

The Good Shepherd

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[0 : 00] Amen. If you would, please take your Bibles and open them up to John chapter 10 this morning.

John chapter 10. This is one of the most beautiful pictures, I believe, in all of Scripture of who Jesus is and how He cares for His people. John chapter 10. Our passage this morning will be John 10, 1 through 21.

And when you found that in your Bibles, if you would stand as I read the Word of God. Amen. He says,

I speak now, Lord, that your sheep would hear your voice in your Word. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. I hope that you realize the depth and the richness of what we just sang together.

We were talking about it with the music team before the service started and some of them knew the song, some of them didn't. And Miss Ann called it an oldie but a goodie. There's a lot of rich truth there in that hymn, isn't there?

[4 : 23] And we see all of it here in our passage this morning in John chapter 10. The question we've been asking, who is Jesus? And the answer that we've seen time and time and time again as we've walked through the Gospel of John, Jesus is the Christ.

Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus is the Son of God. And here in our passage this morning, we see Jesus is the shepherd of his sheep. He's the door of the sheep.

He's the owner and the Savior of his own. Look there with me to chapter 10, verse 1. And I want you to have your Bibles open. I love that you might trust me, that what I'm telling you is God's Word.

I don't want you to trust me that much. I want you to see it with your own eyes. The Word of God, John 10, verse 1. Jesus is continuing a conversation that he started last week.

You may remember last week that Jesus healed the man born blind. He had mercy on him. He saw him. He opened up his eyes. That man was then brought to the religious leaders, to the Pharisees.

[5 : 30] And rather than glorifying God for this miraculous work that's been done in this man's life, rather than receiving him and rejoicing in the work that's been done, what happened? They interrogated him.

They ridiculed him. They mocked him. And then they rejected him. They cast him out of the synagogue. So the last thing that Jesus said to the Pharisees at the end of chapter 9 last week was that they are spiritually blind and that they are bearing their own guilt.

And it's in that context of that conversation that our passage this morning picks up. Look there with me to verses 1 through 5. 1 through 5 set the stage for the rest of the chapter.

He says, 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 the door by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he has brought out all his own, he goes before them.

[6 : 44] The sheep follow him for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him for they do not know the voice of a stranger. Clearly, Jesus is again, he's telling them a sort of parable.

John calls it a figure of speech. He's drawing from everyday experiences, everyday knowledge, in order to make a point, to give a lesson about who he is.

And so here he's drawing from their common understanding of shepherding. I don't know how much shepherding you have done in your life. I know several of you are animal people, and maybe you have a little bit of knowledge of what shepherding looks like, but shepherding in ancient Israel was done a little bit differently than it's done today.

And we need to understand the cultural context here so that we understand the fullness of the picture that Jesus is giving us here. So in this culture, oftentimes an entire town or an entire village would share one sheep pen.

And during the day, the owners of the sheep, they would bring their sheep, if they had other business to attend to during the day, they would bring their sheep into this sheep pen.

[7 : 56] They would bring them in through the door. They would pay a gatekeeper there who would open up the door. He would know who came and who went. And at the end of the day, whenever it's time to come and collect your sheep, the shepherd would come in through the door.

The gatekeeper would recognize the shepherd. He would know who the shepherd was. He would open up the door for the shepherd. And here's what's amazing. The shepherd would look into that sheep pen, and out of all the town's sheep, out of all the many sheep that were gathered together in that sheep pen, he would look out, and he would know exactly which sheep were his.

I know that one there. That one's mine. That one there. That one's mine. That one there. Those two, three scattered here, here, here. Those are mine. And then, what's even more remarkable, is he would begin calling out to the sheep, even by name.

He would call them by name. Come on, Woolly. Come on, little Bo. Come on. And his sheep, out of every noise that they heard throughout the day, would recognize the voice of their shepherd, and they would come to him.

Follow him. Follow his voice. Go to be with him. It's a beautiful picture, isn't it? It's a beautiful picture of salvation. It's a beautiful picture of who Jesus is, of who his people are, of how anybody becomes his people, of how he knows and loves and cares for his people.

[9 : 31] But verse 6, it tells us that the Pharisees, they hear this, and they still didn't get the message. You know, sometimes the Pharisees, bless them, they're a little bit slow. And so Jesus, here in verses 7 through 18, almost the rest of the passage here, he expands on the metaphor.

And he uses this shepherding imagery to give us two more answers to the question, who is Jesus? This is our outline this morning. If you're a note taker, we're going to see two more answers to the question, who is Jesus?

Jesus is the door of the sheep, and Jesus is the shepherd of the sheep. First, he says, I am the door of the sheep.

Look there to verse 10 with me. The Pharisees are confused, and so Jesus again said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 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.

[10 : 47] I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. This is yet another one of the I am statements in the Gospel of John. We've seen a few of these already.

We'll see several more. We have two of them here in this passage. I am the door. I am the good shepherd. This is intentional language by Jesus here to tell us, to tell the Pharisees, to tell any who's listening to him, that he is the I am.

He is God in the flesh. Here he says, I am the door of the sheep. What does that teach us about Jesus? Let's think about this for a minute.

For one, this teaches us that Jesus is the one way into the one flock of God. I am the door of the sheep.

Jesus is the one way into the one flock of God. Now place yourself in the Pharisees' shoes here. This is very, very different from how the Jews understood how they belonged to God.

[11 : 55] They thought that they belonged to God by virtue of their physical belonging, their physical, natural birth. They were born into the Jewish people of God, so they thought that they belonged to God.

Well, Jesus says, not so fast. There's a door, and you have to enter through the door. This is also very different from the modern conception, modern understanding of how anyone might belong to God.

First of all, we don't want to think that we're sheep, do we? We think that we're independent. We're self-sufficient. We got this on our own.

We don't need anybody to own us, to lead us, to guide us. If there's a shepherd, the shepherd does our bidding. The shepherd serves at our pleasure.

That's what the modern mind thinks. And more than this, in the modern mind, if there is a people of God, and if there is a fence that marks off the boundaries of the people of God from the rest of the world, then surely that fence is filled with doors.

[13 : 04] That fence is covered with doors. And certainly, we can come in and out as we please on our own terms. We can enter any which way we want. Jesus says again, not so fast, there is one door.

I am the door, not a door. And you must enter through the door. Enter by the narrow gate, he says in Matthew.

Enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide, and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow, and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

It is not hateful, despite what you may hear. It is not bigoted. It is not narrow-minded to say that there is one way in to the people of God.

We ought to instead marvel that there is a door. Be in awe of the grace of God that there is a door. There is a path. There is an open door for sinners like us to enter into the people of God.

[14 : 18] We ought to be astounded by the grace of God that he has given us a door. Instead, the modern mind scoffs and rejects and laughs at the door.

Not only this. We see that this teaches us that Jesus is the one path to true life. Jesus is the one path to true life.

Look again what it says. He says, I am the door. If anyone enters by me, what happens? He says, He will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

And again, in verse 10, he says, The thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. Do you see the picture of what Jesus offers to his people here?

Why do you come to Jesus? Why do you come to God through the door of Jesus Christ?

[15 : 20] I hope it's not just to escape the wrath of God. Certainly, that's part of it. What does it say again here?

He says, If anyone enters by me, he will be saved. Saved from what? Saved from the wrath of God against our sin. That's good reason to turn to Jesus, but there is so much more here.

He will be saved, yes, and he will go in and out and find pasture. These are happy, healthy, well-fed, joyful sheep here.

He will be saved, yes, and he will have abundance of life. He will be saved, and he will have true freedom, true blessing, true and lasting peace, fullness of life here and now and into eternity.

I don't want us just to come to Christ once out of fear, but to come to him again and again and again and again out of love for him, out of satisfaction in him, that we would come to the door and come through the door into the pasture of God's presence daily, come to him out of love.

[16 : 42] Everyone in the world is looking for peace like this, aren't we? Everyone in the world is looking for blessing, for satisfaction, for pasture.

church, they need to be led to the door and through the door into the joy of knowing God.

A good shepherd will lead the sheep through the door into the blessing of the flock. This is exactly what Jesus has against the Pharisees here, isn't it?

Look there, look there again. It says, Jesus says, the leaders of the people of Israel have not been good shepherds. There's a contrast here in the passage, isn't there? Between Jesus Christ who is the door and all the thieves and the robbers who came before him.

That's the contrast that we see. Verse 8, all who came before me are thieves and robbers but the sheep did not listen to them. These thieves and robbers, they don't come through the door.

[17 : 49] They hop the fence, they avoid the door, they sneak in any which way they can, and they try to come in undetected, not to bless the sheep, not to love the sheep, but to steal them away, to harm the sheep, to destroy the sheep.

Who's he talking about here? Who's he talking about here? There's a few options, they're good options, but I think he's talking about the religious leaders.

If you think about the context here again, remember, at chapter 9, Jesus has just healed this man born blind, called him to faith in himself, and how did the religious leaders respond? Those who were supposed to care for the sheep, how did they respond?

They brutalized the sheep, discarded him, humiliated him. We should know that God does not mess around with this.

in every generation, God has given his people leaders, shepherds, not the shepherd, but under shepherds, those who are stewards to care for the flock of God, and they are accountable to God for how they care for God's sheep.

[19 : 06] I want you to flip over to Ezekiel 34. I want you to actually go there. because this is a longer passage. I want you to see it with your eyes.

It's a longer passage. I think that it would help you to see it, and when you get there, if you mark in your Bibles, in the margin there beside Ezekiel 34, I want you to just write a note that says John 10, and then when you get back to John 10, I'd love for you to write a note that says Ezekiel 34.

I want you to see the connection here between these two passages, and I'm rambling so that you can find it in your Bibles. Have you got there yet? All right. Ezekiel 34.

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

Do you see it? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled over them.

[20 : 29] So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered. They wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill.

My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth with none to search or seek for them. Verse 7, Therefore you shepherds hear the word of the Lord.

As I live, declares the Lord God, surely because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves and have not fed my sheep.

Therefore you shepherds hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep at their hand, and put a stop to their feeding the sheep.

No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths that they may not be food for them. This is an indictment on the bad shepherds of Israel.

[21 : 38] So what's the solution? What's God's answer to the bad shepherds? Verse 11, For thus says the Lord God, Behold, I, I myself, will search for my sheep and will seek them out.

As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they've been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness, and I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and will bring them into their own land, and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel by the ravines and in all the inhabited places of the country.

I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. Then they shall lie down in the good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel.

I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, declares the Lord God. I will seek the lost. I will bring back the strayed.

I will bind up the injured. I will strengthen the weak and the fat and the strong. I will destroy. I will feed them in justice. God says, you religious leaders who pride yourself on being shepherds have avoided the door, have climbed in every which way you could, have failed to care for my sheep.

[23 : 09] You harm the sheep, and you care for yourselves. A good shepherd would not do that. A good shepherd would lead the sheep, love the sheep, by leading them through the one door into the blessing of God.

There's a lesson here, isn't there? For shepherds and for sheep. For shepherds, you know that's the word for pastor.

Shepherds. Good shepherds point the sheep to Jesus. every opportunity that they have. Good shepherds feed the sheep with the words of Christ.

Direct them to the blessing of Christ. Remind them of their belonging to Christ. Teach them to live as God's sheep. Good shepherds lead the sheep through the door to God as often as they can.

They point the sheep to Jesus, not to themselves, because ultimately shepherds are sheep too. And sheep, those who belong to Christ, those who temporarily are placed under the care of earthly sheep shepherds, fix your eyes on Christ.

[24 : 35] Listen for the voice of Christ through the voice of your shepherds. Listen to the voice of Christ and flee as far and as fast as you possibly can from any shepherd who would lead you away from him.

God says to the leaders of Israel, you shepherds have failed miserably. But you know what? I'm going to do it myself. I'll do it myself.

I will seek out my sheep and I myself will care for them. I will be the shepherd. And so Jesus here in our second point this morning, second answer to the question, who is Jesus?

He says, I am the good shepherd. shepherd. I am the shepherd of the sheep. Look there to verse 11.

He says, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. And where before the contrast was between the door and the thieves and the robbers who attempt to avoid the door and come in to harm the sheep, here the contrast is between Jesus, the good shepherd, and those who he calls a hired hand.

[25 : 53] So look there at the contrast here in verse 12. He says, he who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and what happens?

He leaves the sheep and he flees. And the wolf comes and snatches them up and scatters them. He flees. Why? Because he's a hired hand and he cares nothing for the sheep.

You realize it's so hard to find good help? Anybody have that problem? Hard to find good help? I was talking with Treg this week about his land.

We had breakfast Wednesday morning. He and Regina bought some land over here planning on building and building a house developing over there. They had their last pre-construction meeting this week and Treg said, I am so excited that I have a rental unit that's close by my land because I cannot wait to get over there every single day and check in on the contractors.

I was like, man, they're going to hate you. But I get it. Right? Because it's so easy for the hired hand to cut corners, to make mistakes, to cover it up, to not care deeply about what ultimately does not belong to him.

[27 : 13] But the owner of the land, he's going to be by there every day. Make sure that what belongs to him is taken care of. And so it is here with Jesus.

Jesus says he is the good shepherd of the sheep. He owns the sheep. The sheep belong to him. God the Father gave them to Jesus and Jesus purchased the sheep at great price.

1 Corinthians 6 tells us you are not your own Christian. you were bought at a price. And so Paul tells pastors, shepherds in Acts 20 28, be careful, pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to care for the church of God which he obtained with his own blood.

Ephesians 5, Paul tells husbands in Ephesians 5, husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Christ Jesus paid a high price for his bride, the church.

He gave his life to purchase a people for himself. Christ Jesus loved the church and gave himself up for the church.

[28 : 37] The good shepherd laid down his life for the sheep which means believer if you are in Christ. You are the blood bought possession of God.

Christ Jesus gave himself for you, for your salvation, for your good. And don't you think that that which he paid such a high price for that he is going to care for?

Don't you think that what he paid such a high price for he's going to protect and to guard and to love and to cherish and to make sure that he accomplishes what he started in you?

I'll tell you a quick story. I've not paid much for just about anything. But when I was in high school I wanted an electric guitar more badly than I could possibly tell you.

And I spotted it, I knew what I wanted, I identified it, I had to have it custom ordered, it was not a normal kind of in stock guitar. I worked extra hours as much and as often as I could to save up as much money as I possibly could to purchase that guitar.

[29 : 54] When I walked into the music store and looked at all the guitars that were there, do you think I could pick out which one was mine? 100%. I knew which one was mine. I walked up to it, I very carefully grabbed it, I put it in the case, I put the case over the top, I closed up the case, I locked the case with a key, I carried it with two hands to my car, I put it in the back seat of my car, I put a seat belt over the case and very carefully I brought it home.

I paid a high price for that guitar, but church, Christ Jesus bought you with his own blood. Don't you think he's going to care for you?

Don't you think he's going to bring you safely home? Don't you think that he loves you? The good shepherd owns the sheep and the good shepherd cares for the sheep.

There's another old song, oh how he loves you and me, oh how he loves you and me. He gave his life, what more could he give? Oh how he loves you, oh how he loves me, oh how he loves you and me.

It is shockingly easy to forget, isn't it? When struggles of this life, when distractions and difficulties creep in and weigh heavily upon us, that this is the greatest news in the world.

[31 : 26] God loves you. Christ gave himself for you. You are his blood-bought possession.

God cares for you. We see how deeply he loves you because he gave his life for you on the cross. He owns you, he cares for you, not only this, he knows you.

The good shepherd knows his sheep. Look at verse 14. I am the good shepherd, I know my own and my own know me.

Listen to this, just as the father knows me and I know the father and I lay down my life for the sheep. This isn't general knowledge, is it?

This isn't hypothetical knowledge. How deep and how personal and how perfectly does God know the son? He knows him completely, inside out, totally, perfectly.

[32 : 31] This is specific, person by person, particular knowledge of his sheep. Jesus knows his sheep.

He looks out into the sheep pen of the world, filled with people and says, Jonathan, you're mine. Come with me. Sally, you're mine.

Come with me. Dick, you're mine. Come with me. Randy, you're mine. Come with me. And there's an intimate knowledge here between Jesus and his sheep.

He knows his sheep and his sheep know him. And we're going to get here next week. I'm going to rob from Treg's sermon next week, just for a minute. Okay, maybe I'm going to prime the pump, get you ready.

I don't know. We'll find out. But it is the shepherd's perfect knowledge of his specific sheep in eternity that precedes and secures our hearing his voice and our coming to him and our following him and our loving him and our trusting him in time.

[33 : 42] God's perfect knowledge of his sheep, not generally, not hypothetically, not potentially, God's specific perfect knowledge of his sheep personally precedes and secures the sheep believing and entering the fold in time.

Look with me to verse 26 real quick. We really are, Treg, I'm sorry, I'm going to rob you. Look to verse 26. He tells the Jews, listen to this, you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.

You hear that? We sometimes tend to want to read that the other way around and there are other verses, other passages that speak the other direction and that's true.

We want to read that you're not among my sheep because you don't believe. That's a true statement. Again, other passages speak that way in that order. When we get there, we'll preach that.

But that's not what it says here, is it? Again, it says you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. Belonging precedes believing, not the other way around.

[34 : 54] here's where this is good news for us. Believer, you are known and you are loved by God completely, personally, just as personally, just as completely as the knowledge of God the Father and God the Son.

For all of your sinfulness, for all of your faults, He chose you and loves you and cares for you and gave Himself to redeem you and to welcome you into that knowledge of God.

That's what the Good Shepherd has done for His sheep. Jesus is telling these Jews that He's making His own sheep pen.

He's going to the Jewish pen and He's calling out of the Jewish pen all of those sheep that belong to Him and all of those Jewish sheep that belong to Him are going to hear His voice and will follow Him out, but He says His flock will not be entirely Jewish.

I have other sheep, He says in verse 16, other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also and they will listen to my voice.

[36 : 24] So there will be one flock, one shepherd. The Good Shepherd owns His sheep. The Good Shepherd purchased the sheep.

He cares for the sheep. He knows His sheep and He pursues the sheep and they will listen to His voice.

What is He talking about here? What is He talking about? He's talking about the spread of the gospel through the nations.

From Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria to the uttermost ends of the world. The plan of God from the beginning of time was not simply to build a physically Jewish people, but from the seed of this one Jewish people to grow one multi-ethnic global flock of God joined together under one good shepherd, Jesus Christ.

It's the church. Jesus calls His sheep from the flock of Israel. They hear His voice and then He looks out to the mountains here, to the valleys here, to the country here, to the fields here, and He says, I have other sheep.

[37 : 42] I must bring them in. Do you hear that confidence? Do you hear that determination? I must bring them in, and they will listen to my voice.

This is rock-solid determination to accomplish the plan of God, the missionary plan of God, and He says, for this reason, for this reason, the Father loves me.

Not, of course, that God wouldn't love Jesus apart from this, but that the love of the Father overflows for the Son because of the deep dependence of Christ to fulfill the eternal plan of God for the redemption of His people to the praise of His glorious grace.

So God says, this is my beloved Son with whom I'm well pleased. This plan, He says, will be accomplished, which means Jews, all you who are about to pick up rocks to stone me, all you who are trying to kill me, you cannot kill me.

I lay down my life that I may take it up again. My death and my resurrection are mine to accomplish. The Father has given me this charge.

[39 : 03] No one takes it from me. I lay it down of my own accord. I have the authority to lay it down. I have authority to take it up again. Why? It's the plan. I've come to accomplish the plan for the purchase of all of my sheep.

And the reason why we're gathered here this morning, church, not a physically Jewish person in the room, it's because Christ accomplished the plan. Christ lay down His life for the sheep.

Christ rose from the grave for the sheep, and Christ's voice has gone out to each one of you, and called you in to His one flock, the church.

Jesus is talking about the Gentiles here, but I have a question for you. How does Christ plan to bring in His sheep from every corner of the earth?

What's the plan? How does Christ plan to call into His flock all of His sheep? Christ builds His church through His church.

[40 : 18] Christ builds His people through His people. It's through us. You want to know our brilliant plan for reaching all in all with the gospel?

Our brilliant plan for reaching Mount Pleasant and Huges and McClellanville? Preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Proclaim it here behind a pulpit and there in the streets and in our neighborhoods. Tell our friends about Jesus with confidence and joy that His sheep will hear His voice and enter the fold and the plan will be accomplished and God will be glorified as His church is built.

Our passage this morning ends yet again with a division, doesn't it? Some say He has a demon.

It is insane. Why listen to Him? Others say these are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open up the eyes of a blind? They're torn in their opinion. Again, the question who is Jesus?

[41 : 27] That same question again is put to us this morning. Who is Jesus? Is He the door through whom you have entered into salvation?

Into the peace and the blessing and the presence and the knowledge of God? Is He your shepherd who loves you and leads you and guides you and cares for you and lay down His life for you, who purchased you with His own blood?

Are you resting and rejoicing in the joy of being Christ's sheep? Savior, like a shepherd, lead us much we need, thy tender care.

In thy pleasant pastures feed us for our use, thy folds prepare. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou has bought us, thine we are.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we praise You. We thank You.

[42 : 33] We rejoice that You are our shepherd. That You have led us through the door into the pasture of knowing God.

We thank You for the forgiveness and the peace and the joy as found only in You and that You offer up freely to any who believe. We love You and we praise You for this in Christ's name.

Amen. Amen.