeter, but he's willing to address those who would be known as the shepherds, those who had the responsibility of leading the people, and he is confronting them face to face.

And here we find Jesus lovingly confronting this group of religious leaders. About 73% of the gospel of John, Jesus is actually in Jerusalem.

which is astounding when you look at the other gospels. The significance of this is that Jesus is proving to be the shepherd of Israel, the only legitimate shepherd of Israel.

And for hundreds of years, the shepherds, those who were put in place over Israel, were leading in a way that was disruptive and hurtful.

keep your finger in John chapter 10 and turn with me to Ezekiel chapter 34. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel.

[14 : 45] Ezekiel 34 is a narrative of God's indictment on the shepherds of Israel. Notice with me here in verse 1. It says, The word of the Lord came to me.

Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to them, even to the shepherds, thus says the Lord God, Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves, should not shepherds feed the sheep?

You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak, you have not strengthened. The sick, you have not healed. The injured, you have not bound up.

The strayed, you have not brought back. The lost, you have not sought. And with force and harshness, you have ruled them. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd and they became food for all the wild beasts.

Now drop down with me to verse 11. It says this, For thus says the Lord God, Behold, I, I myself, will search for my sheep and I will seek them out as a shepherd seeks out his flock.

[15 : 57] When he is among his sheep that he, that had been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep and I will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness and I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and will bring them into their own land.

Verse 14, I will feed them with good pasture and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. Down to verse 15, I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, declares the Lord God. And here Jesus, standing before this group of religious leaders, denounces their leadership and essentially exalts himself as the shepherd of Israel.

This is an emphatic statement declaring himself to be the Messiah. Here he is standing in front of them declaring that he is the promised one of Israel.

Notice in verse 6, going back to chapter 10 of John, John 10, verse 6, Jesus has just shared these words with them and notice the response.

[17 : 14] It says this, this figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. Now that's common.

You see this time and time again as Jesus is sharing the message, there is a disconnect in their mind, an inability for them to discern the spiritual truths that Jesus is laying out.

And so from verses 7 to verse 18, Jesus unpacks for them what he is trying to get at in the first five verses. Now I don't know if you're anything like me, my thinking is more systematic.

My thinking is a little bit more linear. My thinking tends to build one logical path on another. And John doesn't think like that.

John thinks in clusters. John thinks in groups and patterns. And here as he is sharing Jesus' words, he's conveying not a stream of thought, but he's sharing groups and clusters of thoughts to build this argument as he is conveying the words of Jesus.

[18 : 26] So as we're working our way through this passage, there's not going to be verse 7 that speaks of this and verse 8 that speaks of something else, but it's all kind of intermingled and kind of fits together as one massive group.

So, I'd like to draw out from verses 7 to 18 some of the main points that we find about our Savior and help to draw your attention to those and ask you to just highlight or underline whatever works for you to draw your attention as you look back at this passage those things that stand out about this person Jesus who is the good shepherd.

He is the legitimate shepherd and Jesus goes on from verse 7 to 18 to make that point clear. We find here in verses 7 and verse 11 that he refers to himself excuse me verses 7 and 9 as I am the door of the sheep.

I am the only way I am the only path into the fold. This exclusive right to be the leader shepherd. As it were. And then in verse 11 and then in verse 14 we find himself amping this statement up even more. I am the good shepherd he says in verse 11.

[19 : 49] And then in verse 14 I am the good shepherd. Jesus in these definitive statements was declaring himself to be the Messiah.

Was declaring himself to be that shepherd that had been promised in Ezekiel chapter 34. The one who had come to replace the illegitimate shepherds.

Those scribes and Pharisees who only cared about themselves. Those scribes and Pharisees whose work was dysfunctional. Jesus came to set the record straight.

He came as the only legitimate shepherd of his people. One voice and one leader knowing who was part of his flock.

Jesus begins this section identifying the threat. What is the threat of not following the good shepherd? He says here in verse 1 those who do not enter the sheepfold by the door but climb in another way that man is a thief and a robber.

[20 : 55] What is the alternative to finding and following the good shepherd? The alternative is to follow those who are robbers and thieves. Those who have no interest in the flock as we read from Ezekiel chapter 34.

Those who only have self-interest. Jesus describes them even more in verse 8 when he says all who came before me are thieves and robbers but the sheep did not listen to them.

They're only interested in themselves. They're only interested in their own welfare. They're not interested in how to care for the sheep but how to care for themselves.

But Jesus stands out as the legitimate shepherd caring for the flock and we'll learn about that more as the passage goes on. I am the good shepherd Jesus says.

And as Micah prophesied in Micah chapter 5-4 he says this, the Messiah would arise and shepherd his flock in strength of the Lord.

[22:02] In the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And here Jesus has stepped onto the scene. Jesus is speaking directly to these Pharisees, these religious leaders and he says, I am the only legitimate shepherd.

One commentator writes of his experience in the land of Israel. His experience of all of these sheep being joined together in one enclosure.

Four different groups of sheep and four different shepherds who all put their sheep in one enclosure for the night. One place of protection. But in the morning when the sheep are to be let out, each shepherd calls their sheep with their own distinct whistle or their own distinct call.

And all of those sheep that belong to that shepherd then follow that shepherd out. That is the picture of what we have here. The picture of those who know the Savior, who know the shepherd will follow their shepherd.

But this morning I want to concentrate on the shepherd himself. And then in a couple of weeks when we come back to this, I want to talk about the sheep and what the sheep do. But the question for us this morning is, are you listening to the voice of your shepherd?

[23:22] Do you know the voice of your shepherd? Are you turning up the volume of the voice of your shepherd in your life? Because to do otherwise, to listen to the thieves and the robbers, the illegitimate shepherds as they were, could be fatal, could be risky, could be detrimental to you spiritually.

But the joy is that he is not only the legitimate shepherd, we find here also that he is the loving shepherd. We find that here in verse three and also scattered throughout the rest of these verses, it says this in verse three at the end, the sheep hear his voice and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

Sheep hear his voice and in verse 9b he says, I am the door. If anyone enters by me he will be saved and he will go in and out and find pasture.

Pasture. Verse 12 and 13, Jesus draws a contrast between his shepherding and the hired hand. He says, the hired hand and not a shepherd who does not own the sheep sees a wolf coming and flees.

He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. In contrast with the good shepherd who cares everything for the sheep.

[24:56] And then in verse 14, I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me. In these verses, this collection or cluster of verses and thoughts that John is bringing together, not in a linear stream but as kind of a collective idea, John is helping his reader understand that there is a loving shepherd.

shepherd. Jesus is the good shepherd who loves his sheep. Notice the intimate relationship that he has with them. He calls them by name. They are his own.

In verse 14, he claims them and they claim him. Their feelings are reciprocal, flowing from one to the other and back and forth. There is this mutual care and love between them.

But notice also the implicit trust. The sheep hear his voice. He calls them and they follow. They follow because they trust in the places where he leads.

They trust that he has their best interest in mind. But also notice the gracious care. We find that in verse 9. There is deliverance.

[26:10] Deliverance from the wolves. There is protection. There is provision as he leads them to the pasture. It is reminiscent of Psalm 23 that we kind of read responsibly this morning.

The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He leads me in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters. Jesus is making another bold comparison.

He is that good shepherd. The shepherd that cares for his sheep. Not only the legitimate shepherd but the good shepherd who loves and cares for his own.

The distinction between this shepherd and the hired hand comes front and center. The hired hand that cares nothing about the sheep. Whereas this good shepherd cares and loves for his sheep. And we will see the extent of that love in a moment. The term for good is the term *kalos*. It is the implication of beauty.

[27:13] The implication of something being authentic. John I think uses this as he does in many other ways to call to attention the authentic care and concern of this good shepherd.

All throughout the gospel of John he is drawing attention to Jesus as the only true one. He is the true light. He is the true judge.

He is the true bread. He is the true vine. He is the true testimony. All throughout the gospel of John he is trying to draw attention to Jesus as the only one.

And here he is the only good shepherd. The only loving and caring leader of his flock. Describes the significance of his relationship in this term to know.

This is the term not only to know facts and data as we saw a couple of weeks ago we understand that when the gospel uses this word know it's talking about the intimacy of relationship.

[28 : 17] That Adam knew Eve and they had children. That God is one who desires this intimate relationship with us. One that goes beyond what we know about him and leads us to trusting him and following him and loving him experientially.

There is intimacy in this knowledge with God. The depth of that knowledge between the persons of the trinity then shows up here as well.

In verse 14 it says, I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me. Notice this.

Verse 15. Just as the father knows me and I know the father. that's the extent to which the relationship that we can have with God can go.

It's almost mysterious. It is almost beyond comprehension. That we can have this abiding intimate relationship with a holy God.

[29 : 28] In a few chapters from now Jesus says, abide in me and I will abide in you. My words abide in you. This ongoing perpetual relationship that we can have with God.

This intimacy that we can experience with the creator himself. To think that we can participate in that kind of knowledge.

That kind of fellowship with our good shepherd. This morning I wonder again. Are you one who is listening to the voice of your good shepherd?

Do you see him as a loving shepherd? Well he's not only the legitimate shepherd. He's not only the loving shepherd. But we find here also that he is the leading shepherd.

The leading shepherd. We find that here at the end of verse 3 and then continuing on to verse 4. It says, The sheep hear his voice.

[30 : 31] He calls his sheep by name and he leads them out. And when he is brought out all of his own, he goes before them and the sheep follow him.

For they know his voice. We find in verse 3 that he is leading them. We find in verse 4 that he is leading them. In verse 5 we see the contrast that they will not follow the counterfeits.

We find also in verse 16 he says that he has other sheep that he will find and he will lead them out. He is the leading shepherd. The shepherd will lead.

So what does he lead us with and what does he lead us to? Well he leads us with himself. He leads us with his truth.

And he leads us into righteousness. He leads us into deeper revelation of himself. He leads us into relationship with him. He leads us to protection and provision and safety in himself.

[31 : 40] Essentially he leads us to God. The Lord's assertion is here. All who came before me are thieves and robbers.

Now that's an unusual statement. What does Jesus mean by that? Does it mean that John the Baptist, does it mean that Moses and Abraham who came before Jesus are illegitimate in some way?

No, what it means is that those who lead to God are leading for him. Whereas those who stand in the way of God are leading in the way that these are thieves and robbers.

Jesus was referring to the false shepherds of Israel. Her wicked kings, her corrupt priests, her false prophets, her pseudo-messiahs.

Jesus was saying that the quality of those who would be true shepherds, who would represent the over-shepherd, would be those who would be governed by the truth of God's word in leading people in to truth.

[32 : 47] Whereas false shepherds always lead away from God rather than leading to God. All throughout the gospels, Jesus' clarion call was follow me.

As the shepherd, he had the right to say, follow me. And he did on numerous occasions.

Twenty-two times he says this throughout the gospels. He says, follow me and uses those specific words.

This would be synonymous with discipleship. This would be the defining quality for those who belonged to him. They would follow the good shepherd.

They would follow Jesus. As Luke 9, 23 says, if anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me.

Let me ask you this morning, are you following after your Savior? Are you following after your good shepherd today? In order to follow your good shepherd, you have to know what your good shepherd says.

[33 : 54] And in order to know what your good shepherd says, you have to be immersed into the truths, into the word that God has given to you to know who he is and to know his instructions for your life.

I've got a confession to make. It is really easy for me to lose touch with the truths of the scripture. It's really easy for me to get distracted and caught up in the affairs of life and to set that aside. God, anyone like me out there? How many, how many mornings go by where your good intentions are overcome by a sleepy eyes?

Your desire to get up in the morning, your desire to carve out that special time of just you and the Lord is overcome by the distractions of the day, by the agenda of your schedule, what you know is coming.

It's really easy for us to get overcome by the affairs of this life and to miss the voice speaking through his word, the voice of our Savior, our good shepherd speaking speaking through his word.

[35 : 22] But if you want to be led today, if you want to follow the good shepherd today, you need to listen to his voice.

Are you listening to the voice of your good shepherd? And finally, finally we come to this last aspect of our good shepherd, that he is the life-giving shepherd.

shepherd. He is the life-giving shepherd. And there are two aspects of this last feature. The first is that he gave his life for you.

The second is that he offers life, abundant life, for you. So he gave his life so that you could have life and so that you could have it to the full, so that you could have it abundantly.

He is the life-giving shepherd. And five times, in eight verses, this quality of our Savior comes to the forefront.

[36 : 29] In verse 11, underline, the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. In verse 15, underline, I lay down my life for the sheep.

In verse 17, I lay down my life that I may take it up again. And in verse 18, two times, I lay it down on my own accord. And I have authority to lay it down.

And I have authority to take it up again. This is a distinct feature of the gospel of John. And in using this phrase of Jesus willingly laying his life down for his sheep.

phrase is unique to John. And this is the quality of shepherding that sets Jesus apart from all other shepherds.

It was a self-sacrificing love, not a self-serving love. It was the love of Christ in laying it down. Those religious leaders who were standing in this audience were only interested in what they could get from people.

[37 : 34] And Jesus had confronted them on numerous occasions about their love for attention, their love for authority, their love for prominence in setting the rules.

They loaded men down with burdens too hard to bear. They would tie the mint, but they would not tie their works. They would not love God in the justice and grace that he had called them to love.

These leaders had fattened themselves in the flock but cared nothing about the souls of those.

They were called to lead. But at the end of the day, isn't that what sheep are for?

If you were to think about it, aren't sheep for the benefit of the shepherd? In a really practical way, the sheep provide nourishment for the shepherd.

They provide clothing for the shepherd. But let's not allow our familiarity with this text and the understanding of Jesus' self-sacrificing love to help bring this into the forefront.

[38 : 38] This is a unique and divine love. This is a self-sacrificing love. This is a love that goes beyond extraordinary. This is a love of Christ for his people.

A divine love. It's a love we find was given willingly. It says in verse 18, no one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

It was a powerful love. I have authority, he says in verse 18, to lay it down and I have authority to take it up again. It was an obedient love.

He says at the end of verse 18, this charge I received from my father. This life-giving shepherd gave his life to show his love.

And in giving his life, he offers life. Life for us. Life that is abundant. We find that in verse 10 at the end. It says this, I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

[39:53] To excess. To the max. Overflowing. Would you describe your life in those terms? That your life is lived to the full.

That your life is lived to the max. That your life is abundant and full of joy. That's the life that Christ came to give. And it's not a life that is wrapped up in the circumstances of the day.

It is a life that is resting in the hope of eternity. In the accomplishment of Christ. And what he's accomplished for you in leading you to eternity.

In giving you eternal life. Forgiveness from sin. In fellowship with the Savior. So we come full circle this morning. We could at the very close of the service offer an invitation for those who don't know Christ to come and to receive him.

To enter into fellowship with him and certainly that offer is there. But I would like to invite those of you who do know the Savior. Are you listening to the voice of your Savior today?

[41:07] Are you enjoying his abundant life? Are you blown away by the person of Christ? The good shepherd who sets himself up as the only legitimate standard.

the only legitimate leader. The only legitimate lover of his people. The only one who cares for your soul and cares for your situation.

He is a worthy shepherd. Lord. I wonder how many mornings have slipped by or how many evenings whenever your time is to be with your Savior in a undistracted way without these competing voices in your ear so that you can turn up the volume of God turn up the volume of his voice and turn down the volume of the world.

Are you listening to your Savior this morning? Do the affections of this world have they overshadowed your first love?

Or can you say with my friend continually in longing for my first love content with that and no burden? What would happen this week?

[42:26] Let's keep it in manageable chunks. What would happen this week if you turned off the TV? What would happen this week if you turned off the Game Boy?

You turned off the games on the phones or the iPads or whatever it is. Turned off the music. Turned on the Word.

Listened to the Scripture. Read the Word. Spent some time in prayer. Carved it out free of distraction. In the morning with a coffee cup in your hand perhaps.

Whatever works for you. What would happen this week if you turned up the volume of the voice of God in your life and turned down the volume of the world?

Let me offer some suggestions. Read the Gospel of John this week. There's 21 chapters, three chapters a day. That's not too bad. You could probably do that in 10 minutes.

[43:29] But as you're reading through, take some notes. Underline some key phrases. Like, maybe circle the word believe. I challenge you to do that and without looking at a concordance, tell me how many times the word believe shows up in the Gospel of John.

You will be blown away. I mean, that's why John wrote this. He wrote this so that you would believe.

So see how important believing is to John and how it plays itself out throughout this Gospel.

See how many times Jesus is in Jerusalem and how important that is as he is bringing the message directly to the shepherds of Israel. Highlight the I am statements and know where they are.

Highlight the truly, truly statements in the Scripture. Highlight the words love and whatever else stands out and be amazed once again at your good shepherd.

Let's pray. Oh Lord, I pray this week there would be a holy amazement of our God.

[44:43] A brand new appreciation for who you are. A wondering, a marveling at the grace and love of God as you seek to lead us tenderly, compassionately, protectively.

Your concern for us stands in contrast with the self-serving love of all those other voices that seek to redirect our attention.

So, this week, Lord, we give you our affections, we give you our time and we commit ourselves this week to make it a whole new experience of falling in love with our Savior.

So, Lord, help us in that endeavor. I pray that you would show up in unique ways for each person who is here, that you would show the qualities of yourself as the good shepherd who loves his

people, who laid down his life for his people, who offers life abundantly and full.
May we experience a measure of that this week as we turn up the volume on the still small voice,
we listen to your direction and your leadership and all the affairs of this life.
[46:04] We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.