

Slide 1

The Good Shepherd and His Sheep

JOHN 10:1-21

Introduction

Slide 2

1. Throughout the Psalms, God is often pictured as the shepherd and Israel as His flock:

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” (Psalm 23:1, NASB95)

“You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.” (Psalm 77:20, NASB95)

“So we Your people and the sheep of Your pasture will give thanks to You forever; to all generations we will tell of Your praise.” (Psalm 79:13, NASB95)

Slide 3

“Oh, give ear, Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who are enthroned above the cherubim, shine forth!” (Psalm 80:1, NASB95)

“For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.” (Psalm 95:7, NASB95)

Slide 4

“Know that the Lord Himself is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.” (Psalm 100:3, NASB95)

2. The prophet Isaiah described Him as a Shepherd who tenderly cares for His flock (Isaiah 40:11).

“Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, in His arm He will gather the lambs

and carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.” (Isaiah 40:11, NASB95)

3. In the Gospels, Jesus, as God in the flesh, is portrayed as the Good Shepherd:
 - a. He is the shepherd who will leave the 99 sheep to go in search of one which is lost (Matthew 18:12; Luke 15:4).
 - b. He has compassion upon the people because they are like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36; Mark 6:34).
 - c. His disciples are His little flock (Luke 12:32).
4. In the first half of John 10, we find Jesus speaking of Himself as the good shepherd who knows His sheep.
5. In these verses we find:
 - a. A parable contrasting the shepherd and the stranger
 - b. Jesus, our access to life
 - c. Jesus, our loving shepherd

Slide 5

I. The Shepherd vs. the Stranger

A. SHEPHERD

1. The true shepherd of the sheep “enters by the door” (v. 2).
 - a. In the villages and towns of Jesus’ day, there were communal sheep-folds.
 - b. At night when the various shepherds returned home with their flocks, they sheltered them in the communal sheep-fold.
 - c. These folds were protected at night by a strong door and a doorkeeper to prevent thieves and beasts of prey from entering.
 - d. Only the shepherds whose sheep were in that sheep-fold were granted entrance by the doorkeeper.

2. Jesus said the shepherd would “call his own sheep by name and lead them out” (v. 3).
3. When all of his sheep have come out of the fold, Jesus said the shepherd “goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice” (v. 4).

B. STRANGER

1. The stranger, on the other hand, does not enter by the door into the sheep fold.
2. He “climbs up some other way.” Why?
3. Because “he is a thief and a robber” (v. 1).
4. Jesus said that the sheep simply “will not follow” a stranger (v. 5).
5. Instead, they will “flee from him,” because they do not recognize his voice.
6. Leon Morris, in his commentary on this passage said that “strangers, even when dressed in the shepherd’s clothing and attempting to imitate his call succeed only in making the sheep run away. The sheep know their shepherd’s voice but do not know and do not respond to that of a stranger” (Morris, p. 503).

C. THE PEOPLE’S FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND

1. Jesus used this “figure of speech” or “illustration” to present a spiritual truth.
2. However, according to John, the people “did not understand what he was saying to them” (v. 6b, ESV).

Slide 6

II. Jesus, Our Access to Life

A. THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP

1. In verses 7-10, Jesus uses another illustration with which the people were no doubt familiar.
2. During the warm season when the shepherds did not return home at night, they collected their sheep into another sheep-fold.
 - a. This sheepfold was an open space enclosed by a rock wall.
 - b. At one point in the wall there was an opening through which the sheep came in and went out.
 - c. At night the shepherd himself would lay down across the opening so that no sheep could get out or in except over his body.
3. This is what Jesus was thinking of when He said, "I am the door of the sheep" (v. 7).
4. Through Him, and through Him alone, you and I find access to God.
 - a. "for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father."
(Ephesians 2:18, NASB95)
 - b. "... a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh," (Hebrews 10:19-20, NASB95)
5. Here, in verse 9, Jesus said, "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."
6. The sheepfold was a place of safety and security.
7. In the Jewish way of thinking the idea of going in and coming out brought to mind a life that is absolutely secure and safe.
8. "When a man can go in and out without fear, it means that his country is at peace, that the forces of law and order are supreme, and that he enjoys perfect security" (Barclay, *John (vol. II)*, p. 59).
9. In Deuteronomy 28:6, Moses said of the man who was obedient to God,

“Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.”

10. In Psalm 121:8, the psalmist said of the Lord’s faithful, “The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever.”
11. Now Jesus makes that promise to us:
 - a. He says, “I am the door,” the One who grants access to My Father.
 - b. If you enter through Me, I will save you.
 - c. I am the one who will “guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever.”

Slide 7

B. THE THIEF

1. “All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them” (v. 8).
 - a. Jesus was referring to those leaders of the nation who cared not for the spiritual good of the people, but only for themselves.
 - b. Almost 600 years earlier, through His prophet Jeremiah, God had denounced the leaders of Judah, those He call “the shepherds” (cf. Jeremiah 23:4).

““Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture!” declares the Lord” (Jeremiah 23:4, NASB95)

- c. At approximately the same time, God was also speaking through another prophet, a man named Ezekiel, who was himself in exile in Babylon:
 - 1) “Thus says the Lord God, “Woe, shepherds of Israel who ahve been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock?”” (Ezekiel 34:2).

- 2) “Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will demand My sheep from them and make them cease from feeding sheep. So the shepherds will not feed themselves anymore, but I will deliver My flock from their mouth, so that they will not be food for them.”” (Ezekiel 34:10, NASB95)

Slide 8

2. “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy” (v. 10).
 - a. The thieves are those false shepherds who care only about feeding themselves, not building up the flock.
 - b. They steal sheep in order to kill them, and ultimately destroy the flock.
3. Whereas the thief takes life, Christ gives it to the full — “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (v. 10).
 - a. This isn’t more life from the perspective of time.
 - b. It is life “at its scarcely imagined best” (Carson, *John*, p. 385).
 - c. When I read this, I keep going to what the apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:9, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.” (NIV84)

Slide 9

III. Jesus, Our Loving Shepherd

A. THE GOOD SHEPHERD

1. “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep” (v. 11).
 - a. From the time of Abraham all the way up to Jesus sheep were prey to a number of wild animals: lions, wolves, jackals, panthers, leopards, bears and hyenas.

- b. When a young, inexperienced David was trying convince King Saul that he could go up against a battle hardened warrior like Goliath, he said, “Your servant was tending his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth, and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear” (1 Samuel 17:34-36).
 - c. The true shepherd never hesitated to risk, and even to lay down, his life for his sheep.
2. “I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep” (vv. 14-15).
 - a. There is an intimacy between the good shepherd and his sheep.
 - b. He has a personal interest in them.

Slide 10**B. THE HIRED HAND**

1. “He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them” (v. 12).
2. “He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep” (v. 13).
 - a. The hired hand was tending the sheep simply as a means of making money.
 - b. He felt no ultimate responsibility toward the sheep.

Slide 11**C. HIS OTHER SHEEP**

“I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and

they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd” (John 10:16).

1. When Jesus said this, He was thinking of the Gentiles who would eventually become a part of His church.
2. Peter learned this lesson through the vision he had on the rooftop of Simon’s house in Joppa (Acts 10:9-16).
3. It was for this reason that he willingly went to the home of Corneilus, a Roman centurion and said, “I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him” (Acts 10:34-35).
4. It is also why Paul wrote in Ephesians 2, “For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity . . . so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity” (Ephesians 2:14-16).

D. THE FATHER’S LOVE FOR THE SON

“For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again” (John 10:17).

1. The Father has a special love for Jesus because of His sacrificial obedience to the will of God.
2. Four times Jesus speaks of voluntarily laying down His life:
 - a. “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep” (v. 11).
 - b. “. . . I lay down My life for the sheep” (v. 15).

- c. "I lay down My life . . ." (v. 17).
 - d. "I have authority to lay it down" (v. 18).
3. Twice He predicts His resurrection:
- a. "I lay down My life so that I may take it again" (v. 17).
 - b. "I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again" (v. 18).
4. He has complete sovereignty over His own destiny: "No one has taken it away from Me" (v. 18).
5. Some might argue, "Was not Jesus arrested by the crowd on the night of his betrayal, and did not Pilate order him to be crucified?"

Slide 13

6. When Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, Jesus told him to put his sword away, and then added, "do you not think I can appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions (72,000) of angels?" (Matthew 26:53).
7. When Pilate said to Jesus, "Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?" (John 19:10), Jesus responded, "You would have no authority over me, unless it had been given you from above" (John 19:11).
8. Our Lord's life was not taken from it, He laid it down because He chose to do so — "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative" (v. 18)

Conclusion

1. This is now the third time that Jesus' teaching has divided the people (cf. John 7:43; 9:16).

2. Part of the crowd accused Jesus of having a demon and being insane. They questioned why the others even bothered to listen to Him.
3. Another portion of the people were saying, "These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?" (v. 21).

Slide 14

4. You decide for yourself.
 - a. Are these the words of an insane man, or are they words which bring sanity to an insane world?
 - 1) Peter once told Jesus, "You have words of eternal life" (John 6:68).
 - 2) Jesus, Himself, said that He was speaking the truth (John 8:45)
 - b. Did Jesus perform the works of an insane person, or was His life one which was spent in doing for others?
 - 1) Numerous people were cleansed of their leprosy, received their sight, hearing and ability to speak.
 - 2) Thousands of hungry souls were fed.
 - 3) Peter said that Jesus, "went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38).
 - c. Think about the effect He has had on the world over the last two millennia.
 - 1) Think about the millions of lives which have been changed through the proclamation of the gospel and power of the Holy Spirit.
 - 2) The hateful have become lovers of good, the arrogant and proud have become humble, the weak have been made strong.
5. I believe that Jesus is the Son of God who came to take away our sin and grant us access to His Father.
6. I believe that only in Him will we ever know what abundant life is truly like.
7. I believe that to choose any other path is to lead ourselves away from all that God wants to give us.
8. Will you choose to follow Jesus?