

The Good Shepherd ■ | John 10:1–18 ■

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[0 : 00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we are encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ.! I'm Pastor Patrick Daly, and each week I share sermons that balance the grace and love of Jesus Christ with the truth of the Word of God.

Together, we'll explore Scripture using observation, interpretation, and application. This helps us discover practical ways to live out our faith every single day.

Let's dive in together into God's Word. Well, good morning, everyone. It is really great to be here. I'm glad to be back after spending a week in Delaware, Ohio.

I gotta tell you, it's very humid over there, and it's just a completely different change of scenery, but definitely a very good time to spend with other students, get to meet some professors, and then, as I mentioned earlier, just the good news about our own story being published in their magazine. It just goes to show the blessings that come from the Lord. I'm always excited when people gather together from different backgrounds, different stories, and they come for Christ.

[1 : 14] And I think one of the great things, just kind of referencing a little bit of what happened there in that week, and coming back home, is realizing that how God speaks to you is incredibly powerful.

God may speak to you in a certain capacity that is unique to you. God speaks to us through His Word, through the Word of God. God also speaks to us through other people.

How many of us have had those moments where someone is speaking to us, and it seems like an answer of prayer, and you're like, this is really, really strange. Or there are other times where we've had experiences in our life where we feel so connected to God, being in nature, being in prayer, or even being with the body of Christ.

There are many ways that we can connect to God the Father. We can connect to Christ. We can connect to the Word of God. And I just thought it was very wonderful for us to go over the Good Shepherd here in the Gospel of John.

For many of us, we think of sheep. How many of you guys owned sheep before? If you are online, you can answer that as well, because we have people online and people in person here.

[2 : 38] Are sheep the smartest of animals? Yes. Okay. Right? Now, I always thought it was hilarious. When we are being called, through Scripture, being called sheep.

I've got to be honest for a moment here. You're calling me what, God? You're calling me a dumb animal? Sheep are not the most intelligent of creatures out there.

There are some videos, if you go on YouTube sometimes, there's a very famous video out there where there's a sheep that is stuck in some sort of crack or crevice, and their head's stuck, and they're wiggling around, and the shepherd will go in and get them right out of that, and then the sheep will run off free and then land right in another place, another crack or crevice or whatever, still needing the help from the shepherd.

And I'm like, man, that's a good analogy. I should have downloaded that video and played it for you. But if you guys look it up, you can probably find similar ones showing just how, okay, we are like those sheep, man.

I don't know how many times I personally or maybe you personally have been stuck in a crack or a crevice, and you need the shepherd, the great shepherd, to get you out of that situation.

[3 : 54] Amen. It's a very simple thing, but for sure, it definitely, it does happen. When we're turning here, open your Bibles. We're going to go to page 1065 as we're going through the Good Shepherd.

We had our interactive scripture reading, which is just a way for us here at Ontario Community Church for the text to become alive. Because we believe that the Word of God is living and active, right?

And God speaks to us in so many different capacities. How God may speak to you, well, may be unique to you, and that's okay. Let God work in and through your life every single day.

Okay, so we're going to go over it. We see here that this is right in between where Jesus is healing the blind man, right? And there's this clash with the Pharisees and people.

It's just a lot of things that's happening there. And then after where Christ is saying that I and my Father are one. So we see here in the text, right? Where truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheep by the door, but climbs in another way, that man is a thief and a robber.

[5 : 01] I don't want to be called a thief and a robber, right? You get this imagery for a second here of basically like a wall, right? Or something that is keeping the sheep in their pasture, right?

We think of fences and all these different things. And okay, you're not in with the sheep. So the imagery makes a lot of sense. Someone that is not going to have good intent here.

At least that's what it's talking about in the text. He who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him, the gatekeeper opens. And I think that's pretty interesting, the use of gatekeeper.

How many of us have a positive view of the word gatekeeper? Anybody here? And when I hear the word gatekeeper, I don't have a very positive view of that word for sure.

But we can think of someone like a porter. Or if you guys have ever watched, you know, some of these old movies where someone is traveling into town and they knock on the door. The guy opens. He's looking and he's like, who are you?

[6 : 00] What do you want, right? You get that kind of imagery as well. You have someone like that. Someone that is guarding the gate or guarding the door kind of thing that happens. One of my favorite ones is, what is it?

I think it's Lord of the Rings, right? Same kind of concept. Knocking on the door. What's going on? Can I let you in? Protecting who's inside, right? So you have that kind of imagery. The sheep hears his voice and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

What beautiful language here. Now, for those of us who own animals, cats, dogs, goats, sheep, right? In our everyday life. How many of you, and some of you I know, I don't want to single you out for a second here.

When you enter the room, your animal recognizes you, right? Then they get excited in that moment that you've returned and you're like, dude, I just went to the store.

I was just gone for an hour. How could you, cat or dog or whatever animal, how could you be so excited for me to return? I'm just coming back. But think for a second here.

[7 : 07] If this is the type of language that's being used in the text by the sheep recognizing the voice of the shepherd, that sense of excitement, how are we?

Are we excited when we come together to worship the living God? Are we excited by opening the word of God? Are we excited when we gather together?

And I certainly hope when Christ returns that we will certainly be excited by hearing his voice.

Amen. It's such a beautiful language that we are seeing in here, right?

So knowing his voice, do you know the voice of God? Do you belong in the fold, so to speak? So he goes and leads.

He also, the other thing is the shepherd leading the sheep out is also very interesting language, right? Where you think of, you want to lead the sheep from one place to the next, you know, leading them to green pastures, as it were.

[8 : 04] The Bible talks so much about that kind of imagery. But for those of you that were here when we went over the book of Ezra, there was imagery about vessels that were being transported from the place they did not belong to the place that they belonged.

Very similar imagery, except in this case, it's talking about sheep. And we think about how God being the good shepherd will lead us into many different places.

How many of you have been taken on a journey and God has put you into places or situations where we're just incredible? God working in and through your life, you're going on this journey to get to the destination of where God wants you to be.

Does that mean that when you see this imagery of sheep going over for a journey, does that mean the journey is going to be perfect? Okay, there's going to be times where there's going to be rocky terrain.

There's going to be times where you stumble and fall down. There's going to be times, like I mentioned earlier, you're going to fall into a hole and you can't get out. And you're going to need to

rely on the good shepherd to help you in those moments.

[9 : 13] There's going to be times where you want to run off. Doesn't scripture talk about times where a sheep runs off and the shepherd's got to go after them? See, there's so many parallels that we see to this sheep and shepherds that we can think of even today.

And how important it is for us to come together as sheep, even though I don't want to call all of you dumb. I'm not going to. But us all gathering together and following where Christ is going to lead us. And knowing that the journey through life, the journey individually, and even the journey together is not going to be perfect. But that's why we trust in God's guidance, because he knows what's going to be on the other end.

He knows what's going to be over that hill. He knows you by name, and you certainly should know him by name. Trusting in him and that kind of imagery of someone who, when you see your rod and your staff in Psalms, when it's talking about the protection of God.

A lot of times we think of that in a negative sense, but we should look at it in a positive sense, that God is going to protect us from evil. That God is going to protect us and guide us, right?

[10 : 27] When you have that rod and that staff in that sense of protection. And so we continue on then. When he has brought out his own, he goes before him. The sheep follow him.

They follow his direction. They know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him. They don't know the voice of strangers. We can think about this in our own lives.

Sometimes you might meet someone and you think, I have no idea who you are. Especially when we teach our own children. You don't teach your children to just, well, follow anybody.

Like, hey, little kid, come with me. No. Or you think of these old films where there's the creepy looking ice cream truck, right? And they're telling the kids to come on in.

There's free ice cream. Well, wait a minute. I don't trust you. I don't trust your voice, as it were. So one of many parallels that we can think about when it comes to trusting in someone or something.

[11 : 25] That when we trust in the living God, we know what he wants to do. He wants us to follow him and to be more like him. We can't say that about everyone, though. We can't say that about every person.

We certainly can't say that about, well, every situation and scenario. So a stranger they will not follow, amen. But they will flee from him. They don't know the voice of stranger.

And it goes on in verse 6. This figure of speech Jesus used with them, they didn't understand. That language is talking about a parable or a proverb.

It's one of the only times that it's mentioned within the, in Scripture. That when Jesus is speaking, they don't really understand what's going on here. So he has to, what does it say in verse 7?

Jesus does what? Again. I got to repeat myself, right? Not saying that's a bad thing. It's saying it's he has to clarify what's going on in here. I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

[12 : 26] Oh, I didn't understand. Even you're reading that. You're like, I didn't get that from the first rendering that's happening here. I am the door of the sheep. All who come 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 find pasture. We're talking about that imagery of going into a pasture is a sense of security and safety.

And I don't know about you. There are many of us, me included, seeking security and safety in this life. Finding stability in an unstable world. Finding security in an insecure world.

Finding safety in a place where, is there safety? Only you can answer that. You think about these things, right? And saying, the thief comes in only to steal and to kill and to destroy.

I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. In your notes and in the Bible study, which that will be for your own time, is there is this connection that is found with Ezekiel 34.

[13 : 34] When we went over part of the scripture reading, can we pull up that slide from the scripture reading that's from Ezekiel? I want to show you an example here. Because it's actually, it's very interesting.

If you can pull that up. That in Ezekiel 34, it is connected to what we are talking about. If not, that's okay.

There's a lot of connections. And I love when something is blatantly connected from the Old Testament and the New Testament. So, it's in your notes. It's also in your study guide.

In going over... Where was it? It was verse... Look at this.

Shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves, should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat. Let's go to the next one. You have ruled them. They were scattered because there was no shepherd.

[14 : 43] Because... And they became food for the wild beasts. Showing very similarly the importance of a shepherd leading their sheep. Right? My sheep were scattered. They wandered all over the mountains and on every high hill.

My sheep were scattered all over the face of the earth. And none to search or to seek for them. Therefore, you shepherds hear the word of the Lord. As I live, declares the Lord God. Surely because my sheep have become prey, my sheep have become a food for all the wild beasts. Isn't that interesting? How that is so connected. It's connected with the sheep and the goats. It's connected with the good shepherd. It's connected with the importance of how shepherds are to protect their people and not leave them vulnerable to attack. To be prey for the wild beasts, as it were. And we know that in scripture, when it talks about the wolf and sheep's clothing, how it is connected here. I mean, it keeps going on. But the shepherds have fed themselves.

[15 : 41] They've not fed my sheep. Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord. I am against the shepherds. And I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding of sheep.

No. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. So it's kind of like when we're talking about this sense of a hired hand, which is in the good shepherd.

It's important for shepherds to protect their own and not just run away when there is ravenous wolves or there's any sort of enemy. Here's what I mean. Go back to the text.

Verse 11. 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 what does he do? He runs. He leaves the sheep. He flees. And what does the wolf do at that point? I mean, you think about this. What a very sad imagery.

[16 : 41] If you're being tasked, you know, and to watch over sheep and you run off and they get eaten by wolves, you're irresponsible. There is a sense of responsibility that has to happen if you are a shepherd of literal sheep.

But you also have to think if you are in any sort of ministerial capacity and pastoral ship, eldership, whatever it is, there is a responsibility to congregations.

There is a responsibility to the people to care for them to the best of your ability and to not leave them vulnerable, to not leave them, well, high and dry, as it were.

And so all of this is just connected, right? We're talking about the figure of speech. And then I mentioned the gatekeeper in verse 3. Someone who is also helping the shepherd protect the sheep.

Now, when I talk about gatekeeping for a second here, I got to be very careful with what I'm saying here, is that it's for protection. To protect those that are within the fold.

[17 : 50] Not to attack the sheep on the inside. It is to protect them from the enemies outside. It's to make sure, like, who are you?

What's going on? Okay, you're one of our own. Come on in. Whatever that may be. And so in verse 13, we're going back to the hired person, right?

Or the one that doesn't, that just runs off, right? He flees because he is a hired hand and he cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and they know me.

Just as the father knows me and I know the father, I lay down my life for the sheep. It's talking about Christ here being the good shepherd that he lays down his life. 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 and one shepherd. Very similar to when we find one faith and one baptism.

[18 : 46] Very similar in that regard. That there is a unity that exists across Christians, even in different Christian denominations. Some of you may come from more of a charismatic background.

Some of you may come from a more reformed background. Some of you may not even have a Christian background. And that's okay. What matters is that you come to know Jesus Christ and you have that relationship with him.

And that you grow, you let God lead you, right, as he leads the sheep into greener pastures. That is very powerful. Because when it's mentioning here the other sheep, that's very interesting, very unique language for it to be shown here.

So there will be one flock, one sheep. For this reason, the father loves me. I lay down my life that I may take it up again. And no one takes it from me, but I take it down of my own accord.

I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my father. So there's this kind of this connection with Christ being the chief shepherd, right?

[19 : 52] And then also the responsibility of shepherds who, that's where you sometimes find the language in some Christian denominations where Christ being the chief shepherd and pastors being referred to under shepherds.

A very similar type of language that happens. But it's still the responsibility to take care of the sheep, to take care of the congregation. Just as we found not only in Ezekiel, but we also find here in our main text from the Gospel of John.

And so we've seen what's happening here, right? We see what is happening, right? The sheepfold, the gatekeeper, the sheep hear and follow the shepherd. The strangers are rejected.

And I mean strangers as in ones that are trying to seek and destroy the sheep. Okay? I'm not saying that if you don't know the Lord, everybody is invited to know the Lord.

I'm talking specifically about the ones that are seeking to destroy the sheep. Then, of course, when Christ is saying, I am the door, the thieves destroy and the shepherd offers pasture.

[20 : 57] And there's finally this rundown of the good shepherd and the hired hand. That the good shepherd dies for the sheep. It's that sense of dedication that Christ has for all of Christianity, for all people.

And we also can think in the context of the responsibility of pastors. Let's go to the next one then. The interpretation. What can we learn about this? Well, the number one thing is that Jesus is the door and he is the true shepherd.

Can I get an amen on that? That's blatantly obvious. It should be at least. Right? Where we see that just as the text is saying, Jesus is the door. You got to go to the door. You got to come to Christ and respond to him.

Just as we had last week, those response stones. Where are you going to cast your pebble into?

Right? How are you going to RSVP to the invitation for salvation for your very life?

That is important. Knowing that it is through Christ that he is the gate to salvation and to pasture.

Right? I mean security and safety and rest in him.

[22 : 03] I don't know about you, but there's so many things in this world that drains you, that drains me, that drains us. Things that are insecure and unstable. Well, trusting in the Lord is trusting in the firm foundation, the rock of our salvation.

And it's also important for us to know this idea of discernment. The sheep knowing the voice of the shepherd.

They can distinguish the fake and phonies from the real thing. It's like that imagery you might hear before that in order to know what a real dollar looks like, you got to know what the real thing is before you can understand what the fake and phonies are.

Right? And so when we're knowing the Lord and we're placing our trust in him, grow in discernment. Grow in the knowledge of the word of God. Grow in what it means to live out this faith.

So you can distinguish truth from lies, light from darkness, real dollar bills from fake dollar bills, as it were, as that example. But it's this ability to discern.

[23 : 11] The second thing then is the good shepherd sacrificially cares about the Lord. That he lays down his life and he takes it up again.

Which is a reference to the resurrection. Right? That he willingly is sacrificing his life. And on the third day he rises again. This is the foundation of Christianity.

This is the foundation of our faith. And that's so important for us. And that Christ is not a hired hand. And also, legitimate pastors are not hired individuals.

They care for their congregation. They exhibit this sense of kindness, compassion, love, truth, justice, mercy.

All of these different things. It is God working through these people to help other people come to Christ. And to grow in their faith.

[24 : 12] All working together to get people to heaven. All working together to get to see to it that people are saved. It's just such when you look at the big picture, as it were.

It's just kind of a, it's overwhelming. But in a good way. Knowing that God has a grand plan and a grand narrative. And that's okay.

So the true shepherd mirrors the great shepherd. His courage and his care. They don't abandon the flock in danger. They stay true and they work with their own congregation.

And then finally, the third thing is one flock under one shepherd. And the shepherd being Christ. Christ, we have to think that regardless of what denomination we are a part of.

Regardless of what it is we have gone through or what it is we're going through. All of these things. We seek the living God. That's what matters.

[25 : 16] We seek him and his truth, his righteousness. We seek the newness of life, healing and transformation that comes from God. And whether you were raised a Presbyterian or an Assembly of God or United Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, Roman Catholic, whatever it is.

You seek Jesus Christ in faith. And by golly, you grow in him. Become more like him. And radiate that love, that light and that truth to others so that they too can be saved.

All under one flock. The other sheep being gathered, Jesus forms a single flock from diverse backgrounds. We can think for a moment when you're bringing sheep from all over the place, one flock may go through an entirely different journey than another flock.

Some it might have been real easy. What rocky mountain? What hills? What holes in the ground are you possibly talking about? For others, it's been like, it's been nothing but that.

You have no idea what I've gone through. But the end point is to come to Christ in love and in unity. Very important.

[26 : 36] And so lean into that. It's okay to have a different background. That's part of the body of Christ. You don't want to have a room full of years, right?

Or a room full of feet. You have different parts that make up the body of Christ. So one shepherd. And then finally, we go to the application here.

Here at Ontario Community Church, I mention it every Sunday that it's so important for us to observe the text. What does the text say?

What in the world is going on here? And the second part is to interpret it. What can we learn and how can we grow in our walk with the Lord? And then finally, the application is what should we do because of this?

The first thing then in our application is to what church? To enter through the door. Don't jump over the fence.

[27 : 39] Don't try digging under it. Go to the door. Especially when Christ is saying that he is the door. Let's go to him directly.

I want to go to the source. I want to go directly to God. And what better way to do it than to go through Christ who is the door.

Salvation begins by entering through faith in Christ. And knowing that our God is the God of abundance.

He gives us newness of life. He gives us security and salvation in him. He gives us spiritual gifting. Consider if you have entered through the door.

Maybe you haven't. Maybe you didn't even know there was a door. Or maybe you've been trying to jump over the wall. In this case, go through the door. It's beautiful language.

[28 : 38] Go through so that you can go into greener pastures. When I hear of that language about green pastures and the safety and the protection of God, that's what I want for my life.

I want that. And I hope you do as well. The second thing then is to follow the shepherd's voice. Know who God is.

Know his voice and follow in his footsteps. Follow his direction, his leading, and his guiding. And we can get to know the Lord better through the reading of scripture, through prayer, and through community.

You know, one of the things that I really love about being a Christian is the sense of community. Us coming together, praying for one another, being present for one another.

Just knowing that I call you, sometimes you call me, or sometimes you don't, whatever. We call each other and we can be there for each other. And the highs and the lows of life.

[29 : 45] And that's a beautiful thing. To be together. To be united in Christ and to know that. Celebrate when good things are happening in your life.

It's okay to be present when something bad is happening as well. Whether that's sickness or that's health or whatever it is.

Knowing that your brothers and sisters in Christ or other sheep, if you will, are there for you. Is a wonderful image. Sometimes, and very often, we find that the relationships we build within the walls of the church are unlike any other relationship.

And that's a beautiful thing. I mean, think about that. Think about how important it is. The sense of community.

May we tune our ears to the voice of Christ. Just like how so often scripture says, he who has ears, let him hear. When you first read that, you're like, I've got ears, dude.

[30 : 53] Like, what do you mean? Being open to the spiritual lessons that's found from scripture, that's found from the Lord. And to teach us to flee from strangers.

You don't want to run out of the gate. And sometimes we do. And sometimes the Lord will chase, the Lord will chase after us. In those times where we may not know what we're doing.

I mean, isn't it interesting that even the Lord said on the cross, Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing. What fascinating words. And how often do we not know what we're doing? We may think we know at first, but later on, you're like, I really didn't know what I was doing. And God, you certainly did. I should have listened to you. It's very important for us. To follow the shepherd's voice.

Now, the last thing I put on here is to shepherd the people and to guard the door. It's important to know that for all of us, as we grow in Christ, that we are to continue in the work of the ministry for others.

[31 : 56] The ministry of presence, for example. Being there for someone. Sometimes it's just sitting next to someone, praying with them, offering a word of encouragement, scripture verses.

Other times it's through service. Helping those that are hungry, giving them food. Or giving someone clothes when they're in need. Other times, when we think of ministry, it's sharing the gospel message.

Sharing that with other people. Sharing in the words of your testimony and saying how God has worked in your life. There are many ways to do that. We are all called to be ministers of the gospel. To share in the truth of Christ and the love that comes from him as well. Many of you may know someone who doesn't know the Lord.

Think of how you can be that example. Think of how you can pray for their heart to be softened. So that they can receive salvation in Christ.

[33 : 06] So I put shepherd the people and guard the door, right? There's this sense of shepherding others and also guarding the door. At times it is important as well to be on your guard.

To be protective. Just as it says when we talk about discernment to test every spirit. There's a lot of verses that talk about this sense of protection. Just in the same way that we balance grace and truth, we have to balance guarding, protecting, and shepherding, exhibiting the love of Christ. And so just think of these things and how you can minister to others. It might be speaking truth. It might just be being present.

It might be loving someone who the world thinks is unlovable. It might be sharing the gospel message. Think of someone you know.

Think of someone this week that you can talk to. And so let us listen and follow the shepherd's voice. Let us enter through the gate and live for him.

[34 : 21] Let Christ dwell in us. And let us welcome other sheep into his rest and care. It's so important. And I want to close with that verse in John chapter 10, verse 14 to 16, where Christ says, I am the good shepherd.

I know my own and my own know me. Just as the father knows me and I know the father, I lay down my life for the sheep. 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 and one shepherd. Let's pray together. And Father God, we thank you for this time and this opportunity for us to gather together in this place.

We're grateful for your word. And we're grateful for the things that we can see, the things that we can learn and the things that we can do. I ask, Father, that there is a sense of unity in this place.

I'm grateful for every single person that is here this morning in person and those that are there online. Father, I don't know what it is every single person here is going through, but you sure do. [35 : 37] You offer safety and security. You offer salvation. And you invite all of us in to go through the gate.

For your door is open. May we see the door. And may we go through it. May we enter green pastures. May we be with the flock.

May we appreciate with this sense of gratitude who you are, what you have done, and what you continue to do.

Be with us as we close. We love you, Father. We praise you. We thank you. And we glorify you. It is in the name of Jesus Christ, the chief shepherd, that we pray.

And we all say together, Amen. Thank you for listening for this week's message from Ontario Community Church. I pray that you are encouraged and strengthened in your walk with Christ.

[36 : 43] For more sermons and resources, visit OntarioCommunityChurch.org. May God bless you as you live out his grace and truth every single day. Amen.

Thank you.