

Love Divine

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 December 2025

Preacher: Tyler Dueño

[0 : 00] Good morning, church. As we look forward to a new year,! This morning, we're going to be looking at the great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus.

! For the surpassing love of God in Christ.

There's also a challenge as Jesus disputes with his adversaries.

So let's go to the Lord for his help as we open up his word. Let's pray together. Father, as we open up your word, give us eyes to see and ears to hear.

Open our eyes. Open our eyes to see wondrous things in your word. You show us your power. For the sake of your kingdom and your great and mighty name.

[1 : 16] Would we decrease and would Christ increase, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. As we enter into a new year, I don't think I need to convince you that we live in a world where it's become increasingly more difficult to become lost.

Thanks to that device in your pocket and the exponential explosion of technology. At our fingertips are vast amounts of information.

GPS, generative AI like chat GPT. It's been said that we all have a team of PhD-level experts right in your pocket. It's become very difficult to become lost.

In the internet age, why then do we feel lost? And some have turned to AI to cope with this feeling of loneliness to find in a chatbot a listening ear.

For example, if you listen to Sam Altman, the CEO of chat GPT, he will say that in just a few short years, the most compassionate conversation that you can have will be with the chatbot.

[2 : 45] But if you zoom out in this moment we're living in, isn't there a promise being held out about the future? A promise that you and I and all humanity will evolve into something greater because of this brilliant technology.

A promise of security. A promise of safety. Amidst life's confusions.

When you have a problem, you have something to shepherd you through the ups and downs and the dark places in your life. Humans will no longer be lost if we have a benevolent, compassionate AI to guide you.

Well, of course, if you're like me, you're probably skeptical of these claims. AI is no true shepherd. And as it turns out, these technologies cannot be 100% reliable.

Why? Because they rely on information that is quickly changing. About you. About the world. It turns out that the output is only as good as the input.

[3 : 55] If the input is all human knowledge, then you get both truth and error. You may find you're getting life advice on ultimate questions from some random guy on Reddit.

AI is no true shepherd. But what guide can you follow? What or who can shepherd us in this new year infallibly?

When you're anxious, where can you turn for refuge? That is the subject of our chapter this morning. And this passes as a chapter that provides comfort, provides solace, provides encouragement.

Because there is one who sees and knows all, who can shepherd you with perfect skill and precision. Let's read John chapter 10, verses 22 to 30 together.

And I encourage you to keep your Bible open so you can follow along carefully to see what God is saying to us. And that can be found on page 843 of the Pew Bible. Let's read God's Word.

[5 : 03] 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 are not among my sheep. 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.

[6 : 15] I and the Father are one. What must the good shepherd do? To what end is he unwaveringly committed?

The good shepherd is unwaveringly committed to caring and protecting the sheep. That is the main idea. The good shepherd is unwaveringly committed to caring and protecting his sheep.

Let's look at context to situate us in this chapter. In John 9, you'll find Jesus heals a man born blind. The disciples asked Jesus, who sinned, this man or his parents?

Neither, Jesus says. Not because of his sin or his parents' sin, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. This man was a recipient of free grace.

He did nothing to earn gaining his sight. He simply received it. The religious leaders, though, they don't like it.

[7 : 33] They interrogate the man. The man says, look, I don't know much, but one thing I do know that though I was blind, now I see. And in this upside-down, inside-out world, the story ends in verse 38 in chapter 9.

The man born blind, he sees. And the leaders, the Pharisees, who think they see, are blind. Jesus pronounces judgment over these leaders.

And in chapter 10, Jesus begins to draw a sharp contrast. Jesus says, I am the good shepherd. He says, these men are no true shepherds.

At best, they're hired hands who run away when the wolf comes. At worst, they are thieves and robbers. Again, the leaders don't like this.

So as we come to our passage this morning, it's important to see that the hostility is growing with each chapter between Jesus and those who would seek to kill him.

[8 : 42] Now some structure. We're going to look at these verses in three parts. A hostile interrogation. Point number two will be a profound response.

And then point number three will be a divine love. A hostile interrogation, a profound response, and then a divine love. And verse 22 sets the stage.

You'll see Jesus had been in Jerusalem for some time now. It's winter. It's December and it's cold outside. And it says he's walking near the colony, the colony, probably with his disciples.

And the colony of Solomon was this public space and it acted as a public forum for teaching. We find Jesus walking during the Feast of Dedication.

What you and I would know as Hanukkah. Hanukkah recalled about 200 years earlier a Jewish revolt against the Greeks after the Greeks desecrated and defiled the temple.

[9 : 49] Antiochus, a Greek king, unleashed a reign of terror. He placed an altar of Zeus in the Holy of Holies and began executing and crucifying Jews, many forced into slavery.

In this pressure cooker, the Jewish people revolted and gained their freedom from foreign domination. And so Hanukkah celebrates Israel's liberation, restoring the temple, and rededicating the altar.

So as Jesus is walking, there's a kind of national pride in the air. Then we get to verse 24. These religious leaders, the Jews, suddenly surround him.

That's what the word gathered around in verse 24 means. They are surrounding him and closing in on him, preventing his escape. Then they make a demand.

How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. They are demanding that Jesus reveal his identity.

[11 : 05] Now, if you're here and you're asking questions about who Jesus is, you should do that. That is one of the most important questions you can ask in this life.

Who is this Jesus? And you know, it's a normal experience to doubt when you're wrestling with competing truth claims. The book of Jude says, have mercy on those who doubt.

Jesus showed mercy to Jude who himself doubted his own brother's claims. However, there could be a different kind of doubt where the person does not have sincere intentions.

Have you ever had a conversation like that? Whatever you say won't be enough. They're just looking for more reasons than to not believe. That's what's happening here.

So the question asked in verse 24 is not sincere nor is it humble. This is a hostile legal interrogation. You see, they were looking for a clear confession in order to use as evidence to obtain a legal conviction.

[12:17] And once they had their evidence, they could bring it to the Roman governor so they could hang Jesus on charges of treason and sedition. And you can see their hostile purpose in verse 31.

They brought stones with them. Evidently, Jesus' response wasn't what they were looking for. And they were prepared to let those stones fly to kill him. In this interrogation, the question, it's loaded. It's leading. It's like the old adversarial question in an interrogation against the unsuspecting where someone says, tell me, have you stopped lying to your wife?

Yes, I've stopped lying. No, I haven't. There's really no good way to answer that question without appearing evasive. And this question is leading and loaded.

Now, why isn't this just a straightforward answer? Why can't Jesus say, yes, I'm the Christ? Well, what makes this question complicated to answer is the confusion of the kind of Messiah that Jesus would come to be.

[13:22] You see, there were competing definitions of what it meant to be the Christ. to say he was the Christ would have publicly been understood to be a political and military leader who would act as a liberator from Israel's oppressor, the Romans, kick them out once for all, just like we did the Greeks.

So Jesus knows that a simple yes answer would have been misunderstood and it would have been used as evidence against him. He is prepared to die, but not yet. His hour had not yet come as we come to John 10.

So they surround him and they put him in a dilemma. And Jesus will be very careful in how he responds to this question. Before we look at his profound response, let's notice the absurdity of the question itself.

How long will you keep us in suspense? Do you see the irony in that question? Jesus' track record up to this point about his identity, let's just say it's been solid.

But who are they pointing the finger at for their unbelief? How long will you keep us in suspense? Well, it's his fault. He's the cause. Jesus, stop with the suspense.

[14:43] Stop with your games. What you've said is not enough. Friend, they can stare at the Messiah in the face and accuse him of duplicity.

Do you see their spiritual blindness? It was about 20 years ago when a man dressed up in a baseball cap in jeans walked onto the D.C.

metro during rush hour to play the violin. And people thought this man was a no-name fiddler and so they ignored him and some belittled him.

He was another nuisance interrupting their commute. But as it turns out, this man was a world-renowned violinist, Joshua Bell. And that morning, Bell played six of the most intricate pieces of musical compositions that the world has ever known.

And he played on a violin worth more than 3.5 million dollars. It was an experiment by the Washington Post and it proved its point.

[15:51] The average person is blind to true greatness when it's right there in their midst. friend, do you recognize the greatness of Jesus? Seeing him as supremely valuable.

You might be here and you say to yourself, I have a big degree. I'm going places. But if you don't know, if you don't recognize who Jesus is, Jesus will say, you too are blind.

And spiritual blindness is not like physical blindness. It's more dangerous. See, physically, you know you're blind. Spiritually, we are blind to our own blindness.

Friends, do you know your own heart? I know mine, it is frightening. In fact, our blindness can even masquerade as wisdom, as humility.

Friend, ask God to open your eyes to see the light of the glory of Christ, who is the image of the invisible God. And sometimes the point in which you may be lacking is not understanding your need of Jesus.

[17:06] And Jesus has a profound response to this interrogation. Point number two. Look at verse 25. 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. Now, Jesus will not give them what they want. This is a very calculating and careful choice of words.

He's been saying, look, I've been answering this question for months. Where have you been? But now, up until this point, to be fair, Jesus has not come out publicly and said that he is the Christ in those words.

He has said it privately. Remember the woman of Samaria in chapter four? Remember she said, we know that the Christ is coming. When he comes, he will tell us all things. Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am he.

But that wasn't a public declaration. But Jesus is telling these leaders, I have said enough to you. Jesus is saying, look, I told you, I told you I am the one who came from heaven.

[18:14] I told you that whoever believes in me has eternal life. I told you that you should honor me just as you honor the Father. I told you the Father has entrusted all judgment to me, the Son.

And I will be the one to judge humanity on that final day. And I told you that I am Yahweh, the great I am. I have claimed deity.

Jesus has said more than enough in his teaching. But the evidence Jesus points to mostly are his miracles. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me.

These miracles speak for me, he says. Now his miracles are not just fireworks designed to grab the attention of the crowds. No, these miracles were pictures, they were signs.

And he's drawing from the Old Testament to prove his identity. He's healed the blind, the sick, the lame. He healed the paralytic man who had been lame for 38 years.

[19:21] Get up and walk. And he took up his matting walk. He fed the 5,000 with a few loaves of bread. He said, I am the bread of life that's come from heaven.

He turned water into wine. All these miracles revealed his identity. So the problem isn't that Jesus has not been clear.

The problem is they failed to believe in his clear evidence. Their eyes were tight, shut, and they refused to open them. Well, friends, how much more now? God hasn't just done a dozen or so miracles.

God has done a billion things. Isn't every Christian with a transformed life, a walking miracle? Church family, what about our life corporately?

Do the works that we do in the Father's name bear witness to the world about Jesus? In this new year, what should our strategy be to witness to the world of his power?

[20:25] Marketing campaigns? Social media outreach? Outstanding music? Great potlucks? And we do have some great potlucks, so thank you. Thank you, hospitality team.

No, none of these things. Isn't it our unity and our love for each other? Doesn't that bear witness to the world? Jesus prayed as much in his high priestly prayer before he went to be crucified. Praying to his Father, he asked, that they all may be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I am in you, that they also may be in us, in order that, for this very reason, the world may believe that you sent me.

Whoa, that's real power right there. God the Holy Spirit is so powerful that he can bind us together in the gospel. That's powerful.

Oh, brothers and sisters, we have so much more in common than that which divides us. And beloved, aren't you bearing fruit in this area? This love and unity amongst you is a witness to God's power at work in you.

[21:32] Isn't that evidence of God's grace in our life as a church? We're not united by shared sports teams, ethnicity, education levels, income brackets.

There is one thing, though. We want to build our life on Jesus and his word. We can say with Paul to the church at Thessalonica that your faith, beloved, is being reported throughout the whole world. That is no exaggeration in a church like this. Now, many of you knew the butlers. Many of you walked with them after their daughter Evangeline's death.

And God recently called Landon to be a pastor in Stanford. And they recently wrote a note to you thanking you, church, for your love for them. I'm going to read a part of it.

They write, Thank you, church family. Thank you, Trinity, for being our shelter, home, and family for almost three years. While God has brought us to a new community in Stanford, we will forever hold you in our hearts as one of the most generous compassionate and upstanding churches we have ever known.

[22 : 41] If God's commandment to the church is to love one another, church, you have nothing to bless you about. The end with, we love you very much. Oh, friends, continue to abound in this area.

Abound more in love for one another. Let's give the world something to see that bears witness to our Father in heaven. And students and workers, go into the office this week, into your classrooms, and display who you belong to.

Do honest work. Don't ask ChatGPT to write your essays. Do honest work and work hard. Don't fudge the numbers in the lab because of your insecurity. Let your work give glory to your Father in heaven.

But despite these works, there will be those who still reject our Lord Jesus. Why? Well, here is probably the most profound part of his answer. Right in the face of his accusers, he says this to them.

You do not believe because you are not among my sheep. Wow. We might ask, what's cause and effect here? Jesus is saying, before ever believing, you must be among my sheep.

[23 : 58] Being comes before believing. They ask Jesus to speak plainly, and so here it is. This is what they were looking for. Not only are they not true shepherds, Jesus is saying, you're not even among my sheep.

Friend, this is a humbling truth because whose hands does Jesus put the scepter of your fate? Who is the captain of your soul? Who is the master of your destiny?

Jesus did not hesitate, nor do we to say the scepter is in God's hands alone. And hasn't Jesus already testified of his gracious choice to his disciples?

He says, you didn't choose me, but I chose you. Not that we love God, but that he loved us. He's appointed some to eternal life. Now this raises some questions.

My shockingly brief answer? Well, go listen to the seven-week Sunday school that John Hinkson just taught on the doctrines of grace. If you still have questions about it, come email the elders.

We're happy to talk to you more about it.

[25 : 07] Point number two is a profound reply. Point number three is a divine love. These next verses hold infinite sources of encouragement.

The shepherd is unwaveringly committed to caring and preserving his sheep. Isn't verse 27 maybe the best definition of what a Christian is? Unlike these rulers, Jesus says, my sheep hear my voice. I know them. They follow me. Isn't that the story of every Christian? We hear Jesus' words. We recognize him. We follow him.

If you are in Christ, this is your story. You heard his voice. You heard that you were in a calamitous condition from the day you were born.

You heard that your biggest problem is that God is good and holy. That's a problem. Because God created us in his image to love him above all else and to love each other.

[26 : 14] And God is good unimaginably so. His ways unflinchingly righteous. Because of that, God must punish sin. We are naturally rebels against God.

Dead, inclined only toward evil. Unable to lift a finger to save ourselves. Our problem, ultimately, is not merely that we are bent against God, but we have a blindness.

Blind to God's beauty, we stood under God's condemnation. Our beloved, but then you heard that God Almighty loved you with an everlasting love.

And the great lengths he went to demonstrate this love to you. Because in God's amazing love, the Father would send his Son, fully God and fully man, and the good shepherd to rescue his lost sheep.

And the shepherd would die so that his sheep could live. Jesus bore the wrath that we deserved. Hell was put into his cup, and he drank the cup down to its dregs, so that our cup would overflow with grace and love and mercy.

[27 : 33] And this good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. On the third day, he rose again, and he commands everyone, everywhere to turn from sin and trust in him alone.

Friend, if you're here and you're not a Christian, do you hear the shepherd's voice calling you? If you knew the heart of the shepherd, you would come to him. Brothers and sisters, you heard this message, and you listened.

His sheep listen to his voice. The shepherd speaks, the sheep listen. This is a speaking God. And he calls you by name.

In the first century, that's what would happen. The sheep would hear the shepherds calling them by name, and the sheep would run to the shepherd. The Savior calls us, and we come.

All Christians have this moment. We hear the sweet voice of the shepherd calling our name, willing us to come to him, laying our burdens down upon him.

[28 : 38] He says, come to me, all who are weary, and I will give you rest. We come to him, and we lay our burdens down, and we find rest for our souls. Jesus says, I am the water, the living water.

Come and drink of this well. And we come and drink, and we are satisfied. Oh, you heard the shepherd's voice, and you listened. But notice the description here given to the people whom he loves, these sheep.

First, he claims us as his unique possession. These are my sheep, he says. He claims them as his own.

Jesus plucked his enemies out of a burning building headed for destruction. She is mine. He is mine. They are mine. They are my sheep. You know, the t-shirt that says, Jesus loves you.

But then again, Jesus loves everybody. That might be how we think about God's love for us, right? As Christians, God loves me, but then again, that's kind of his job.

[29 : 48] God loves the world, I'm part of the world, so I guess God loves me too. Doesn't he love everyone? Nothing special about that. No, friend.

These sheep claim a special place in the Savior's heart. This is about a husband who seeks his beloved bride, who's wandered far away into the far country.

He finds her deep in sin, a prisoner of this world. It is not only that he has secured the opportunity for her release, opening the cell door, no, but because of God's amazing love for her, he reaches his almighty hand into the prison cell and by grace grabs her out into his everlasting arms.

That love actually exists for you, Christian. Christian, God loved you with an everlasting love. This love stretches back in eternity past.

it had no beginning, it will have no end. Paul can write, before the stars were created, before the planets orbited the sun, in the mind of God, he delighted and loved you.

[31 : 09] Ephesians 1, in love he predestined us for adoption as sons. In eternity past, his heart was wedded to his bride. And God distinguished her, set her apart.

In the fullness of time, God came and gave himself up for this beloved bride. What does he give to this bride of his?

Jesus says, I give them eternal life in verse 28. I came to give them life and life to the full. And that life is eternal life.

life. It's the life of heaven. It's the life of God himself. In verse 28, his emphasis is not on the quality, but it's security.

You know, at this point, it's as if Jesus invites all who can say, the Lord is my shepherd. He invites us to step onto a balcony and to look into the distance.

[32 : 12] and you begin to see these vastly lush green hills, the rustling grass, the sunshine of God's grace shining on your face.

You can almost hear the trickling waters. The shepherd says, you, my beloved, you can rest here and you can rest securely.

I am your shepherd and I will protect you. You will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. These are fresh and clear rivers for weary sheep to drink and be satisfied.

He not only claims us, he also intimately cares for us. Brother and sister, how do you think God feels about you? Do you doubt Christ's love for you?

Does he merely tolerate you as he holds his nose? No, no. Christ's marvelously says, I know them. I know my sheep.

[33 : 20] That is covenantal language, rich with intimacy. Christ knows us with a special affection and interest. Christian, you are the apple of his eye by sheer unmerited grace.

The way a husband knows his bride. God is faithful to his people because he delights in them.

About a month ago, I was at a trampoline park with my kids.

And for those of you who haven't been to a place like that, it's a cacophony of noises. It's loud.

There's hundreds of kids. It's crowded. It's chaotic.

The kids are yelling and screaming. They're running into each other, jumping up and down. The music is blasting. And when I was there, I faintly heard a child cry.

And I merely knew, that's my child. I know my child. I know them in a personal way. They are not lost in the crowd.

[34 : 29] Parents, this is the difference between the love you have for all the kids in the nursery. You love them. You do good to them. But there's a difference, isn't there, between that and your love for your own kids.

You hear the cacophony of crying, and then you recognize their cry in the crowd. God. You know, we can think of God, maybe the way we would as a president claim, they love the citizens of their country.

You know, God bless all you citizens. I love all of you. A sort of general love, a goodwill for all. No, but the kingdom of heaven is not like that. It's not like that.

The kingdom of heaven is like a mother who personally knows each of her children. She knows them by name. And if a mother has a sick and self-willed child, is she going to just cast a child into the street?

Of course not. Not if that's her beloved child. Can the stream of a mother's love for her children be fuller, more wider, more deep than the fountain of mercy in God's heart for his people?

[35 : 35] It can never be. God's checking account of mercy is never overdrawn for his children. All Christian, God knows you. He loves you in a special way.

His love for you is higher, deeper, wider, more infinite, more incomprehensible. So, brother and sister, you may be unknown, overlooked at work, passed up for the promotion, but know that Christ does not overlook you.

You are not lost in the crowd. Do you come here alone, betrayed, abandoned, permanently stained by guilt?

God has a special compassion and concern for his sheep. And there is no anxiety that the shepherd cannot soothe. Do not be anxious for tomorrow or this next year for you are worth more than, you are worth more than many spare-offs.

And God has loved you with an everlasting love. You know, leaders in the church, is this not how we ought to be shepherds? To go out and know the sheep and to care for them?

[36 : 50] Husbands, let me ask, are you modeling this kind of care for your wife? Do you ask her how she's doing spiritually? If you're single, are you modeling this care for other members of the church?

If you're preparing for marriage, this is what it looks like to be a faithful husband or wife, to care, to know your bride, your husband. Wives, what are ways you can model this kind of care for your husband?

You know, if your spouse is failing in this area, which they surely will, look to the Good Shepherd. He models this care perfectly. See, he claims us, he cares for us, but marvelously, he keeps us. Look at the promise in verse 28. I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hands.

Notice the certainty, the totality. Jesus will lose none, no one. They will never perish. Is Jesus one to make a promise and not deliver on it?

[38 : 03] No. Christ will give an account for each one of the sheep that the Father had given him. Not one will be lost. Jesus will not look at the countless multitudes of sheep and say, well, I'm glad 99.9% of them got home.

No. He must have all of them. And not one atom of this security belongs to us. It is not found in our performance.

It is not found in our personal fortitude. It is not found in our own righteousness. You know, sheep are not known for their high IQ. No, this promise is about the supreme love and sovereignty of the shepherd.

By the power of God, he will make sure his children are preserved. You will reach the finish line. He will cause you to persevere through deep valleys and hard trials for his glory.

Oh, you will finish the race and you will make it home. And there are many dangers, toils, and snares as the hymn writer says.

[39 : 16] It is true that we stumble and we are prone to falter. Our faith is often fickle. Our knowledge is so often limited. But the shepherd takes complete responsibility for his sheep.

Step by step, he leads us from grace to glory. Hasn't this been your experience this past year? with a power that is never exhausted, a patience that never worries.

He continually has shepherded you. When you were weak, you felt you could go no further. He strengthened your steps. When you erred, he corrected you.

He brought another person in your life to correct you. When you were grieving, he has dried your tears and comforted you. And one day he will wipe away every tear.

Oh, how near he must draw to you to wipe away your tears. But even now he stays that close by your side.

[40 : 27] Can you see his shepherding hand even this past year? How he has showed his unfailing skill and how he has shepherded you. Through the ups and downs, twists and turns, how God has protected you.

He's protected us even from ourselves. He has slammed doors in your face. He's closed them because he knows they would not be good for you. When something is supremely valuable, you place it in good hands, don't you?

Parents, you know, sometimes you have kids and you leave them by themselves for more than five minutes and they're going to lose an arm or a leg. So you're not going to let anyone watch them. No, you place them in good hands. If you own a Mona Lisa, you're not going to let just anybody look at it. There are thieves and robbers out there. No, the Mona Lisa is guarded 24-7, maximum security, bulletproof glass.

Look at verse 29. The Father has placed his sheep in Jesus' hands. Ah, friends, you are in good hands. And that's the belt.

[41 : 37] He adds suspenders, then a clasp connecting the two so nothing falls to the ground. Jesus just piles it on. It's not just the will of the Son. This is the will of the Father in verse 29.

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 hands. This is the ultimate assurance of your security Christian.

It's as if the Father clasped his almighty hands underneath you, underneath Jesus' strong hands, both hands holding you up. How safe you are in the arms of the Father and the Son.

I might add, and the Spirit. Oh, friend, do you doubt that the eternal God has pledged his faithfulness to you? He has given you this testimony of his love for you, and should we distrust him in this new year?

Jesus concludes, I and the Father are one. One in power. One in will. One in mission.

[42 : 47] One in affection. The Father, Son, and the Spirit unwaveringly united in their task of saving, caring, preserving the sheep.

God for the enemy of our souls may be strong and mighty, and there are many, but the Savior is stronger, mightier, more powerful. What's security?

Infinite Encouragement in this passage. But let's zoom out for a second. Why does Jesus go here after being asked to reveal his identity as the Christ? Well, he is answering their question, isn't he? Because the question that Jesus wants you to ask is this. Who can say these things? Who can say I and the Father are one?

He is no Joe Schmo. Jesus is God, the eternal self-existent one. He simply is. He is the king of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God who honor and glory forever belong to.

[43 : 57] Jesus takes them to the very height of who he is. This is the glorious doctrine of the Trinity, one God, co-equal, co-eternal persons.

He could not have been more clear. This one is the great shepherd of the sheep, the one who stands before them is God himself. He could not have been more clear, but they picked up stones to kill him.

To conclude, the best scene in Narnia is probably the third book, The Horse and His Boy. C.S. Lewis tells a story of Shasta Shasta. And Shasta is walking in darkness. He is in despair. A series of terrible misfortunes befell him.

He was abused growing up, chased by lions. Everything has gone wrong in his life. He's been there. As Shasta is walking in the field, the tears are rolling down his cheeks.

[45 : 10] But then Shasta suddenly senses that someone or something was walking beside him in the darkness. He asked, Who are you? He heard a loud, large, and deep voice, one who has waited long for you to speak.

Are you a giant? He asked. The voice replied, You might call me a giant, but I am not like the creatures you call giants. And this voice chronicled every bit of suffering in his life.

And Shasta begins to feel sorry for himself. Don't you think it was bad luck for me to meet all these lions? The voice said, I do not call you unfortunate. And then he revealed himself as Aslan, the lion. He says, There was only one lion. I was a lion. I did all these things. I wounded you to shape you and mold you. his entire life, Aslan had been right there beside him.

Through the good and the bad, the lion had been there behind the scenes, shaping him, protecting him, since he was a baby, guarding him, guiding him, shepherding him.

[46 : 19] The lion of Judas says the same to you. Behold, he is the one who keeps you. He will neither sleep nor slumber. Let's pray. Father in heaven, we thank you for this rich cup of free grace.

This cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our life because of the good shepherd's love for us. Father, we are more than conquerors through you who have loved us. Nothing in all creation will separate us from this love. We pray we answer this new year confident, bold, that you are with us always. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Amen.