

Jesus - The Good Shepherd

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[0 : 0 0] again at 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 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, and so on, down as far as verse 16 in particular, but looking at a few other verses related to that near the beginning of the chapter as well. Now, this morning we looked at a passage in John 6, Jesus as the bread of life, and we did that with the intention of it being a preparatory of our minds, a preparation for the Lord's Supper, which we anticipate next Lord's day, God willing.

We saw something of a connection there between what Jesus says as himself, the bread of life, I am the bread of life, and our eating of him and drinking of his blood, and we saw how that means participation in Jesus and the life that is in Jesus, so that we come to have eternal life ourselves through that. And here in John chapter 10, he's speaking very similarly, another of these I am's, where he says, I am the good shepherd and who lays down his life for the sheep. And that's a very obvious connection with the Lord's Supper because that's what is remembered and commemorated in the Lord's Supper, the death that Jesus died, the laying down of his life for the sheep.

I want you to try and picture a scene with me for a few moments. A young boy looking out through a fence near a cliff top on a croft in one of our villages, and just in the distance, not too far away, he sees a crofter inching his way along towards the cliff edge, and then going out, making his way out onto a very narrow outcrop from the cliff which jutted out into the sea. And there's a lamb trapped on that outcrop. It's made its way out, but it can't get back. And its mother can't get out to lead it back.

So the crofter makes his way out. And the little boy looking onwards, looking on at what's happening, is really filled with fear, wondering if this crofter is going to manage to get to that lamb, afraid that he's going to see him falling down to his death into the sea.

And the crofter reaches the lamb, puts out a big hand, takes hold of it, clasps it with one hand to his chest, and very slowly makes his way back again towards the safety of the cliff top. And what a sense of relief when the crofter and the lamb are safely back, out of danger. Well, I saw that for myself as a little boy, as a young boy, in a croft and tongue.

[3 : 1 6] Jesus is the contrast to that in some ways. Jesus, as he came into this world to save us from our sins, he reached out to take us, take his people as lost lambs, but not by preserving his own life.

He actually gave his life for them. And it's through the giving of his life that they came to be saved. So here, in this chapter, in this passage, we find, first of all, the shepherd's love for his sheep.

And secondly, we'll look at the shepherd's gathering of his sheep. The shepherd's love for his sheep. How is the shepherd's love for his sheep shown? How does that show through in what Jesus says about himself as the good shepherd?

Well, he says, I am the good shepherd, verse 11. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He shows his love for the sheep because he died for them. That's what we commemorate in the Lord's Supper.

That's what marks him out as the good shepherd. It's the ultimate in love. The love that surpasses all other love. The love that goes so far as to die for his people, to die for his sheep.

[4 : 40] That's the contrast he's making. We saw this morning the contrast between ordinary bread and the bread of life that Jesus says he is. And now that works its way through chapter 6. Well, here, there's a contrast, too, between those who are hireling shepherds, who aren't really, who don't possess or don't own the flock themselves.

They are hired for some reason. The shepherd himself maybe was away somewhere. Perhaps he was ill or whatever. But sometimes shepherds would actually hire someone just to look after the flock temporarily. And what Jesus is saying, knowing this for himself and probably having seen something like that while he was in this world, he says that the wolf comes, the animal that's going to attack and wants to ravage the flock.

And the hireling sees the wolf coming. And what does he do? He says, I'm not staying here. This is not for me. This is not my flock. They don't belong to me. I'm not going to put myself in any further danger for them.

I'm out of here. He does so, says Jesus, because he's a hired hand and not a shepherd who does not own the sheep. But I am the good shepherd.

And I know my own and my own know me. I lay down my life for the sheep. You see, when Jesus came to rescue the lost sheep that we all are, he came into this world knowing that he needed to die for them.

[6 : 09] He came into this world willing to die the death of the cross for them. And that's the contrast with every other shepherd that he's speaking of here. The hireling flees. Flees. He leaves the flock.

But when Jesus is confronted with the reality of death, he actually goes through with it. He takes it on and he accomplishes it. You think of a shepherd or a hireling shepherd or a shepherd facing the prospect of a wolf coming to attack the flock and putting his own life in danger.

It's no small thing. But the wolf that Jesus faced, as you all very well know, was nothing less than hell and damnation.

The death that you and I deserve to die is the death he came to die and the death he died. That's really what is at the heart of that great cry from the cross, my God, my God, my God.

Why have you forsaken me? We mentioned this morning to the children that death is really essentially separation. That when we died in Adam, we were separated from God. That's the essence of death.

[7 : 19] That's the core of death. Separation from God. And our separation from God continues unless someone comes to save us.

And the one who came to save us is the good shepherd. And how did he come to save us? By dying the death that we had brought upon ourselves. By dying the death of hell. By dying the death of damnation.

By taking the wrath of God to himself. That's the penalty. That's the death that we owed God. We were in debt to him and could never pay it back.

That's why he came. I have come. That they might have life. And have it more abundantly. When he faced, from the very time that he came into this world, the mouth of hell was open.

To attack and to receive the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the nature of the death.

[8 : 26] That he came to die and that he died. And please remember that that's what we are remembering in the Lord's Supper. We remember far more than the fact that his body and his soul were separated.

That's an aspect of death. But we remember far more than that. Because our own death is more than the separation of our soul from our bodies. It is our separation from God.

It is our alienation from God. And that's what Jesus came to fix. To put right for us. Our relationship with God.

And he did it by coming to die. The death of the cross. Psalm 22. Which we almost invariably sing.

At communion times particularly. Though other times too, of course. But you recall how that psalm so graphically sets out. The sufferings of the Lord. And how he quoted from this psalm.

[9 : 27] On the cross. My God, my God. Why have you forsaken me? And then you go through to verses 12 to 15. There are many bulls encompass me.

Strong bulls of patience around me. The imagery of the most powerful bulls. The most powerful animals of the time. Coming with their horns to gore.

Gore. Those that they needed to get rid of. They opened their mouths. Wide at me like a ravening. Roaring lion.

I am poured out like water. All my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax. It is melted in my breast. My strength is dried up like a pot shirt.

And my tongue sticks to my jaws. You lay me in the dust of death. It is a prophecy of the Lord on the cross.

[10 : 21] The Lord facing death. The Lord experiencing the death of the cross. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life. He showed his love for his people.

He loved them by dying for them. He loved them secondly in the way that he knows them. And he loves them in the way that he knows them. You see what he says here is how the shepherd recognizes the sheep.

And the sheep recognize him. It is a very simple imagery. But it is very profound. And it is very precious when you come to see that this is an imagery of the relationship between Jesus and his people.

Very often in those days when the sheep needed to be kept safely at night. Very often shepherds would share one common fold. In which their sheep would be penned for the night.

And they would put a gatekeeper there just to keep the main, the one gate into the fold. Usually stone walls. And that would be their security for the night. And then in the morning the shepherds would come.

[11 : 23] And would come to the fold where all the sheep were gathered together and mixed together. But you see the shepherd came in such a way as knew his own sheep. And actually his sheep knew his voice.

That's what you find at the beginning of the chapter there. When he has brought out his own, he comes to them. He leads them out. He calls his own sheep by name. And they follow him. They won't follow a stranger.

But they follow their own shepherd. And the shepherd knows the marks of the sheep. He knows each and every one of them individuals. It's a remarkable thing that for most of us sheep just all look the same.

Especially when they're the same breed. Same kind of colorings. Same markings. But the shepherd can actually distinguish each one of these. He can tell them one from the other. And in fact you get this with Stockman elsewhere.

When I worked on a farm at one time. I was quite amazed really when coming to help out with the milking. And as you know cows coming into a parlor for milking.

[12 : 25] All you can see coming towards you when you're down in the parlor. Is their head coming in through the narrow passage. And taking up their place in the stall. And so often the herdsman, the dairyman would see the cow coming in.

And look at his face and say, ah there's old Mildred. Or there's old Jane coming in on the other side. He wouldn't know them by name. He had given them these names. They had these characteristics. And for most of us, it just looked, they looked all the same.

Cows look the same. Especially when they're Frisian. They have all these markings. And how can you tell them apart? Well he could. He had them all named out. And that's how it is with the shepherd. He knows his own sheep.

He knows their distinguishing marks. He knows their identity. What a precious truth that is. For those who know the Lord as their shepherd. That he is able actually to look at each and every one of them.

And see them singly and individually. Is there anything more precious to yourself tonight than that Jesus in looking after your life knows every detail of your character, of your makeup, of your thoughts, of your predilections, of your preferences, of your mistakes, of your failure.

[13 : 34] Every single thing that marks you as one of his sheep, he knows. And he deals with you accordingly. And he ministers to you accordingly. And you see these words are here connected very specifically with laid down his life.

Where he says that he knows his sheep. He knows them there. Verses 14 and 15. I am the good shepherd. I know my own. And my own know me.

Just as the Father knows me. And I lay down my life for the sheep. What he's saying is I know them. And I lay down my life for them. In other words, when Jesus died for every one of you in here this evening.

For whom he died. He died knowing that you were one for whom he died. He didn't come to death. And just look at those that he was going to die for as a generality without distinguishing marks.

Jesus knows every single individual personally. And all their characteristics. Tonight when you trust us in him.

[14 : 39] And you know that you've been saved by him. You can say assuredly from God's own word. That when Jesus came to die. He came to die for you. Knowing you.

Knowing about you. Knowing your needs. Before you ever existed. The Son of God. And the knowledge that he has of his flock. What a precious truth that is as well.

You see verse 3 there. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice. And he calls his own sheep by name. And leads them out. You see it's not just Jesus in his death on the cross.

Knowing his sheep by name. Knowing them personally. Isn't that what he's doing every day with you? Isn't he leading you out? Leading you on? Directing your life?

Doesn't he assure you that whatever things may be in your life tomorrow compared to today. However different they are to what you are today or yesterday. He's going to keep up with that.

[15 : 39] He knows that already. It's all written up. It's in his book. He knows it before it happens. Psalm 139 has that wonderful passage in David's own praise to God and his wonder at God's knowledge of him.

And how he comes to see that as so precious. To begin with that Psalm really David is overwhelmed by the knowledge that God has of him.

It's something that really as it were presses him in. It's on all sides of him whichever way he turns. God is looking in on him. He's looking in on his thoughts. On his motives. On his mind.

Everything that he is. God knows. And God sees into it. He says it doesn't matter where I would go. I would go to the other side of the world.

To the further part of the sea. Even there. That's you're there. I'll meet with you there. You're there also. If I said darkness will cover me. It doesn't matter that darkness is like light. Like daytime to you Lord.

[16 : 43] And then he comes to say for you formed my inward parts. You knitted me together in my mother's womb. What an awful thing it is.

As we find so sadly in our day. What an awful thing it is to attack the child in the womb. To put to death.

What has been formed. By God. I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works.

My soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you. When I was being made in secret. Intricately woven. In the depths of the earth. By that he means his development.

In the womb. Your eyes saw my unformed substance. In your book were written. Every one of them. The days that were formed for me. When as yet there were none of them.

[17 : 45] What is he saying? He is saying. The whole of my life. Was in your record. Lord. In your mind. In your knowledge. Before I ever existed myself.

Actually. You knew all about me. And what does he conclude from that? How precious to me. Are your thoughts. Oh Lord.

How vast. Is the sum of them. You come tonight. To prepare. To take communion. That's what you're saying to the Lord.

Lord. How precious to me. Are your thoughts of me. Your remembrance of me. Your knowledge of me. The detail that you know. Of my life. How precious.

That is to me. Where would I be without that? And that's what you find. Elsewhere in the Bible. Such as Job. For example. In chapter 23. So he.

[18 : 40] Showed his love. And he died for them. The love of Christ. Is shown. In that he knows his people. But then. Correspondingly. They know him as well. I am the good shepherd.

I know my own. And my own. Know me. That's going back to the beginning. Of the chapter again. When the door is open in the morning. The sheep hear. The shepherd's voice.

They know the shepherd's voice. So they follow him. And each shepherd who comes. For all the flocks. Mixed there. Each shepherd called his own sheep. And each of the. All of the sheep. Follow their own shepherd.

They don't go after another voice. They know the shepherd. That looks after themselves. Again. Going back to. Crofting. And to. Having some sheep.

I remember one time. A sheep. Longing to a crofter. That developed a disease. That left it blind. Everything else about the sheep. Was fine. In fact. That sheep had some lambs.

[19 : 37] But by this disease. It actually developed blindness. Both its eyes. Couldn't see. And what was really interesting. Was seeing. The reaction of that sheep.

The reaction of that sheep. To. The way that. The crofter would come. And call it out. Wouldn't move. Until the crofter's voice was heard.

When the crofter came. To feed it. Which was mostly everyday. That sheep. Would respond. Immediately. To the voice. Of the crofter. And would come to. Follow the crofter.

Knowing. That that crofter. Had food. That that voice. Could be trusted. That that voice. Was something that. Provided for it. In the past. I remember one day. Well I'll try that. I'll see if it'll follow me.

So I tried. And I called it. No response. Didn't know my voice. Yet as soon as the crofter came. That owned the sheep.

[20 : 33] That cared for the sheep. That fed the sheep. As soon as that voice was heard. The sheep responded. And followed it. Even though it couldn't see. Physically. It knew the voice.

Yes. And so it is. With the Lord. The voice. Of the Lord. Is known. By his people. And they follow him. And you follow that voice.

Because you know it. You know it. Through the scriptures. You know it. Through the work of the spirit. In your heart. You've heard the voice. Of Jesus saying. To follow him. And you've responded. And you know that voice.

And you're looking for that voice. Every day. And as you come. To prepare for the Lord's supper. You're thankful. That he's not given you. His word. His word only. Oh that of course. Is so precious.

He's given you the ordinance. Of the sacrament as well. So that you can hear his voice. Through that. That you can hear him saying to you. Look what you're seeing. On the table. On the Lord's table. Look at that bread. And look at that cup.

[21 : 29] And take these things. What do they represent? What do they seal to you? They seal my love to you. You know my voice. Through them. Isn't that so precious as well? Well. And if you're not.

If you've not yet been there. When really that's where you should be. Because you know the shepherd. And the shepherd knows you. And you know his love. And you know his voice. Well.

That table is for you. That sacrament is for you. That communion is for you. It's only going to enrich your life. And that's why he's given it to us.

So that we'll find. And speaking to us through it. You know that shepherd. Tonight. Is there someone here.

Anyone here. Who doesn't yet know that shepherd. Personally. You may be here. And you really desperately want to know him. But you don't know yet. If you've come to that point.

[22 : 27] Well. Here's his voice. Speaking to you. Through the scriptures tonight. What else do you need. But himself. Everything you need. Is in him. When you come to him. When you commit your life to him.

And he becomes your shepherd. You have security. You've got everything you need. In himself. And you know the shepherd. All of you are the Lord's people.

There's a. Story or an incident. It's got different versions of it. But. The version that I know of. Is that. Is that. A famous actor. Was at one time.

Giving an audience. A performance. Of him. Reading out various texts. Plays and so on. And he was asked. Could he possibly read. Psalm 23. The 23rd Psalm. And the actor.

This famous actor. A well-known actor. Of course. He was skilled. He was skilled. And reading. And delivering. And delivering. From what he was reading. And his voice. With all the. Various emphasis.

[23 : 24] So he read. Psalm 23. And as he read. Psalm 23. And all. The people were listening. When he finished it. The whole audience. And began to applaud. And he said.

But wait a minute. There's one person here. That I'm going to call up. And I'm going to ask him. To read. This Psalm as well. And he called this man. Who was sitting. Near the front. Of the audience.

Very nervously. He got up. And he began to read. Psalm 23. When he finished. The audience was still. In fact. Some of them. Were actually. Beginning to show signs.

Of weeping. Very emotionally moved. Didn't applaud. Just silence. And somebody asked. This actor. Why the difference?

Why didn't they applaud. When this man. Finished reading. When they had applauded you. Well he said. It's like this. I know the Psalm. I know Psalm 23.

[24 : 23] But this man. Knows the shepherd. I know the Lord. Is my shepherd. I know it off by heart. He said. I can read it. I can recite it. This man.

Knows the shepherd himself. That's what makes. The difference. Do you know that shepherd? Do you know the psalm? You sang it many times. Do you know the one of whom.

You're singing? Is he your shepherd? Is he looking after your life? Have you given yourself to. His care?

The shepherd's love for his sheep. In that he died for them. In that he knows them. And they know him. But very briefly. Secondly.

The shepherd's gathering of the sheep. Look at verse 16 there. He says. 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.

[25 : 22] And one shepherd. He's talking about those. Outside. Outside. Probably meaning at that time. The Gentile world. Outside of the people of Israel. Or the Jews. Who would through the gospel.

In the time of the apostles. Begin to be gathered into the church. Because God is only one church. Not the church of the Gentiles. And the church of the Jews. It's one church.

As Paul in Ephesians 2. Makes very clear. And Jesus is saying. I have other sheep. That are not of this fold. Them also I must bring. And that word must is important.

It's a word that's loaded with energy. I must bring them as well. That's what he came into the world to do. To actually save his sheep. To save his flock. From whatever quarter of the world.

Wherever they exist. He's come to bring them into his flock. And if we had time. We could go into how that urgency. That must. That eagerness of his love.

[26 : 18] To gather in his sheep. It should actually be. Reflected in our own eagerness. In serving him. In seeking to have others come. To be part of the flock of Jesus as well.

And in our evangelism. In our outreach. In our witness. We should seek to emulate. This example of Jesus himself. We can't sit idly by. While people are perishing in their sins.

We have to look at the urgency. With what Jesus says. I must bring them. He is saying that as the saviour. We're not saviours of people. But we are disciples of Jesus.

And when he's saying here. I must bring them also. Let that drench your own mind. And my own mind. And your own soul. And my own soul tonight. And let it actually be for us.

A spur towards engaging. In the work of the gospel. So that people will come into the flock. And become part of the flock of Christ.

[27 : 18] Will come to know him. As their shepherd as well. Notice what he's saying. There will be one flock. And one shepherd. And what a great day it will be.

When there will be no denominations. No denominational distinctives precious. Though some of them undoubtedly are. Because the flock of Jesus.

Crosses the boundaries of denominations. And his sheep are found. In every denomination I'm sure. Wherever we come across them. We have to love them.

And treat them as his. Because he is their shepherd. And he died for them too. But. And not only does he bring them in. But he is ultimately going to bring them home.

So there will be one flock. And one shepherd. And of course that's anticipating. How God will. How Jesus finally will take all of his sheep.

[28 : 16] All of his people home. To be with himself in that fold of heaven. In that wonderful. Uninterrupted. Pastoring of Jesus in heaven. And it's interesting.

And it's important isn't it. That the shepherding of Jesus. Reaches its apex. Or its summit. In heaven itself. Because Revelation chapter 7.

Actually brings us. That picture of heaven. And those who are before the throne of God. Who washed their robes. And made them white. In the blood of the lamb. They before the throne of God.

They serve him day and night. And he who sits on the throne. Will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more. Neither thirst anymore. For the lamb in the midst of the throne.

Will be their shepherd. The word there literally is. Will pastor them. And he will guide them to springs of living water. God will wipe away every tear.

[29 : 16] From their eyes. God will wipe away every tear. God will wipe away every tear. What is heaven? What a question to ask. How impossible to answer it fully.

In this world. That we can say this is heaven. It's the everlasting. Unending. Perfect. Pastoring of Christ.

Christ. It's Jesus. The good shepherd. Having laid down his life for his people. Having. Having provided them. With all that was required.

To make them his flock. Heaven is going to be about his pastoring. And if his pastoring is in this world. As precious as it is. And if this. This knowledge.

And this experience. Of Christ. As your pastor in this world. Is a wonderful thing. As it is. How wonderful is it going to be in heaven. How wonderful is it going to be.

[30 : 11] The whole flock of Jesus. That he has redeemed by his blood. By his death on the cross. All gathered forevermore in his presence. And pastored by him.

And led by him. To springs of living water. God having wiped away. All tears from their eyes. Or will wipe away all tears from their eyes. Really. It's saying to us.

All the sorrows. All the disappointments. All the tragedies. All the things of this world. That were in the experience of the flock.

All the ravages. Of the wolves. All the attacks. Everything else. They're all gone. There's no place for them there. They don't have access there.

The lamb. Who is in the midst of the throne. Will shepherd them. Unique. The only time you find a lamb.

[31 : 12] And a shepherd combined. In the one person. He's the lamb who died. He's the shepherd who lives.

And shepherds his people. And he will pastor them. And lead them to living. Fountains of water. What does that say to us? It is that the life of heaven is always fresh.

Always new. Never recedes. Never grows old. It's just always perfectly fresh.

And it is so. Because it's the fruit of Christ's death. It's what he died to achieve. That's what he has achieved.

As an old hymn writer. Herbert Buffum. That I came across. When looking for words. That would finish our study tonight. This is what he wrote. My sheep hear my voice.

[32 : 14] And the path that I take. They follow wherever I go. My sheep know my voice. And come at my call. But a stranger's voice. They do not know.

My sheep know my voice. And the pastures of green. Where I lead them so often to feed. My sheep know my voice. And the cool sparkling stream. Where beside it still waters.

Where I lead. My sheep know my voice. And the valley of death. Through which I shall lead them someday. But no danger nor harm. Can touch one of them.

For I will be with them always. My sheep know my voice. And day by day. They abide in the fold. And go not astray. They love me because.

I have made them my choice. And they follow my call. My sheep. Know my voice. The good shepherd.

[33 : 16] May he be your shepherd. If he is not so. Already let's pray. Lord our gracious God. We give thanks once again.

For the assurance your word gives us. With regard to your care of your people. And we thank you tonight. For the quality of your shepherding. Of your everlasting love.

For the way that you have redeemed your people. To be a flock. Pastored by yourself forever. Lord we pray that you would place. In the heart of each one of us.

That longing to know more of your shepherding care. That longing to be led by you. And fed by you. And that longing to know you. More and more each day.

As time goes by. As the one who so tenderly cares. For his own people. So bless us now we pray. And your word bless it to our hearts.

[34 : 15] For Jesus' sake. Amen. We'll sing in Psalm 23. These well known words of Psalm 23. The Lord's my shepherd. And we'll sing from the Sing Psalms version.

To the Chuntawathi. On page 28. The Lord is my shepherd. No one shall I know. He makes me lie down. Where the green pastures grow.

He leads me to rest. Where the calm waters flow. Psalm 23. On page 28. The Lord is my shepherd. Amen. Amen. The Lord is my shepherd.

No one shall I know. Him is still I found. Where the green pastures grow.

He leads me to rest. Where the calm waters flow. My wandering steps.

[35 : 22] He brings back to his way. His straight paths of righteousness. Making me sick.

And this he has done. His great name to display. Though I walk in this valley.

Where darkness is near. Because you are with me. No evil I'll fear.

Your road and your staff bring me comfort and cheer. In the sight of my enemies.

The table you spread. The oil of rejoicing. You pour on my head.

[36 : 29] My cup overflows. And I graciously fed. So surely your covenant.

Mercy and grace. Will follow me closely. In all of my ways.

I will dwell in the bounds of the Lord all my days. I'll go to the main door again this evening.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The love of God the Father. And the communion of the Holy Spirit. Be with you now and evermore. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.