

John 10:18

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn again to John's Gospel, and chapter 10, I'm reading at verse 16. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.

So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father. Now, as we know, the picture that Jesus paints, or the picture that the Bible paints of Jesus as a good shepherd, is one of the most powerful, one of the most beautiful, one of the most moving, one of the most assuring pictures that the Bible gives to us of the security and the safety that the believer enjoys in Jesus.

And it's a wonderful thing for us to know tonight, that if we are in Jesus Christ, then we're safe. Irrespective of what may happen, what may frighten us, irrespective of what may come our way, through difficulties and challenges in life, the great thing to know is that we are safe in Christ Jesus.

And even our own failures and our own weaknesses, that doesn't alter or change anything.

[1 : 5 5] I suppose those of you who have sheep know how annoying and frustrating it can be to work with sheep.

Often you say to yourselves, you know, they get the worst out of you. Anybody who works with sheep knows what it can be like. But, you know, we have a good shepherd.

And it doesn't matter how frustrating or how difficult we may be. It doesn't matter how often we may wander and slip and stumble and fall.

Yet he never gives up. He'll never let us go. He'll never walk away. He'll never abandon us. Always and ever he is faithful and he loves us.

And that's one of the things that this chapter highlights is the intense, and it is an intense, the intense love that the shepherd has for his sheep.

[2 : 5 8] And it's a wonderful thing to even reflect on that and just to think upon that very thought tonight, that Jesus loves us with an intense love.

And if ever we question his love to us, all we have to do is to think of Calvary and to think of what he did upon the cross of Calvary. And that shows us the measure of his love to us, to and for us.

Now, the Bible talks about Jesus as the shepherd in various ways. It talks of Jesus as a good shepherd. It talks of Jesus as the great shepherd.

And it talks of Jesus as the chief shepherd. It talks of Jesus as a good shepherd, as the one who laid down his life for the sheep. It talks of Jesus as the great shepherd, as the one who rose for the sheep and today is shepherding the sheep.

And it talks of Jesus as the great shepherd, the one who is coming again in order to take all his sheep, to take all his flock to be with him in glory forever.

[4 : 08] Now, it's, I suppose, quite interesting that two of the main characters that we find in the Old Testament, two men who are at the very forefront, as it were, of Old Testament life, two men who led Israel at different periods, were taken from the, what you could almost say, from the sheepfold, or taken from the shepherding.

One was Moses. I know that he was brought up in the palace. But for 40 years, Moses was a shepherd. And the other, of course, was David, who was a shepherd.

And it's very interesting that these two characters, who in some ways symbolized or typified Jesus, there were aspects of their life that were typified or symbolized Jesus, but two of the greatest men in the Old Testament were shepherds.

And there is so much significance in these very things. Now, Jesus, in verse 16, as a good shepherd, is talking about gathering in the flock.

And the flock is going to be all one. There are going to be people from different backgrounds, from different cultures, from different gatherings, from different setups, from all over, and they are going to be one.

[5 : 39] Now, I suppose in its immediate context, Jesus is talking of the Jew and of the Gentile. We are the Gentiles, but he's talking of the Jew and the Gentile.

And in these days, the Jew would never comprehend or understand or believe that God was going to extend his kingdom worldwide.

They had such an insular, such a settled view of God's work that it was so localized just amongst themselves that they couldn't understand the breadth and the depth and how it would become, we use the word, a global phenomenon, but it would become a global spread.

And there's just going to be the one flock. And that's what Jesus is talking about here. And Jesus says, I have other sheep who are not of this fold. And as we say, at that time, the fold, the flock, was very small.

When you think of this little group in the Middle East, and at that time, the world spiritually was in darkness. And it was into this darkness that Jesus came.

[6 : 55] Now, I'm sure you might say to yourself, and a lot of people would think, it must have been wonderful living at the time when Jesus came into this world. It must have been wonderful to have been living and to be walking around the streets of the city of Jerusalem or to be walking through the country lanes and the country roads around in the Palestine at that time.

But what we've got to remember is that, by and large, although there was a lot of religion, it was very outward. It was very legalistic. It was very formal.

And Jesus was forever finding fault with the religious leaders because he was saying to them on the outside, on the outside you are so righteous, but inside you're rotten to the core.

He, in fact, described many of the religious leaders like painted sepulchres or painted tombs. Now, if you go down to the cemetery, and sometimes you can see the most magnificent gravestones, but we know that within the grave there is decaying and that everything is corrupt.

And that's how Jesus was looking at many of the religious leaders. He said on the outside, yes, there you are, you're praying on the street corners, and people are saying, what holy men you are.

[8 : 16] But Jesus could see into their hearts, and he knew that it was all a facade, that it was a front, it was to be seen by people, to be seen of men, to receive glory of men.

And unfortunately, they were resting in that. They were resting in their self-righteousness. One of the greatest hindrances to the freeness of gospel grace is self-righteousness, where we parade who we are and what we are, when we think somehow that what we are will make us right before God.

And self-righteousness clings to us all our days, and even as a believer, self-righteousness is there. It is one of the big, big curses, so that somehow we think that God owes us something.

My friend, we deserve nothing, in and of ourselves, but the wrath and the curse of God. And it's just a marvel of God's grace that he has extended his love and his favor to us.

And every step that we take, we must take by grace, leaning upon him, trusting in him, looking to him, depending upon him, all the time.

[9 : 30] So that was the kind of the background, the situation at that particular time. People lived in fear. There wasn't liberty. There wasn't freedom. Remember, there's freedom and liberty in the gospel.

And so when Jesus came to his own people, to the Jew, it was largely rejection. As the word says, he came to his own, and his own received him not.

Or there were times that they appreciated, there were times they marveled. And there were times we read about that. It's quite extraordinary. They were saying, we read about that in this chapter.

Because his teaching was not like any other teaching of the day. What he did wasn't like what anybody else did. And that's why they were perplexed.

And they were saying, are you the Christ? And he said to them, I've told you. And all the time, Jesus kept saying to them that he had come from the Father, and that what he did was revealing the Father, and those who had seen him had seen the Father.

[10 : 34] And yet he's saying to them, you will not believe. And despite the miracles, and despite the amazing teaching, some of them were saying he had a demon.

Isn't it extraordinary? That's a blindness of sin. face to face with Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God. Watching him at work.

Watching him release people who were held under the power of darkness. Watching him opening the eyes of the blind. Present as he released people from their bondage.

And they were saying, he's got a demon. And you say to yourself, how blinkered, how prejudiced can people be? But there, that's it.

That's what they were saying. And of course, when push came to shove, and when the crunch came, and when the decision was to be made, what was the cry in Jerusalem?

[11 : 36] It was a united cry. Crucify him. Crucify him. And so it was into this, as it were, this little flock.

And Jesus had elsewhere, talking to his disciples, terms it, a little flock. That's how it was in those days. But Jesus is looking ahead, and he's saying, and I have other sheep that are not of this fold.

And we are here now, and we are part of the other sheep that were not of the fold then, but we are, we have been, we have been gathered.

And you know, that's the wonderful thing, is that the Lord is gathering his sheep, continuing to gather. And if you're here tonight, as part of the flock, you, the wonderful thing is, as we said earlier, that he will never let us go.

That he continues to shepherd us all the time. And you know, one of the wonderful things about the shepherding is, that he is in the business of restoring.

[12 : 45] Psalm 23, the shepherd's psalm, my soul he doth restore again. And you know, you could put, my soul he doth restore again and again and again and again and again.

doesn't just restore at once, he continues to restore. It's one of the wonderful things. And I don't know where you are tonight, maybe you're a follower of the Lord, but you feel far away, you feel you've drifted.

And you're saying to yourself, you know, I would love that it would be the way it once was. Where there was a warmth in my heart, where there was a, a sense of, such a sense of belonging, there was a passion there.

There was a desire for Christ-likeness. It was what I wanted, but I seemed to have drifted. Remember, the shepherd is in the business of restoring, restoring your soul.

And he is in the, the opening words there of Psalm 23 are so beautiful. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me down to lie in pastures green.

[13 : 54] He leadeth me. The quiet waters be. My soul he doth restore again. And you know, in a sense, that Psalm, some of that Psalm belongs even to glory.

It belongs to here. Not all of the Psalm, I would say, but some of it. And when you get, the Lord is my shepherd, I'll not want. That's glory. In fact, we're told in glory that the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to living fountains of waters.

You see, he's still shepherding. It's part of the wonder of it, of glory. Leading the flock. Of course, we will be in a different, we will be in a, in an environment that is absolutely safe and glorious and wonderful.

And there'll be nothing within us with regard that will threaten. Death's dark veil will not be anymore. But there is still this sense of shepherding. The shepherd never ceases his work of shepherding.

And I hope tonight that you are part of this flock. And if you are not, will you hear the voice of the shepherd who is calling, who, the shepherd who is, who is in gathering.

[15 : 09] Because that's what he says, I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also. And they will listen to my voice.

Is there anybody in here tonight who has not been listening to the voice of the shepherd up till now? You've heard his voice, but it's distant.

It's, it's in the distance. It has never touched your heart. His voice has never penetrated. You are hearing, as it were, the outward call of the gospel, but never the inward.

And I would ask you tonight to ask the Lord and say, Lord, please help me to hear your voice. Help me to hear your voice in order that I may respond.

Give me the grace, Lord, to respond. You know, he will not turn away from that prayer. Will you? If you're here tonight without Jesus, let's, let's be honest, let's be frank, because we're dealing with eternal realities, with the issues of life and death.

[16 : 23] This is not something we can take and just dismiss. This is not something that we can sort of have a wee look at and then say, oh, well, I'll look at that later on. Remember, we're dealing here with our eternal realities, with our soul, our never-dying precious soul.

Where are we going? If you die tonight, where are you going? Well, here is the voice of the shepherd and he's calling. He's calling. Here's an outward call of the gospel.

It's coming. And if you have never heard that call, that's why I'm saying, ask him tonight, Lord, speak into my heart so that I will hear. And just like the shepherd goes out, Jesus in elsewhere, he picked us up, like the shepherd who left the 99.

There's one missing. And he goes off searching for the one that is lost. It's a wonderful picture and it shows how the Lord is looking and searching and he'll find.

He's a shepherd who will find. And I believe that tonight, maybe here in churches, in homes, maybe on street corners, maybe up and down our land, maybe even in pubs and clubs, for all I know, the voice of the shepherd is speaking to someone.

[17 : 49] Someone, there might be somebody in this very town who grew up in a Christian home and has turned their back upon it and they're away down another road tonight.

but maybe the good shepherd is going to look them out. And all they heard when they were young, which they'd forgotten about, which they thought was something that they had dismissed, but it was still in there.

Remember, nothing that we've learned or heard has actually gone. It's all in there. It's just our powers of recall are often affected. And where there's so many things we just say, oh, I don't remember, but deep down it's still in there.

It's like a computer in there. And maybe for somebody tonight that's exactly what's happening, that the good shepherd is looking that person out.

And I pray that there will be some in here tonight who may have not yet come into the fold, who may yet not have come to embrace Jesus, that Jesus is tonight looking you out.

[18 : 55] You ask him tonight, Lord, stretch out your hand to me. Speak the word into my soul. Speak the word come with power.

And remember, when the Lord speaks his word in power, then he enables in the same way as he said to Peter, just these words come. Peter was enabled to walk upon the water, enabled to do what he couldn't naturally do.

And so just as the shepherd, the natural shepherd is looking in the hills and down by the riverside and down into the valleys and into the gullies and searching for sheep that are missing, so the good shepherd, Jesus, is calling tonight.

And this is the wonderful thing that is going on. And you know, if he is dealing savingly with you, if tonight the Lord is going to touch your heart, you know what will happen?

The barriers that have always been there before will be broken. The hindrances, the things, the obstacles that kept you back will all of a sudden, these barriers and obstacles will be lowered.

[20 : 13] and you'll begin to see and things will become clearer and the desire in your heart will become more powerful and you will come to realize that this is who you need and all the other voices and things that have been holding you back will be pushed aside and you'll realize that this is serious, that this is between yourself and God.

And that is the shepherd at work and I hope that that is happening in the experience of somebody in here tonight. So Jesus says here that he will, 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.

And then he says for this reason the Father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it again. Now of course the Father has always loved the Son.

He has loved the Son as a Son. He has loved the Son as an equal and he loves the Son as the mediator and the Redeemer and the Savior and the sacrifice.

Of course the Father loves the Son. and he loves the Son because the Son is fulfilling all his purposes and all his decrees and through what the Son is doing the wonderful thing is salvation is being obtained.

[21 : 50] Now as we know the Father it says here for this reason the Father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it again. Now as we know the love of the Father for the Son never wavered.

And we must never lose sight of that despite all that Jesus went through even on the cross even when Jesus cried out my God my God why hast thou forsaken me the love of the Father never wavered.

Jesus through the withdrawal and we've got to remember that Jesus on the cross was there as mediator and Jesus on the cross was there representing us and on the cross every comfort and every prop was removed.

Remember he had the Spirit without measure the fullness of the Spirit and the Spirit was always communicating to the Son the love of the Father but the Spirit was withdrawn and the influence of the Spirit was withdrawn and so there was this sense of disorientation and this sense of abandonment even although the Father even then never ceased to love the Son even although he was pouring his wrath and his anger and his judgment and his fury upon the Son as he was there as our representative as our sacrifice as he was making propitiation for sin.

And so Jesus here highlights that he lays down his life that he may take it again. Lay down his life for us for a ransom to deliver us to deliver us from the curse of the law to deliver us from death to deliver us from judgment to deliver us from hell to deliver us from sin.

[23 : 57] And then he says in verse 18 about his life no one takes it from me but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority or power to lay it down and I have authority to take it up again this charge I have received from my Father.

And this shows us the voluntary nature of Christ's sacrifice that everything he did he did according to a particular purpose and plan.

Jesus was in control all the way through. Now there were different times when people tried to take his life away. Herod tried to destroy him at the very beginning when the babies in Bethlehem were put to death.

The Jews often tried to take him. They tried at other occasions but it used to say the Bible said they could not take him because his time had not yet come. See Jesus was keeping to a heavenly timetable and every step he took he was aware of what he was doing.

But the time had now come. But he gave himself and one of the things that Jesus did was when we look at his life and particularly when we look at the events leading up to the cross we see that he handed himself over.

[25 : 17] because when the soldiers came to take him in the garden first of all he went to the most obvious place. He went to the place that Judas knew. In fact he even said to Judas what you're going to do go and do it.

Jesus knew that Judas was going to betray him. If Jesus was wanting to control or Jesus was wanting to save his own life the last place he would have gone would have been the garden.

He would have gone somewhere else. But he went to the place where he frequented and Judas knew that he would go there. So he went to where Judas would obviously take the soldiers.

And when the soldiers came and Jesus said who do you seek? Who are you seeking? They said Jesus of Nazareth and he said I am he. Remember what happened?

They fell backward to the ground. At that moment Jesus could have walked away. That moment he was exercising his authority and power and he was showing I can walk away from all of you.

[26 : 24] You cannot lay one finger upon me unless I will it and my father wills it. And when they got up again he said I asked them the question again who do you seek?

And again said Jesus of Nazareth I am he. And he allowed himself to be taken. told Peter to put his sword away. Told them he could call on twelve legions of angels.

When he stood before Pilate and he wouldn't answer a word. Pilate said look I am judge. I have power to release you and I have power to put you to death.

And Jesus said to him you could have no power at all except it were given to you from above. In fact that shook Pilate. Pilate was wanting to release him.

Pilate is one of the saddest characters in the Bible. The man who knew what was right and wanted to do what was right but still did what was wrong. There are far too many people with regard to the challenge of the gospel who are like Pilate.

[27 : 31] They know what is right. They know what they should do but they don't do it. Anyway Jesus is showing all the time that he is in control.

All the time that he is the one who is laying down his life. And even on the cross we see Jesus at work saving one of those who had been executed making provision for his mother.

And when it comes to the end when he dismisses his spirit he does so with a cry of victory. and it was such that the centurion who had been watching everything was so marveled so much.

Yes the centurion was hearing and seeing everything that was taking place. The centurion who was used to seeing people being put to death had never seen what he saw that day.

There were things that happened that he had never seen before. And that's why at the end he said truly this was the son of God.

[28 : 37] The centurion was absolutely convinced there and then that Jesus was exactly who he said he was. And that was one of the amazing things because in death by crucifixion one of the things happened was you suffocated.

That was one of the awful things where the body sank and where the whole being was crushed and you would as it were because of the body sagging on the cross it would be impossible naturally humanly for a person in their last breath through crucifixion to cry out with a loud voice with a triumph of victory.

That would be humanly impossible. And yet that's what Jesus did declaring I have done it. It is finished. I have done everything that the father gave me to do.

And it's quite an amazing thing. And it was this love. It was this love that took him all the way to the cross. It was this love that held him on to the cross. His mockers and detractors were below the cross saying, come down, you come down from there and we'll believe in you.

And then there were some crying and saying, you know, he saved others. Himself he cannot save. They spoke the truth. If Jesus had saved himself, he wouldn't have saved you and me.

[30 : 17] He wouldn't have saved others. He had to give himself and that's exactly what he was doing all the time. And so Jesus is saying here, no one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

And I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it again. He had the power and the authority to take his life up again. And that's what he did. In fact, it would appear that the Trinity were involved in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus, remember, he said to the Pharisees on various occasions, destroy this temple, he says, and in three days I will raise it up.

In three days I will raise it up. We're told in Romans that Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. We're also told in Romans, but of the spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised Christ from the dead shall also raise your mortal bodies by his spirit.

So Father, Son, and Spirit were all involved in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And Jesus is here. We can see it's all really of love, and that's what love does.

[31 : 40] Love fulfills, love obeys. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down in my own accord, and I have authority to lay down, and I have authority to dig it up again. This charge, this commandment, I have received from my Father.

There was a determination in Christ all the time as he walked through this world. The shadow of Calvary hung over him. There was a tension in his life, there was a joy that was set before him, when he was seeing his blood bought ones coming home.

But there was a shadow of Calvary was always there. And that's why it tells us as he was making his way to Jerusalem, there's a description given to us in the Bible, he set his face like a flint.

In other words, there was just this absolute determination that he had to press on and do it. No, irrespective of how difficult and painful and traumatic and awful it was, nothing and nobody and not even the powers of hell were going to sidetrack him.

This is what he was going to do. And God willing, next Lord's Day morning, we will be celebrating and commemorating, remembering this supper, remembering this death and this resurrection until he come again.

[33 : 06] You know, Jesus is coming back. That's part of what the supper is doing, reminding us that it's looking back to what Jesus did and it's looking forward to his coming again. But remember this, if you're here tonight as a believer, everything that he did in this world, from his crying as a baby, every step that he took, because every day he was fulfilling the law and he did that for you.

Every step he took, he did for you. He was spat upon, spitting on him.

And he bore that for you. They hit him, violent hitting. He bore that for you. He was flogged, a Roman flogging, with that awful whip with bones and things that would push the body tied into the leather.

He did that for you. And he went on to the cross, bore the nails into his hands and feet, and he hung there, enduring the curse and the shame.

Can you imagine the shame? There was a fearful shame in crucifixion. Hanging there, being mocked and ridiculed.

[34 : 38] And the father pouring upon the son his wrath and anger. And he did that for you. And that is when Jesus says to us in the word, this do in remembrance of me.

He's not asking an awful lot of us when you think of all that he did for us. what about anybody in here tonight who doesn't yet know Jesus as Savior?

You know, it's an incredible thing to go on rejecting Jesus. You have to ask yourself the question, why? Why tonight, if you're still rejecting Jesus?

Ask yourself, why am I? Why am I holding him away? Why am I pushing him away? Why am I going to walk out of this church again tonight without asking him to be my Lord and my Savior?

Doesn't make sense. Well, remember that the Good Shepherd is tonight inviting you to come. Let us pray. O Lord, O gracious God, we pray that we may truly hear the voice of the Good Shepherd.

[36 : 03] We pray that souls will respond to the gospel call. We ask, O Lord, that thy spirit will minister amongst us. We pray that we may indeed have a sense of the wonder of all that the Shepherd has done for us.

Lord, bless and pity us, we pray. Take us all to our home safely. We pray to bless the Youth Fellowship tonight. And we pray that thy blessing upon all that is being done in the name of Jesus.

Go before us, we pray, forgiving us our sin. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. Amen.