

Blessed to be Christ's Sheep

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles and turn to the Gospel of John. We're going to read again from John chapter 10. We'll read the first 30 verses.

John chapter 10, verse 1. I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate but climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep.

The watchman opens the gate for him and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them. And his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger. In fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice.

Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them. Therefore Jesus said again, I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep.

[1 : 03] All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away.

Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd.

I know my sheep and my sheep know me. Just as the father knows me and I know the father and I lay down my life for the sheep.

[2 : 02] I have other sheep that are not of the sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

The reason my father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my father. At these words, the Jews were again divided.

Many of them said, he is demon possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him? But others said, these are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon.

Can a demon open the eyes of the blind? Then came the feast of dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's colonnade.

[3 : 02] The Jews gathered around him saying, how long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered, I did tell you, but you do not believe.

The miracles I do in my father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice.

I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. No one can snatch them out of my hand.

My father who has given them to me is greater than all. No one can snatch them out of my father's hand. I and the father are one.

One of the ways that Jesus speaks of his sheep is to call them, or of his believers, is to call them his sheep.

[4 : 01] And if that's your identity this morning, a believer in Jesus with no hope but him for salvation, then my aim today is to show you just how blessed you are to be one of Christ's sheep.

And how that identity affects your life, both now and your future hereafter. Last week we saw that the one thing that's true of sheep, among all others, is how absolutely dependent they are upon the shepherd for all things.

And according to Jesus, therefore, nothing is more pitiful than harassed and helpless sheep without a shepherd. And that's what we were, according to Isaiah 53.

For we all, like sheep, had gone astray and we had turned each one to our own way. And so having ditched the Savior, ditched Jesus as our shepherd, we went out on our own and we were exposed to all kinds of damning dangers.

There was sin. There was Satan's rule. And we had no power over it. There was the alluring world and we found ourselves drawn into it. There was painful trials of life.

[5 : 22] And no shepherd to care for us in our troubles. And worst of all, there was the torments of God's eternal wrath for all who have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

And all this because we didn't want the shepherd and we chose to declare our independence of him. Harassed and helpless sheep without a shepherd. But rather than leave us to ourselves and damn us all the good shepherd, rather laid down his life for the sheep.

The father laid on him the iniquities of us all. And he bore them, those sins, in his body to the tree.

That we, too, might die to sin and live for righteousness.

And then he rose again, didn't he? And in your own lifetime, this good shepherd came and sought you. And he found you. And he drew you.

He overcame all of your resistance and reasons for rejecting the shepherd, not wanting him. And he sweetly drew you to repentance and faith to come to him for salvation.

[6 : 29] And so you are one of these of whom Peter says, You have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls. And by the power of his death and resurrection, he has healed you of your chronic waywardness.

Wanting to have nothing to do with the shepherd, but to go your own way. And now yours is the privilege of being a sheep in Jesus' fold. Belonging to him under his constant care.

None more blessed than the sheep of this good shepherd. And that, brothers and sisters, is your new identity. And I want you to live more in the light of it.

So we're returning to this one more time, our identity. I am a sheep in Jesus' fold. He not only is identified in the New Testament as the good shepherd.

Hebrews 13.20 calls him the great shepherd of the sheep. He's as great as he is good. And he's the only shepherd that can see you safely through this life and into heaven at last.

[7 : 40] So let's count our blessings this morning as sheep of this good and great shepherd, Jesus Christ. And so many of these blessings spell out security, safety for his sheep.

So I want you to notice with me just how safe and secure the sheep of Jesus are. Now other so-called shepherds and leaders of God's people were only interested in fleecing the sheep. And what they could get out of the sheep. Taking from them. And so they came to steal, to kill and destroy. But in John 10.10 the good shepherd says, But I have come not to take from the sheep, but to give to them life.

Abundant life. Life to the full. And how will he give life to his sheep? By laying down his life for them. So he switches places with us.

Our sins deserve death. He had no sin. He deserved life. So he lays down his life instead of us. That we might have the life that he deserved.

[8 : 54] Instead of the death that we deserve. He got our death under God's wrath. We get his life. The whole of it. In time and forever. Under God's favor.

His unchanging love. And now again in John chapter 10 and verse 28. We're told something else about this life that he gives.

The life he came to give his sheep. Verse 28. I give them eternal life. And those words are so familiar. I fear they run over my ears without reaching my heart.

And I want to drive them home to you this morning. And trust God will touch your heart. And mine. I give them eternal life. That's Jesus the good shepherd.

That's what he's saying about his sheep. So this life he's come to give is not only abundant and full. It's eternal life. And that speaks first of all of the quality of life.

[9 : 52] Remember how Jesus says it in John 17 3. When he's talking to the father. He says this is life eternal. To know you the only true God.

And Jesus Christ. Whom you have sent. So first and foremost. Eternal life speaks of a quality of life. The very highest quality of life possible to men.

And that is to know and be known. By this one true living God. To know him. As your God.

To have this relationship with him. And sometimes we boast. If we know some great man. Some celebrity. And we drop these names well. And we feel so good.

If we know somebody great. What is this? To know God. That's right. I just spoke with him this morning. What a privilege.

[10:50] For the sheep. That they're given this life. That is knowing him. But eternal life also speaks of the duration of this life. Doesn't it? The life he gives to his sheep.

Is without end. It is eternal. And that's what he promises in John 3.16. To everyone who believes in him.

They will. What? Not perish. But have eternal life. And that's the kind of life that he gives. To his sheep. Unending life.

So that they will never. Perish. You see that in verse. 28. I give them eternal life. And as if.

We. We may miss it. He adds to that. And the result of that. Having given you eternal life. Means you will never perish. Sheep. Drink that in.

[11:49] You will never. Perish. Perish. What security for sheep. Who are traveling. Traveling through this barren wilderness. So filled with.

Dangers. And devils. That want us damned. That want to drag us to hell. To have the good shepherd say. I give to my sheep eternal life.

And they will never. Perish. And their security. Not only has to do with this gift. That Jesus gave them. In the past.

If he gave you. Eternal life. When you trusted in him. It not only has to do with that. But it has to do with. What he's doing. For us.

In the present. And will do for us. All of our lives. His present activity. Of defending them. He says. No one can snatch them. Out of my hand. Verse 28.

[12:47] In other words. He's standing. Guard. Guard. And he's defending them. And that reminds us. That he's alive. And why do we need that reminder? Because earlier in the chapter. He says.

I lay down my life for the sheep. Well then he died. Yes. He did. He laid down his life. In death. But then. He.

He tells us. Here in chapter 10. That he had authority. To lay it down. Verse 18. And authority. To take it up again. In other words.

This Jesus. Who laid down his life for us. Is now alive. And that secures our life. A dead shepherd. Would.

Would be no good to the sheep. We need a living shepherd. Who's aware of what's going on. In my life. The temptations. The trials. Someone to protect me. Against all these dangers.

[13:41] And so he lives. And he lives. To protect his sheep. He lives to ensure. That no one. Will be able to snatch them. Out of his hand. If he holds you.

In his omnipotent grip. No one can get you out. Remember kids. When the bear. And the lion.

Came. And tried to snatch. Away. One of David's sheep. And he went after them.

And they failed. And paid dearly. For the attempt. As David killed them. And recovered. His sheep. Well even so. The sheep of Jesus.

Are precious to him. He holds them with a love. That will not let them go. Oh the love. That sought me. Oh the blood.

That bought me. Oh the grace. That brought me. To the fold. And we can add to that. And oh the power. That keeps me. In the fold. Because Jesus.

[14:37] Will not let us. Be snatched. Out of his hand. The omnipotent grip. Of his love. Will keep us. To the end. And he protects his sheep.

So well. That not one. Will be missing. Not one. Will be missing. Of all the father. Has given him. But he will raise them up. At the last day. John chapter 6.

So dear sheep. Of Jesus. You are safe. And secure. Without alarm. You belong to him. You're his. And since you're his. He takes care. Of his own. And that means.

You are not. Finally. And ultimately. Your own. To care for. So you can come. And cast your care. Upon him. Because he cares for you. He's your shepherd. And that's what he's all about.

Caring for. His sheep. But Jesus piles up. Even greater security. For his sheep. Notice as he goes on. To say in verse 29. My father. Who has given them to me.

[15:32] Is greater than all. And no one can snatch them. Out of my father's hand. Now there's all kinds of security in this verse. Notice first of all. That Jesus' sheep were given to him.

By his father. What security. For the sheep to know. That. My belonging to Jesus.

Was not due to my being smart enough. Or being lucky enough. To. To find the good shepherd.

But. Was rather determined by.

The father's decision. In eternity past. In choosing me. And giving me to his son. And saying son.

You go now. And you lay down your life.

For these sheep. And you be damned in their place. That they might live. Instead of die. They were given to him. By the father.

[16:32] In chapter 17. In verse 2. Jesus says to his father. In his prayer. You gave your son authority. To give eternal life. To all those.

You have given him. God gave Jesus. This great shepherd. The authority. The right. To give eternal life. Not to everyone. But to those.

That the father. Had given to him. And who are they? They are the ones. Who when called. Do come to him. And trust in him. But long before they ever believed.

They were given. To Jesus. By his father. What security. For the sheep. And this father.

Who gave us to the son. Is also holding us in his hand. And Jesus reminds us. That there's none greater than he. So if you have the greatest. Holding us in our. How safe are we? We are doubly.

[17:30] Safe. In the hand of both the father. And the son. And security offered. To any sheep. Without a shepherd. Who's here this morning. If you but come to Jesus Christ.

And will have him. To be your savior. And to lead you. And to direct you. Through this life. To heaven. He will be your shepherd.

And he'll claim you. As his sheep. Now. You will have eternal life. And you will never perish. And no one.

Will snatch you out of. His hand. That is. Eternal security. Isn't it? For the sheep. Of Jesus. The good shepherd. Now these are amazing things. Said of.

Of us. Who were. Who were sheep. That loved to wonder. And now he's. He's saying these things. Of us. The sheep. Of Jesus. But.

[18:24] I want us. To. To. To answer this question. Next. Or look for the answer. In Jesus word. How do you know for sure. If you are one of these. Sheep of Jesus. Now I hear children.

With that question. On their minds. Pastor. Yes. I know the gospel. I know. It's only Jesus. That can save me. I know. I need to repent.

And trust in him. But how can I know. That I've done that. How can I know. That. That I'm one of Jesus. As sheep. That he was sent. To lay down his life for.

That he now lives. To. To watch over. And to keep. And to ensure. That I get into heaven. At last. How can I know. For sure. That I'm one of those sheep. That the father gave him.

And that he died for. And he now lives for. Folks. That is not a question. To leave to. I hope so. We're talking about.

[19:22] Where you will live. Forever and ever. Just as you have an address now. And you live at that address. There are two places. You will live. Either in heaven. Or in hell. And that forever.

That's a big issue. That's a big deal. And most of the world. Is yawning. And not believing it. That there's really a heaven. And a real hell. Where people live forever. But God wants you.

To be clear on that. And so he speaks. Very clearly. On this issue. He doesn't want to leave us guessing. And nothing is more clear. Than verse 27. How do I know.

If I'm a sheep. In Jesus fold. Well Jesus says. My sheep. Listen. To my voice. I know them. And they follow me.

Now that's. That's very plain. Isn't it? It's very easy. To understand. Verse 27. Of chapter 10. You know. It's also true. In the animal world. Of sheep. As it is.

[20:17] In Jesus. Sheep. That. Sheep. Listen. To. And follow. Their shepherd. But they will not follow a stranger.

Or listen to his voice. And that's what Jesus. Is saying to them. And teaching them. By pointing them. So there's this flock. Of wooly sheep. And they're.

They're just chewing. The cut. They're just. They're just eating the grass. They're grazing there. And. And along comes a stranger. Not the real shepherd. And. And he can bark orders. At those sheep. As loud. And as long. As. As he wants. But. They'll just go on chewing. They will do nothing. They won't budge. Why? Because he's not their shepherd. They don't know him. Or his voice. And so they will ignore him. They'll even run from him. But let their own shepherd speak. Let their own shepherd call.

[21 : 15] Or give the order. And they'll stop what they'll. What they're doing. And they will follow him. For they know his voice. They know him. And he knows them.

And he even calls them each by name. With an intimate knowledge. Of every one of them. Kids you've perhaps heard. The old nursery rhyme. Mary had a little lamb. And out of all the lambs in the world. How do you know which one is Mary's? Well it's simple. Isn't it? Mary had a little lamb. Its fleece was white as snow. And everywhere that Mary went. What? The lamb was sure to go. That's how you know. Which lamb is Mary's? Well which one's following her? Even so. Jesus too has many lambs. Jesus too has many lambs.

[22 : 10] With sins washed white as snow. And everywhere that Jesus goes. His lambs. Are sure to go. That's what Jesus is telling us.

How do you know who are the sheep of Jesus? It's very simple. They listen to his voice and follow him. They follow the shepherd. Jesus Christ. Now he tells us the reason they follow the shepherd. It's because they know him and his voice. They recognize him. They. And I want us to see these two reasons. Why they follow the good shepherd. First of all they know him. The sheep know the shepherd. Verse 14. I know my sheep. And my sheep know me. You see there's this mutual knowing of each other. Knowing and being known. That's the sheep and the shepherd. This. This relationship. Relationship. He says. I know them. And they know me. Just as the father knows me.

[23 : 11] And I know the father. So. There's a relationship. Of knowing each other. Between the father. And the son. And there is. Similarly. This relationship.

Of knowing each other. Between the shepherd. And his sheep. Christ's sheep are not. Those who just do some religious things. We don't know. Who's a real sheep. Of Jesus. Just because of who shows up. At church. Or who does good deeds. In the world. In the world's eyes. And so on. No. His sheep. Know him. There's this. There's this relationship. A real relationship. A mutual. Knowing of each other. And so it's not just that they're smart. And have a lot of facts. In their head. About Jesus. No. They know by experience. Something of his wisdom. Something of his faithfulness. His love. His compassion.

[24 : 08] His power. His goodness. His grace. Why? Because they've. They've proven him. They've. They've followed him. And they've learned how gentle.

And humble of heart he is. They know his character. And his ways. And because they know him. They listen. To his voice. And follow him. And he knows them. Not only do they know him. He knows them. Not just knowing sheep generically. That Jesus is familiar with sheep. And knows that they love to stray. That's true. But he knows them. Specifically. Even. Calls them. By name. And Jesus. She can never get over this fact. That he cares enough to get to know me.

[25 : 05] And he knows my frame. And he remembers just how weak I am. I am dust. And he remembers that. About me. And he knows my limits. Different from yours.

And he knows my weaknesses. And he knows my trials. And he knows my needs. And he knows my fears. And he knows my tears. And he knows my thoughts. And he knows my dependence upon him. He knows everything that there is to know about me. And that's why the true sheep of Jesus follow him. He cares about them. They know that he knows them. He's worthy of following. He's trustworthy. I can safely put my life into his hand. And follow him. Wherever he leads me. So that's the first reason.

They follow the shepherd. Because they know him. They have this relationship. And they can trust him. But second. They know his voice. Verses three to five.

[26 : 10] The sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name. And he leads them out. Someone has said. That's important to remember. He doesn't drive them from behind.

But leads them from up front. And when he has brought out all his own. He goes on ahead of them. And his sheep follow him. Why? Because they know his voice.

That's why the sheep follow him. They know his voice. But they'll never follow a stranger. In fact. They'll run away from him. Because they don't recognize a stranger's voice. In other words. The ears of their hearts.

Have been tuned to the frequency. Of the good shepherd's voice. And that's what the new birth does. For the sheep. It gives them a love for Jesus voice. When I was a wandering sheep. I did not love. The shepherd's voice. I wouldn't listen to the shepherd's voice. Oh but now I love him. And I love his voice. And let's have no misunderstanding.

[27 : 10] About Jesus voice. It's not some audible voice. Heard inside of us. Oh. I just heard Jesus say something to me.

No. It's just this. That when I open my Bible. And read. Or when I hear it read. Or preached. It is the voice of Jesus.

That I hear. All of it. The red letters. The black letters. It's the word of Christ. To the sheep.

The voice of Jesus. And his sheep are now in tune. With that voice. It now carries weight with them. Before.

Didn't carry weight with them. But now it does. Now when he speaks. They're all ears. They listen. And they follow. So who are the sheep of Jesus?

[28 : 06] My sheep listen to my voice. I know them. And they follow me. Do you love the word of God? Because it is the voice of Jesus. Is this book the most precious commodity in this world?

Because it's the voice of your shepherd. Lord. And do you follow him? As he leads you. Now where does Jesus lead his sheep?

Well. David tells us in that shepherd's psalm. That the Lord is my shepherd. And he leads me in paths of righteousness. For his namesake. Doesn't he? Paths of righteousness.

That's where he's leading us. These are the right ways of the Lord. Who is wise? He will realize these things. Who is discerning? He will understand them. That the ways of the Lord are right. They're righteous. The wise walk in his ways. The fools stumble in them. And so we follow on.

[29 : 08] For his namesake. And our shepherd not only leads us by his word. He also leads us by his providence. As we heard this morning in the worship. The singing. He leads me sometimes to feed in green pastures.

And to lay down and drink by still waters. Oh precious precious times. And as I eat and drink. My soul is restored.

He knows how exhausting trials are. He knows how worn out we get. Just with the cares of life. The burdens of life. He knows how wearisome.

It is to battle against sin and temptation without rest. And knowing this. And how sapped and sluggish we can be.

He comes to us. He says. Now you're going to lay down. And eat. And drink. By still waters. Green pastures.

[30 : 11] Well how often. Has the Lord restored my soul. Feeding. Upon the precious green pastures. Drinking. Of the living water.

Christ. Through his word. That's it. The shepherd. You see. He's leading you. To minister to you. To bring you. Just the word and season you needed.

Isn't that comforting? Isn't that security for the sheep? I'm not going to poop out. And quit short of heaven. Because. My shepherd.

Restores my soul. He's constantly. Coming. Knows. When to lead me. Besides still waters. And green pastures. Other times. He leads us right down into the dark.

The dark valleys. But even here. We need not fear. When he leads us into the valley. Of the shadow of death. Why no fear? Because the shepherd is with us.

[31 : 08] He's with me there. He's with me through the valley. He goes down in with me. He's through the valley. And he comes up on the other side. Receives us unto life eternal.

And so we don't fear. But sometimes in providence. He leads us into these valleys. And then he leads me right into the presence of my enemies. With all the fiery darts of the evil one. Flying at me. Temptations. Coming at me. And right there. He sets a table before me. That I might have sustenance and resources for the battle.

Where? Right in the midst of the battlefield. Right in the midst of the strife. Is that not security for the sheep? As we battle against sin and Satan and hell.

Revelation 14.4 says they follow the lamb wherever he goes. It's not that they follow the lamb when where he leads them is where they want to go.

[32 : 14] When he leads me in paths of my choosing and in commands according to my liking. Or ways that I understand and that feel good to me.

No. They follow the lamb wherever. Wherever. Wherever. He goes. That's a mark of the sheep you see. And it's the great difference the new birth makes in a sheep. The reason we were sheep without a shepherd is we didn't want the shepherd leading us.

Did we? We wanted to call the shots ourselves. And that's why we ditched him in the first place. But now. Now we have a shepherd who leads us. And we follow on.

Wherever he says. Wherever he leads me. Now that's good news to my heart. He leadeth me. Oh blessed thought. Used to be.

Oh horrendous thought. I don't want to be led. I want to choose from. Now. Oh blessed thought. What words with heavenly comfort fraught. That he leads me. Why is that such good news?

[33 : 20] Well. Because I need to be led. Remember. I'm a sheep. So where. Whatever I do. Where I be. Still tis God's hand that leadeth me.

His faithful follower I would be. Wherever he leads. A little over a year ago. Jose and I were walking the streets of Victoria, Canada.

Quaint old town. With little shops tucked in. And one narrow alley carved its way between tall brick buildings. That you could almost reach out and touch in some places. They were so close to each other.

And at one point. As often is the case. Jose lingered to window shop. And I meandered on ahead. Maybe 20 paces or so. And unbeknownst to me. She took out her phone. And she took a picture of me.

From the back side. My better side. And. But about 20 paces ahead. And I guess she posted it on Facebook or Twitter. What. I know nothing about these places.

[34 : 19] Just that they exist. And she put the caption beneath it. I'd follow this man anywhere. Now some smart aleck responded back.

And who is he? Who is this man? Well of course it was me. Who else would she follow? Anywhere. You can confess if that was you afterwards.

I'm not sure who wrote that. But I'm sure that she would want to reserve the right. To put qualifications on. Anywhere. Because I.

Am a poor. Leader. At times. And I misled her at times. Sometimes I led her selfishly.

For what was good for me. And not thinking of what was best for her. And yet if she would say. I'll follow that man anywhere. How much more. Oh sheep of Jesus Christ.

[35 : 19] Should you be able to say of. Jesus. The good shepherd. The great shepherd. I'll follow him anywhere. Without qualification. Without exception.

Period. I'll follow him anywhere. And why can we say that? Because the one we're following. Has pierced. Nail prints in his feet.

Amen. Because he's the one that laid down his life for us. He's already gone on the record. To show how invested he is in our good. How concerned he is for our best.

And our welfare. That he holds back nothing. That if his very own life was needed. He has laid it down already. Now what else would he withhold.

From one so dear to him. I can follow him safely. Anywhere. And so we sing. Anywhere he leads me. In this world. Below.

[36 : 17] Where he leads me. I will follow. I'll follow. I'll go with him. With him. All the way. Peaceful scenes. Turbulent storms. Mountaintops.

Lowest valleys. Paths of righteous commandments. Follow him. I'll follow him. Anywhere. Indeed. Jesus. Off repeated. Invitation.

For anyone. Who would become his disciple. Requires this right up front. For you. Doesn't it? That if you would be his disciple. You must deny yourself. Take up your cross.

Daily. And what? Follow him. Follow him. And if it's where you don't want to go. You deny yourself. And you go where he wants you to go.

You follow him. That's the essence of Christianity. What it means to be a believer. To be a disciple of Jesus. To be saved. It's a mark of every one of his sheep. That they hear his voice.

[37 : 15] And follow him. Aren't you glad Jesus is the one going ahead of us. And leading us. I'm so short sighted. I can't see around the next bend. I can't see over the next hill.

But he sees the end from the beginning. That's the one who's guiding and leading me. I can't see through the fog. I can't see in the dark.

But darkness is as light to him. I'm easily deceived by that way that seems right to a man. That really leads to destruction and death. But my good shepherd will not deceive me.

He leads me in the proper path. I know he will not leave me. I don't even know what's best for me. And all who are involved with me. But he does. So how blessed am I to have Jesus my shepherd leading me.

And it is security and safety to follow him. Anywhere he leads us. Not chafing under the yoke. But with growing contentment.

[38 : 16] To follow on in faith. Knowing he does all things well. Thy way not mine oh Lord. However dark it be. Lead me by thine own hand. Choose out the path for me.

Smooth may it be or rough. It still will be the best. Winding or straight. It leads right onward to thy rest. So our security. Our safety is bound up.

With being a sheep under the care of Jesus the good shepherd. Lord. In the shepherd's song David says. Your rod and your staff. They comfort me.

Here's further security and comfort for the sheep. You see. The rod. The rod with which. He destroys his and our enemies. Oh what a comfort.

The rod with which David struck. The animal. That sought to steal. The sheep. And killed it. And our good shepherd has a rod. A rod of iron.

[39 : 15] To defend his sheep. From all. Who would snatch us away from him. But then he has a staff. And that too comforts us. Yes children. You know that song.

The shepherd has a staff. To who. To who. To who. To who. The shepherd has a staff. And on the top of the staff is a hook. A hook to recover. Any straying. Sheep.

That start to wander off the path. And the hook. Pulls them. Back onto the path of righteousness. It's. It's a staff.

To recover his straying sheep. Because even though our prevailing disposition. To roam. And to go astray. Has been healed. He has healed our waywardness.

There is still a part of every sheep. It's called in the Bible. The flesh. It's called indwelling sin. Sin that dwells in me. It's called another principle of sin.

[40 : 11] That. There's a part of every sheep. That still wants to roam. Now that's stupid. That is irrational. That is wicked.

That. That having followed the shepherd. And never found him to. To lead us astray. We would still have some part of us. That wants. To roam. A proneness to wonder.

Lord I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. Prone to walk out on my shepherd. At least for a while. At least. Not. Not that command.

All of them. But that one. Not that providence. Anything but their Lord. Lord. And because of that.

What a comfort is it to the sheep. To know that the shepherd has a staff. And he loves us too much. To let us. Stray off all the way into hell. And he's going to come after us.

[41 : 06] And he's going to. Bring us back. Onto the path of righteousness. It may be the staff of that still small voice. Of the Holy Spirit convicting you.

Maybe you're sitting there. Under a sermon. Maybe you're reading your Bible. At home alone.

Maybe you're driving down the road.

And the Spirit pierces your conscience. And that's all it takes. And you run. And you confess your sin. Oh I've strayed. Forgive me.

Wash and cleanse me. In that precious blood. And forgive me. The staff you see. The shepherd. Restoring.

The one that strayed. Sometimes he uses the staff. To bring affliction. Painful. Painful. Trials and hardships.

[42 : 06] By which he. He uses them to recover. Your straying heart. And feet. So that one sheep could say. Before I was afflicted. I went astray.

But now. Now. Having been afflicted. I obey your word. Oh. It was the staff. You see. Painful thing. Oh. He hit me.

Where I hurt. He caught my attention. He showed me how far I strayed. I came back. Does the shepherd do that sort of thing?

Yes. He loves us far too much. To let us stray. All the way into hell. And so the sheep say. It was good. It was good. It was good for me to be afflicted. That I might learn your decrees.

Or it might be the staff of his goodness. And his kindness. And his forbearance. And his patience with you. He just keeps blessing you. You start straying.

[43 : 04] And rather than a lightning bolt. Blessing falls on your head. And the staff. Pours that into your heart. And melts you. That God has not dealt with you.

As your sins deserved. And the goodness of God. Is meant to lead you to repentance. That's the staff. See how good I am sheep.

Come on back. Why are you roaming? What lie have you believed? And that's why we sing. Let your goodness like a fetter.

Bind my wandering heart to thee. Let your goodness. Just be another reason. To never stray. And so our shepherd. Uses his staff. In many different ways. To recover us.

And we can't help but see. That the hand that holds the staff. Is nail pierced. And that guarantees. That he will only use that staff.

[43 : 59] In a loving way with us. He loved us. So much that he. Gave his life for us. And so the sheep know. That he's gentle. And loving.

And so when they stray. They. And the staff is felt. They know that they can come. Back to the shepherd. They know. He's gentle. And humble in heart.

They know that he welcomes. Wandering sheep back. He doesn't. He's not waiting for them. With a berating rod. No that's for his enemies. He's waiting to embrace them.

Now I remind you. What we see in the gospels. In Jesus story. When they're in ninety and nine. Safely in the shelter. Of the fold. He leaves them. To go get that one. Wandering one.

And what does he do. When he finds it. He picks it up. And carries it close to his heart. And he. He comes back home. Rejoicing. Rejoicing. At a sheep.

[44 : 57] A wandering sheep. That has been recovered. What a shepherd. What a shepherd. And so we come. And we're safe. To confess to him.

Psalms 119. Is the longest chapter. In the bible. It's all about. A sheep's love. For the shepherd's voice. So in verse 10. He says. I seek you with my whole heart.

Do not let me stray. From your commands. Now that's a man. Who knows about. A straying heart. He feels it. And so he says. Oh. Don't let me stray. From your commands.

Verse 10. Fast forward. To the end. Verse 176. And this sheep. Has reason. To say to his shepherd.

I have strayed. Like a lost sheep. Seek your servant. Seek your servant. For I've not forgotten. Your commands.

[45 : 54] The good shepherd. Died for sheep. That love to wonder. And he rose. And never lives. For sheep. That sometimes. Still do wonder. And he lives. To recover them. What a security. For the sheep.

In Jesus fold. Are you straying. This morning. Is that you here. Straying. From the good shepherd. Maybe it's just. The beginning. Of a stray. You. You still. You still. Come to church. But. Those quiet times. Just you. And the shepherd. Oh. They're so.

So rare anymore. When you talk to him. He pours out. His heart to you. And you listen. To his voice. If you're honest.

You have to say that. Your heart for his voice. Is not what it once was. Other things have caught your attention. And things of the world now. Are looking. More enticing.

[46 : 47] Than the shepherd. And his voice. And his friendship. And. And so you're being pulled. And. And some other idol. Has snuck in between you.

And the shepherd. And it's just receiving. Your attention. And affection. And you're beginning to. To stray. Well. Come back to the shepherd.

You'll find him. So full of grace. Plenteous in mercy. Rejoicing. To restore. If you can truly say. With David. At the opening of Psalm 23. The Lord. Is my shepherd. Then you can go on. To say. I shall not. Be in want. Not with a shepherd.

Not as long as. Jesus is my shepherd. It's because of who he is. And what he's. What he does for you. That the sheep are secure. In the keeping of the shepherd. What an identity.

[47 : 43] To be a sheep. Of Jehovah Jesus. I'm going to challenge you. To live with the 23rd Psalm. For a week. Memorize it. If you haven't. If you've memorized it.

In the past. I love to. Recite it. In the. The old King James. That's how I learned it. The first time. And live with that Psalm. For a week. And. Use it to talk.

To your good shepherd. And to praise him. For all that he does. For you. Glory. In your good shepherd. The security.

Of the Lord's. Sheep. Reaches its pinnacle. In the closing words. Of the 23rd Psalm. Surely. Goodness. And mercy. Shall follow me. All the days. Of my life. And I will dwell.

In the house. Of the Lord. Forever. Did you get the first word? It's not a name. Of a lady. It's a word. Of certainty. Surely.

[48 : 38] Certainly. Here is something. That you can. Bet your. Eternity on. Surely. What more. Could you want.

In life. Goodness. And mercy. All your days. And then. With the Lord. At his house. Forever. Forever. And so. He leads us. All through the entire.

Wilderness. Of this life. All the way. Home. To heaven. He's the only shepherd. That can do that. Are you one of his sheep. This morning. If so. That's amazing.

That is amazing. Amazing grace. Amazing. Savior. Amazing shepherd. Amazing. Identity. To be one of his. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Yes. And Jesus. Will not only be our shepherd. To get us safely. Home to heaven. I want to close.

[49 : 32] With a reference. In revelation. Seven. Where we get a peek. Into heaven. Heaven itself. The shepherd's home. And there we see. The great multitude. Of saints. From every tribe.

Language. And nation. Those who have washed. Their robes. And made them white. In the blood of the lamb. And they are before the throne of God. And they serve him day and night. In his temple. And he who sits on the throne. Will spread his tent over them.

Never again will they hunger. Never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them. Nor any scorching heat. For the lamb at the center of the throne.

Will be their shepherd. Lord. And he will lead them. To springs of living water. And God will wipe away. Every tear from their eyes.

Forever the lamb. Will be their shepherd. What a twist. The shepherd is a lamb. Who would have thought.

[50 : 32] That a lamb. Could rescue. The souls of men. Who would have thought. That a lamb. Would be the shepherd. To get us all the way. Safely home to heaven.

And then. To be our shepherd. Forever and ever. So that we will be safe. And secure. From all alarm. Hallelujah. What a savior. What a shepherd. Do you know him?

Is he yours? Do you know for sure. That he laid down his life. In your place. And that you therefore. Will never perish. But have everlasting life.

This good shepherd. Could be yours forever. Come to him. That's his. That's his welcome. Come to me. Come to me. Whoever seeks me. Whoever comes to me.

I will in no wise. Cast out. Children. Why should you not be one of Jesus? Little lands. Why should you wake up another day. As a sheep without a shepherd.

[51 : 31] Why shouldn't you spend the whole of your life. Not just the tail end of it. But the whole of your life. In this dangerous world. With devils that want you damned. Why shouldn't you be safe in the shepherd's arms.

Safe in his hand. Under his rod and staff. His safety and security. Early let us seek thy favor. Early let us return to him.

Turn to him today. Whether young or old. And let's rejoice. In being. A sheep. In the savior's fold. We. We sing. To our good shepherd.

In number 644. Savior. Like a shepherd. Lead us. And let's. Sing this. To our good shepherd. As we conclude. Stand with me. And let's sing.
Number 644. 644. Mercy to relieve us.
[52 : 35] Grace to cleanse us. And power to free us. Amen.