

“I Am the Good Shepherd”

John 10:1-19

Of all the “ ” titles of Christ, probably the most endearing is that of Jesus being “*the good shepherd.*”

Examples of shepherds and sheep are found throughout the O.T.—**Abel** was the first shepherd (Gen. 4:2). **Jacob** and all his sons were shepherds (Gen. 3-31; 47:3). **Moses** was a shepherd (Ex. 2:16-17; Isa. 63:11). **God** is called a Shepherd in Isaiah 40:10-11. The most outstanding example of a shepherd in the O.T. was **David** (2 Sam. 5:2; Ps. 78:70).

➡ The life of a shepherd was **not easy**. This is because sheep are...

- Basically dumb animals (none perform in the circus). Sheep have the smallest brain of any mammal that size and walks on four legs.
- Prone to wander—“*All we like sheep have gone astray.*” The shepherd has to constantly watch over them (cf. Mt. 9:36).
- Can be stubborn—“*we have turned every one to his OWN WAY.*”
- Defenseless—The shepherd must constantly guard the flock against attacks from wolves and wild animals. He was always vigilant to protect the flock from thieves and robbers.
- Sheep cannot clean themselves. They must be cleansed by the shepherd (Song of Solomon 4:2).
- Sheep are totally dependent upon the shepherd.

➡ Jesus is called the _____ in three passages of Scripture:

1. In our text Jesus is the GOOD shepherd who dies to REDEEM the sheep.
2. Heb. 13:20-21 Jesus is the GREAT shepherd who ROSE from the dead.
3. 1 Peter 5:4 Jesus is the CHIEF shepherd who RETURNS for the sheep.

I. The CHARACTER of the Shepherd (10:11). He is the shepherd, as opposed to a false shepherd who is a thief (v. 1).

A. He loves His sheep INFINITELY (vs. 11, 15). No one loves you as much as Jesus does. **He loved you enough to die for you.**

➡ Jesus did not die as a martyr (vs. 11, 17-18). Jesus laid down His life for the sheep. He died as a Substitute! In the O.T.

sheep die for the shepherd—In the N.T. the Shepherd died for the sheep.

- B. He knows His sheep INTIMATELY. No one who knows you better than Jesus, *“the good shepherd.”*
1. He knows **your name** (vs. 3, 14 cf. 1:42; Luke 19:5).
 2. He knows **your nature** (Shepherds know the nature of sheep).
 - There is no weakness in your life that He does not know;
 - No thought in your mind that He does not perceive;
 - No longing of your heart of which He is not aware.
 3. He knows **your needs** (Ps. 23:1). (Song—“He Know Just What I Need”)
 - He knows your every joy and every burden.
 - He knows every mountain you face and every valley you go through.

Several years ago in a small Virginia town, the local newspaper published the upcoming sermon titles for local churches. One pastor named R. I. Williams called the editor to tell him his sermon for next Sunday is titled *“The Lord Is My Shepherd.”* The editor asked, “Is that all?” Williams answered, “That’s enough!” When Williams later received a copy of the paper he opened it to find the title of his sermon: *“The Lord Is My Shepherd, .”*

II. **The CARE of the Shepherd** (10:12-13). He cares for them because He has purchased them! They belong to Him.

- A. The PATTERN of a Shepherd. Christ is a pattern of the ministry for a true pastor who oversees God’s sheep in a local church:
1. He PRECEDES the sheep (vs. 3-4). A shepherd always walked ahead of his sheep. He leads the sheep (the sheep do not lead the shepherd).
 - He goes before them by being *“an example to the brethren in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity”* (1 Tm. 4:12).

2. He PROVIDES the sheep (v. 9b cf. 1 Pet. 5:2).
3. He PROTECTS the sheep. (vs. 12-13 cf. Acts 20:28-30).
 - ILLUS. David (1 Sam. 17:34-36).
 - The “hireling” (professional) is not committed to the flock. He is only concerned about himself.
 - He does not flee at the first sign of trouble. (ILLUS. Dr. Noe).

➡ “The hireling fleeth, he is an hireling”—What you ARE determines what you DO.
4. He PERCEIVES the sheep (v. 14). He observes and knows his sheep. Calls his sheep by name—He acquaints himself and knows his sheep individually (Prov. 27:23).
5. He PURSUES the sheep (v. 16—“*them also I must bring...*” He brings them because He has sought them (cf. Luke 15:4).

➡ There are several interpretations of John 10:16:

 - Roman Catholic interpretation: The “other sheep” are Protestants who are outside the church. The Pope is the “one shepherd of the one fold” who seeks to bring both Catholic and Protestants together.
 - Mormon interpretation: According to the spurious *Book of Mormon*, the “other sheep” are the so-called “Nephites,” a group of Jews who supposedly fled the Babylonian captivity and settled in Central America in 600 BC.
 - Interplanetary interpretation: “Other sheep” are souls who live on other planets which are not of this fold (earth).
 - Baptist bride interpretation: “Other sheep” are Christians who are not part of the Baptist Bride.
 - The “*other sheep*” are Jews of the dispersion who would believe on Him (cf. Ezek. 34:6, 8, 11-16).

➡ “*Other sheep*” = Gentiles who are not of this Jewish fold... There shall be “one fold” made up of both Jew and Gentile under one shepherd (cf. Eph. 2:11-18; 1 Cor. 12:13-14).

- B. The PROGRESSIVE application of Christ being a “shepherd”—*“Good... Great... Chief.”*
1. A man may be a “good” shepherd, but not a “great” shepherd. A man may be a “great” shepherd without being the “chief” shepherd. Jesus is the shepherd... the shepherd... and the shepherd—The top shepherd—The head shepherd— the supreme shepherd. The Shepherd of shepherds.
 2. Every pastor of a local church is an UNDER shepherd who works for the CHIEF shepherd!

III. The CALL of the Shepherd (10:4, 27-28).

- A. A call to CONVERSION (10:27-28). To answer His call, one must turn around.
- B. A call to CONSECRATION (10:27—“...*they follow me...*”).

SUMMATION: The story is told of a banquet held in honor of a famous Shakespearian actor. He received many requests to recite favorite excerpts from various literary works. An old-time country pastor in the audience asked the actor to recite Psalm 23. The actor agreed on the condition that the preacher would also recite it. The actor spoke with great dramatic emphasis and perfect diction. When he finished the audience responded with a lengthy applause. Then the old preacher stood up and began, *“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want...”* His voice was rough and course from many years of preaching. But, by the time he finished—*“...and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever”*—there was not a dry eye in the room.

After the banquet was over someone asked the orator, “How did that old preacher move the crowd emotionally like he did but you didn’t?” He answered, “I know the Psalm, but he KNOWS THE SHEPHERD!”

Do you KNOW the Shepherd? Are you one of His sheep? How you answer that question will determine where you can expect to spend eternity—Heaven or Hell. I invite you to make Jesus your Shepherd!