

Our Good Shepherd

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Preacher: Mr Donald Matheson Macleod

[0 : 00] There's always time for a story, and this is a true story, because it's about me. Actually, it's not even a story, it's a bit of a secret. So boys and girls, and mums and dads, and those online, please keep my secret, okay?

It's a very big secret, it could get me on lots and lots of trouble back home. I don't really like sheep. At all. At all, at all.

Now that's okay. I've got a big problem. The rest of my family really, really like sheep. Quite a lot. Even bigger problem, my family knows when I'm home, and when I can help with a sheep.

So a few weeks ago, quite early in the morning, I was just waking up, planning out my breakfast, planning out my day, and the phone goes. It's a certain family member, and he phones asking for help to look for a sheep which has gone missing.

So I get dressed, and I go out, and I spend the whole morning looking for the sheep. Did I find it? Of course not. I go home and have lunch. I take a break.

[1 : 09] Watch some telly, have some lunch. I thought, I haven't found a sheep yet. I better go out again. So I go out again to look for the sheep yet again. Whole afternoon looking for the sheep. Still no sign. Go home again.

I'm getting bored at this point. My legs are tired. Getting a bit grumpy. I have my dinner. I thought it was getting late, but it's still bright outside. I haven't got an excuse. I have to go out again. So evening comes.

I go out again to find the sheep. I didn't find it. Now, the sheep, of course, at this point, had gone all the way around the village back home again, and I spent the whole day back in the croft where she came from in the first place.

But I was so bored of this sheep. I was so tired. I just gave up, went home, and that was it. In a wee second, we're going to read from John chapter 10. And in John chapter 10, we see Jesus calling himself the good shepherd, the perfect shepherd.

And unlike me, I am not a good shepherd. Jesus tells us that he promises to never, ever lose, to never, ever grow tired, to never leave behind any one of his precious sheep.

[2 : 20] This is good for us, but also good for mums and dads and granddads, that as you get older and go through life and go to school and go to Nicholson, perhaps, and then get a job or go and study and move away and start a new life, and as the whole world opens up, of course, you've gone back to school, haven't you?

School started again. So as you start this new year in school, there's big things. There's new things. Sometimes in life, there's also quite scary things happening, if we're honest. The promise is in the Bible that if we know Jesus, even as a young boy, a young girl, even to the oldest granny and granddad here, if we know Jesus, if we love Jesus, the Bible promises us, even in our chapter we have in a wee while, that he is the good shepherd.

He won't grow bored of you. He won't give up on you. He promises to keep looking after you. All the way through your life, even to the very, very end, he promises to keep looking after you.

Now that's a good shepherd. Unlike even the best crofter, not a rubbish crofter, but even the best crofters sometimes get annoyed at their sheep.

I have some nodding heads here. Even the best crofters love their sheep. Even the best crofters get very, very tired of their sheep. That's not the case of Jesus. He never gets tired of us.

[3 : 44] He always promises to love and to look after us. Even at times when we decide to leave the croft and go far away, if we love him, if we know him, he promises to come and to find us and to take us home again.

Boys and girls, you're listening so well. It's great. Let's now, hands and eyes closed, and join together in saying the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen. Amen. Let's now turn to God's Word and to the chapter we have in John chapter 10.

[4 : 49] John chapter 10. John 10 verses 1 down to verse 30 of the chapter.

Let's hear the Word of God. 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.

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 own sheep by name, and leads them out.

When he has brought out all 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 strangers.

This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So Jesus again said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

[6 : 05] All who came 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 out and find pasture.

The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. 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 leaves the sheep, and flees.

And the wolf snatches them, and scatters them. He flees, because he is a hired hand, and cares nothing for the sheep. 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, and 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.

[7 : 12] 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. There was again a division among the Jews because of his words.

Many of them said, he has a demon, and is insane. Why listen to him? Others said, these are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?

At that time, the feast of dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, how long will you keep us in suspense?

If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my father's name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you're not part of my flock.

[8 : 23] My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

My father who has given them to me is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the father's hand. I and the father are one. Amen.

We give praise to God for his holy and his perfect word. For a short time this morning, we can look at verses 11 down to verse 18 together, taking in really the whole chapter, but focusing mostly in verses 11 down to verse 18.

For the sake of a text, we could take verse 11 on its own. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Here, of course, we find Jesus in the middle of his discourse, and here we find him. I find two examples, really, in this chapter of Jesus describing himself using a certain pattern he's been using all the way throughout the Gospel of John.

[9 : 41] The I am sayings of Jesus. This is not new, I'm sure, to most of us, but just as a brief recap, in this chapter, we see him calling himself, he is the gate, I am the door, I am the gate, and we also see him calling himself as I am the good shepherd.

Of course, these descriptions, they are descriptive, but they're not merely descriptive. Jesus isn't just saying that he's like the thing. There's something more, of course, something more beautiful, something more glorious going on in the statement we have from Jesus.

As we approach the statement, I am the good shepherd, we have to, first of all, just very briefly note, in this statement, he is saying something much more glorious than just stating it, a simple fact, to those who are listening.

He is going right back to the start. As God appears to Moses in the burning bush, as God commissions Moses, as God sends Moses out to rescue his people.

Of course, Moses asks, well, who do I say sent me? What name do I give them? What do I describe you as? How do I put it? And God gives a beautiful, humbling, incredible answer.

[11 : 02] I am that I am. God. And the name that God uses for himself encapsulates the idea that he has nothing and no one beyond him.

He relies on nothing and no one else. That in and of himself, he is fully self-reliant, fully self-sufficient. That there is nothing beyond him. That he is God.

God. It's the ultimate expression of his full power, his full glory. And it's that title that Jesus uses in our text today.

I am the good shepherd. The same wording that we have in the Greek version of the Old Testament, Jesus uses the same wording here to describe himself.

Yes, he is the good shepherd, but also he is God, the good shepherd. He is the ultimate, the perfect good shepherd, the only one able to lead, protect, provide for, and sacrifice for his people.

[12 : 13] That's the one we are worshipping today. That's the one we're drawing together to come beside today. So with that in our minds, we can look at verse 11 down to verse 18, just under three very brief headings as we seek to answer the question, who is the good shepherd?

Or even, what is a good shepherd like? So first of all, roughly looking at verses 11 down to verse 13, we see the good shepherd sacrifices for the sheep.

11 down to 13. Then verse 14 to the first half of verse 15, the good shepherd knows his sheep. In the second half of verse 15 down roughly to verse 18, the good shepherd gathers his sheep.

So the good shepherd sacrifices for his sheep. The good shepherd knows his sheep. And the good shepherd gathers his sheep. So we begin looking at verses 11, roughly down to verse 13.

We begin this section with a wonderful, simple declaration that is our text this day. This simple title he gives himself, which is the root of all we're about to say.

[13 : 28] I am the good shepherd. In the previous verses, in verse 10, we see Jesus describing the thief, the one who comes to do what?

In verse 10, the thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. He comes to ruin, make a mockery of the gospel, to ruin the lives of believers, to seek to destroy the sheep, to remove their joy, to help them to stumble.

The thief has no care for the sheep. He might appear and appear as being good, but the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. Of course, taking in Satan, speaking here to the Pharisees, but really speaking, of course, about Satan himself.

In contrast to that verse, in contrast to the stealing and killing and destruction of the thief, Jesus sees himself as the good shepherd. Where the thief comes to steal, Jesus comes to give.

Where the thief only comes to kill, of course, Jesus comes to give life to his people. The thief comes to destroy and to tear down. Jesus comes to give new life and to build up his precious people.

[14 : 46] He is the good shepherd. Again, I've already risked myself being cast out of a congregation in the children's talk, but the truth is, I do have next to no knowledge about sheep or about being a crofter or about anything else.

I'm sure that's not the case. I know it's not the case for many here today. If I was to ask you just now to name the top three qualities a shepherd, a crofter, must have, even to name the very top quality a crofter must have to be called a good crofter, I wonder what answers we would get.

We should get a good variety of good answers, but I wonder if not one of us would answer the way Scripture answers for us in verse 11. What is the top quality here of the perfect shepherd?

Verse 11, the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He lays down his life for the sheep. Any good crofter, any good shepherd worth of salt, of course, would go very far for a sheep, would do all he can to give the sheep a good and a comfortable life, of course.

Many crofters go to great lengths to look after their sheep. It's funny, in the preparation for this, there's a loch close to my house of an island in the middle of the loch and I was going for a walk one morning and there's a sheep stuck on the island.

[16:20] This morning, quite early in the morning, there's this older gentleman, a crofter, in his waders and he's wading up to his chest out to the island to rescue his poor sheep which is stuck there.

A beautiful image of a crofter going so far to look after his sheep. If that's true for us, humanly, then how much more glorious is the reality we have here in verse 11.

The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. Now, we have to note here what the verse doesn't say. It doesn't say the good shepherd is willing to lay his life down. That itself is incredible. No, it says he lays down his life. It's definite. It was the eternal plan. The eternal plan of the Father, Son, Spirit.

In the courts of eternity, it was the plan that the Son would come to die for his people. He would come into this world, a world of his own creating.

[17:26] He would live and suffer and die at the hands of his own creatures. This was the eternal plan. He would come down into his own creation to live every day, every second of every day, knowing what he was heading towards, knowing and bearing the full weight of the reality of why he had come.

that is our good shepherd. He wasn't as willing to lay his life down. He did it. He lays his life down for his sheep.

He came knowing fine well we would hate him, fine well we would spend years rejecting him, years spitting on his face, years rebelling in every way possible yet in the courts of eternity he set his love on his people and he came to be their shepherd.

Our minds might go to the beautiful words of Romans chapter 5 and verses 6 to verse 8. For whilst we are still weak at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

For one will scarcely die for a righteous person though perhaps for a good person one would even dare to die. But God shows his love for us that whilst we are still sinners Christ died for us.

[19:02] How quickly they lose interest in that unruly sheep. And those sheep which just keep jumping a fence or just keep causing problems.

How quickly we all grow tired. Our good shepherd came knowing exactly who he was coming to. Knowing exactly the rebellion he would face and he would see and he would know in the lives of his people.

He came knowing he came to a people with no care for him. A people who if we're honest in our hearts have at least once happily crucified him in the days gone by before we were saved happily crucifying him in our hearts.

Dear brothers and dear sisters this is the state the good shepherd saw you in when he came to save you. He saw you outside the fold. He saw you wandering the moors lost, stuck in the heather, stuck in the bracken, confused, heading towards darkness.

He saw you there and it's there he set his love on you. It's there he chose to come to save you. The Christians this should just bring us such joy.

[20:20] It should rejuvenate us in our souls as we're reminded as to the level of love and of care the good shepherd has for his precious flock in verse 11. He lays down his life for his sheep.

In verse 11 and verse 12 and down to verse 12 he then contrasts the good shepherd who lays his life down comparing that to the hired hands those who are hired for a feed who look after the sheep but who aren't shepherds, who don't own the sheep.

Who don't care for the sheep. Those who might even call themselves shepherds but in their actions have no care. In their actions display they have no love for the sheep.

Who will do nothing to ultimately save the sheep. Who have no power to save the sheep. We see that at the end of verse 12. When a wolf comes, when danger comes, when reality comes, the hired hand has no power to save the sheep.

Here we have the solemn there are many in our world who claim to have our best interests at heart. There are many who claim to be saviors. There are many who do so meanfully, many who do so

quite happily, many who do so out of love and who are doing so without any ill intent but who will not save us.

[21 : 51] And the truth we have here, as long as we put our trust in the hired hands of the world, as long as we trust those who look good and who sound good but who actually cannot save us.

The reality is when danger comes, when a wolf comes, as it were, we are destroyed. I know perhaps a handful of faces here today, so I don't know where you stand before the Lord.

But the truth is, if this morning you're not trusting in the good shepherd and him alone to look after you this day, if you are not loving the good shepherd and him alone as your only source of protection and of help, then you're still here.

Unfortunately, the truth must be said in verse 12. You are putting your life in the hands of ones who have no care for you. When danger comes and when death comes, you will be destroyed.

It's only under the protection of the good shepherd can we know for certain that we are safe. Don't trust anyone this morning who promises to have your eternal soul, your eternal life, who promises to be able to look after it for you, who promises they cannot even begin to accomplish no, only trust the good shepherd.

[23 : 21] Only he can save us. Christ. Christ alone that owns his sheep. Christ alone who loves his sheep with a selfless love to the grave but also beyond the grave.

So the good shepherd sacrifices for his sheep. Then we see verse 14 down to the first half of verse 15. the good shepherd knows his sheep.

The good shepherd who is willing to sacrifice himself for his beloved sheep. Unlike the hired hands, unlike the false prophets, unlike those who promise much but who deliver nothing, he actually knows his sheep.

If you look with me down to verse 14 please. Verse 14. Verse 14. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.

It's always fascinating just how well crofters tend to know their sheep. Even myself with my admitted lack of ability, even I can guess some of the village colours of the sheep.

[24 : 40] But the ones who actually own the sheep, how they know the personalities of even individual sheep. A few weeks ago I was walking and talking with someone who was pointing at her sheep in the fence and said watch that one, she'll jump in a second.

Sure enough, she jumps the fence and she jumps over again. He knew her personality, he knew what she was like, he just knew that moment. The good shepherd knows his sheep.

The good shepherd knows us as individuals. The good shepherd knows us on a level we can't even begin to comprehend or understand. The shepherd of our souls, he knows his flock.

That's a comfort to us as Christians. Dear brother, dear sister, he knows you and he knows me this day. He knows all about us, he knows exactly where we are in life, he knows exactly our situation in life, he knows exactly what we're facing this day, this week.

The good shepherd knows his sheep. Just as we saw in his sacrificing for his sheep in verse 11, the wording of verse 14 is also something certain, it's not vague.

[25 : 57] I am the good shepherd, I know my own. It's clear, it's certain, he knows his own. If that applies humanly for us with the crofter on the moor, how much more glorious is the knowledge of the good shepherd for his beloved people.

Dear brother, dear sister in Christ, those here who know and who love Jesus, you're this very moment before the one who knows you, who has set his love on you, who has called himself your good shepherd.

This is not just a pep talk to get us through the week, this is God's living word coming from us, coming to us just now from him. There's no time today that we could turn to Ephesians 1, chapter 1 and chapter 2.

Ephesians 1 and Ephesians 2, we could read the chapters and again, if you have time this day, I encourage you to do so. Read Ephesians chapter 1 and chapter 2 and look at the level of love and care the good shepherd has for his people.

The good shepherd doesn't just know you now. He has known you from before time, from before creation itself. Ephesians 1 tells us that. His love was set on you even before time itself.

[27 : 24] His love was set on you. You were in the plan that one day he would come, he would live, he would die, he would rise again so that you would be saved, dear Christian.

That's a glorious good news of a shepherd. That's how well he knows you. He has known you from before time itself. So don't think for a second that you can hide your face from him.

Don't think of a second that you have to hide your face from him this week. You feel perhaps you've drifted, you feel far away from him, whatever reason you have. He has known you from before time itself.

He knows everything about you. You have no reason to hide. Go to him. Go to the good shepherd, the shepherd of your soul. Now, the other reality of this is, the comfort it gives us, that since there is no point the shepherd did not know us, also extends to the future.

There's no point where the good shepherd will one day forget us. there's no way one day we'll be somehow forgotten about or lost. We see that in verse 28.

[28 : 41] I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand. That is our hope and our promise from now to the future.

We've been known before time and will be kept and known for all time. That's a great promise for us as his. people. Christian, the shepherd of your souls has not forgotten you.

Perhaps in your wonderings, I don't know your situation, perhaps in your wonderings, perhaps this past year, it's been a tough year this past week, perhaps in your infirmity, perhaps even in your age, you're feeling and finding and thinking somewhere in the back of your mind, perhaps he's done with me, perhaps he's finally decided to let me go, perhaps I've now wandered too far away he's been good to me all these years but perhaps now I've gone too far, perhaps now I'm just too old or whatever else comes to your mind.

We're reminded in these verses that that is not the case. I know my own. That's a definitive word, it's all encompassing, it is clear.

shepherd of your souls, he's not distant, he's not aloof, he's not far away and somehow uncaring, he knows you, dear brother and dear sister, he knows you intimately, he knows all about you, he has set his love on you, he is close to his own.

[30 : 20] He leads us by name. And to leave us as aware and no doubt as to the extent of the knowledge of the good shepherd for his people, we see this curious expression in verse 15, verse 15, just as the father knows me and I know the father.

Here's where our verses and our human made verses somehow distract as we read verse 14 and verse 15 together. In the Greek of course it reads as one sentence here.

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. How much does a good shepherd know you?

How well does a good shepherd know you, dear brother, dear sister? He knows you as he knows the father. You think, well, what does that even begin to mean and we can't touch it more than that. The father knows the son eternally. The son knows the father eternally. The good shepherd has a knowledge of you that is eternal.

[31 : 27] He knows everything about you. He sees it all. Dear Christian, he sees the sin, he sees the darkness, he sees the worry, he sees the panic, he sees the anxiety, he sees it all and yet he calls you his precious sheep.

He calls himself still your good shepherd because he has paid for you. He has bought you his precious blood. He has bought you and he will not let you go.

He saw you wandering the moors as it were long before you saw him. You were out there confused, getting yourself tangled in all messes of the world. Darkness and in daytime, just wandering around and thinking, what's the point in life?

Why am I here? And there are some here perhaps at this moment who are thinking that very same thing. What's the point of any of it? He saw you there wandering, aimless, clueless.

He set his love on you to come to purchase you with a precious, precious price of his blood. That is our good shepherd.

[32 : 42] he knows you. He calls you by name. This is the level to which our good shepherd knows and cares for us.

It's a level that's beyond our understanding if we're honest. We begin very quickly to run out of words to describe it. This is here to give us encouragement, to give us hope.

The good shepherd that he knows us, he has bought us. we can take him at his word. This very morning we can be in awe of the love and the knowledge of our good shepherd for his people.

It brings his family down, second half of verse 15 down to the end of verse 18. The good shepherd gathers his sheep. He sacrifices for them, he knows them, and the good shepherd gathers his sheep.

Of course here Jesus is speaking to a Jewish audience, speaking to those who are a majority Jewish. So dear brothers and dear sisters, when Jesus, when our good shepherd here talks about the other sheep that are still without the fold, the other sheep he's still to gather in in verse 16.

[33 : 59] Verse 16, I have other sheep that are not of this fold, I must bring them also. When Jesus speaks about these other sheep, he is speaking about you and about I this very morning.

In this small island, a few thousand miles away, a few thousand years later, we are here as the living, walking, talking, breathing evidence of our Savior fulfilling his promise here.

He would gather in his sheep. We're so used to it all, but think about it properly, we're here on this tiny island, so far away from where Jesus first said these words.

A different culture, a different color, a different time, a different era, and yet we are the living evidence that his promises are true. We are part of the other sheep, the Gentiles.

Of course, the thinking of the day and the culture, it wasn't biblical, but it was taught as biblical. The Jewish culture at the time thought that when the Messiah came, when the Messiah came, he would make Israel great, destroy all the other nations, and that the Messiah would come and that would be it.

[35 : 15] Israel would rule forever, destroy the enemies, everything's going well. And of course, that was not what was predicted, that was not the prophecy, that was not what God had said all the way throughout the Old Testament.

Again and again, God was clear, from the very start, God was clear, that he would have the Gentiles too. The Saviour would come and the Saviour would come and would have the Gentiles too.

Those who were not Jews would be grafted in, that we would be included into the great promise of God, a promise made at the start, a promise made to Abraham of the stars in the sky and the sand of the sea, that his descendants would be as numerous as them, a promise all the way through the prophets, all the way through the Psalms, that God would bring a people together.

He has done so. We are the living evidence of God keeping and God fulfilling his promises, a promise we see here in this verse. This verse is not just as if that were not enough, not just a reminder of God keeping, of our Saviour keeping his promises, but there's more than that.

In this verse we also have a great encouragement, a great hope given to us, for the good shepherd still has sheep yet to collect. I have other sheep that are not of this fold.

[36 : 42] I must bring them also. And we ask, how do we know there's still more sheep to collect? How do we know the good shepherd is still adding to his flock? Well we know because we're still here gathering together on his day.

Once that final sheep is brought in, that is the end. But we're still here. We're still worshipping him until he comes again. And until he comes again, he is still gathering together his sheep.

He is still building his flock. He is still going out into the moors as it were to take in those who without him are lost and are dying but who with him are given eternal life.

That is our hope this morning. Christians, that is our hope. As we pray for those who we love, as we pray longingly for those who as of yet have no gospel interest, we have a great hope, a great promise.

The good shepherd still has other sheep. And just as definite as his sacrifice, just as definite as his knowing, here we see his gathering is also just as definite.

[37 : 44] Second half of verse 16, I must bring them also. Jesus did not just call out and have his voices that were carried away by the wind.

No, when a good shepherd calls for his sheep, they listen and they come. That is hope for us as Christians. If we're very honest, as we find ourselves failing and making a mess of our lives and making a mess of our witness, perhaps even this week, if not this week, certainly this month, I'm sure we can all agree that the Lord has given us chances to share the good news, given us chances for our friends, for our families to share the gospel.

We've either just not taken the chance at all, ignored the chance, or in our own minds perhaps made a mess of it. Here we have a wonderful reminder. It's Jesus who does the work.

Yes, he makes use of us. Yes, we are called to serve him. Yes, we must, as his people, share the good news. At the end of the day, we must point them to Jesus. We save nobody.

We point them to the one who can and who's willing and who's able to save them. The shepherd calls with full confidence that his sheep will hear.

[39 : 02] We feebly share the gospel. And I assure you, standing up here, I feel as feebly as everyone else, as we feebly seek to share the gospel, as we feel ourselves failing day in, day out doing that, we trust in the truth of his word.

The good shepherd is the one who gathers his sheep and he makes use of us to do that. To his glory, he uses us as his witnesses. That's an incursion for us.

Keep witnessing in your family, in your places of work, wherever you find yourself. As you find yourself perhaps discouraged, as you find yourself perhaps wondering, will that person ever actually hear the gospel?

Keep sharing it. The good shepherd is still gathering his sheep together. It's his work we're doing. It's also good news for those here, perhaps those online, who as of yet have not responded to this call.

Again, I don't know where you stand. Perhaps you've come to this building for years. Perhaps you've come to this building all your life and we praise God for that. We thank God that you're here and we love that you're here and we love you.

[40 : 09] You've heard the gospel again and again. You've heard perhaps countless ministers up here. And you're hearing the same thing again and again and again.

The truth is you are hearing even this very moment from his word. You are hearing the call of the good shepherd. As you sit here trying to think of reasons why you cannot yet come, think of excuses as to why you as of yet do not believe.

All around you is sounding the voice of the good shepherd as he is telling you to come. Other words of Donald from Graver. My words, take them or leave them.

But do not take or leave the holy word of the living God who is speaking to you right now through his word as he instructs you to come. As he tells you he has made provision for you to come.

Are you too old? Too young perhaps? Perhaps you haven't read enough scripture. Perhaps your knowledge of theology isn't good enough. Whatever other excuse you've been using all these years and you know more than I do is just an excuse the good shepherd calls to you today.

[41 : 21] He calls through his word. As he reminds us here that he is calling out to his people. As he promises as we sang at the start to lead us by these cool clear streams.

As he leads us to a place of life, eternal life. Please stop ignoring the call. I say this carefully but perhaps we become too comfortable, too comfortable in procedure, too comfortable in our pews as it were.

We forget that this is not just something we do to take off a list. This is life and death. This is real. This is the voice of the living shepherd calling out today.

And to quote Reverend Campbell as he touched on this verse, Murdo Campbell and Barvis, he quite simply at this point declared that this is the voice of the crofter as it were, calling out to his sheep on the moor, throw a jahy.

That is a call today, throw a jahy, come home. Come to the shepherd who has bought his people. Stop wandering in the moor aimlessly, finding no help, no support, no place or shelter.

[42 : 29] Come to the one who has purchased it all for you. With his precious blood he has bought his beloved sheep. Come and join. Come and join. Come and join. Just as sure as he calls, so is the nature of response to the call.

In the end of verse 16, of whole verse 16, I have other sheep that are not of his fold, I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.

They will hear the voice of the good shepherd. That is certain. Again, Christian, for all our worry and all our pain and all our crying out for those who as of yet we love and as of yet are not saved, that is a reminder for us.

The good shepherd's work is effectual. It is perfect. When he calls, he calls. His people will respond. They will be saved. What is the grand plan at the end?

Why does the shepherd come? Why does the shepherd gather? Why does the shepherd call out? So that we see at the end of verse 16, so there will be one flock, one shepherd.

[43 : 51] Dear friends, that is why he has come. He has come, why? To have a people for his own possession. He has come so that he would have his own people. He has come to gather together his people.

He has come to buy us with a precious, precious price. He has come to buy us and never to lose us. He has come to buy us, to make us part of his flock, to lead us by that stream of water, to give us eternal life, to give us that assurance that we are kept never to fall, never to be left behind, never to be snatched out of the hand of the father.

That is the good news of our good shepherd, even this day, even this morning. That's our encouragement as we begin this new week, that we have a good shepherd who has been willing, who has come, who has given his life.

who rose again. A good shepherd who is also the high and exalted king of the right hand of the father, this very moment, reigning in glory, with all power, with all authority.

He comes back one day, yes, he comes back as a conquering king, to destroy his enemies. But he also comes back as a good shepherd, to gather together his people, to take us home, to be with himself for all time.

[45 : 13] come and know the good shepherd. Let's bow our heads now, word of prayer. Lord God, we do ask again that you would bless us through your word.

Thank you, it's your word that has the power. Forgive anything that was said, not in accordance to your word. Lord, we know it's you and your living word, not the jar of clay.

Lord, who stands here, who would transform anyone. Lord, we do ask even this day for those here who as of yet do not know you, that your word would transform them today. Your word would give them life.

They would come to know even this day the saviour, the one who has done all, so they would be saved. They would come to know and to be led by the good shepherd, come and to relax and to find constant assurance, to find their love and to find their hope, to find certainty of eternal life, walking alongside him as he leads them into the fold and pass the river of life that he has secured for them.

Lord, help us as your people here, those of us who know and who love you, Lord, to be comforted as we are reminded from your word today that we worship you, the one who has given us your son, the good shepherd, the one who promises never to leave nor to forsake us, the one who promises to lead his flock even to the very end and then for all time after that.

[46 : 36] help us as we come to sing our final item of praise, to do so with joy in our hearts as we praise you, as we sing the words of redemption, the words of promise to all who cry out to you.

Let's go all these things in and through and for Christ's precious name's sake. Amen. We can sing verses, Psalter, Psalter, Psalm 40, Psalter, Psalter, Psalm 40 and verses 1 down to verse 4, of course, again the psalm, the psalm which the Christians here, those of us who know Jesus, we sing these words with that reminder that this is where we once were, through the grace and the love of God, we now sing the verses 3 and verse 4.

Let's join together and sing to God's praise.

I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear He took me from my fearful pit He took me from my fearful pit and from the mighty clay and on a rock He set my feet establishing my way

He put a new song in my mouth O God to magnify O blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord relies Respecting not the proud nor such

[49 : 53] As turn aside to lies Just a reminder to please remain in your seats and the office banners will guide you out and follow the usual procedures Let's close in a word of prayer Let's pray Lord God go before us the rest of this day We thank you for the time we've had under your word Lord bless your servants in this congregation Lord bless your servant over them Bless him this evening as he seeks to again leave them in your word Lord help each one of us this day to have hearts and minds resting on you and resting in the finished work of our Saviour It's to him we cling It's to him we call It's to him we seek to live our lives Ask all these things in and through and for his precious name's sake Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen

Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen