

Jesus is the Good Shepherd

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[0:00] Amen. This evening, my goal is modest.

! His love is unfathomable.

It's incomprehensible. And I want us to dive into that and have our hearts stirred up. So when we receive the bread and the cup, we will receive it in a worthy manner, in a worshipful manner.

Turn in your Bibles to John chapter 10. John chapter 10 is a very familiar passage. You won't find any surprises here tonight.

But I do hope, and I've been praying, that you would be encouraged as you remember the goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[1:14] We'll read the first 18 verses. John chapter 10. I tell you the truth. The man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.

The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of a 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. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

[2:19] 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.

I have other sheep that are not of this 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.

[3:35] 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.

Jesus is the good shepherd. To be more specific, if you are one of his sheep, if you've been enrolled among the blessed as we sang, Jesus is your good shepherd.

He's your good shepherd. In the Greek, the word is kalos. And it means beautiful, pleasant, precious, useful, good.

So Jesus is your beautifully pleasant, infinitely precious, wonderfully useful, good shepherd.

All that you need in a shepherd is in Jesus. Jesus is for you. There's nothing defective in him.

There's nothing lacking in him.

[4:45] He's altogether lovely, the most beautiful of 10,000. And if you're a sheep, beloved, he is yours.

He's your good shepherd. And I want to simply ask tonight, why is Jesus the good shepherd? What makes him so good?

This passage tells us several things, and it probably doesn't exhaust, or what I'm going to say is not going to exhaust why Jesus is the good shepherd. But we want to look at several things.

Why Jesus is such a good shepherd. And first is that he enters by the gate. He enters by the gate. There have been all kinds of people who've made their way into the sheep pen.

There have been all sorts of people who have jumped over the wall, they've climbed over the backside, and Jesus says they're thieves and robbers. There's all kinds of men that tell other men, follow me, and I will give you life, and I will give you pasture.

[5 : 46] Follow me, and I will shepherd you. The kings of the ancient world, they were often called shepherds, and they said, I will lead you. I will protect you.

I will shepherd you. And Jesus says they were nothing but thieves and robbers. They came in to kill and steal. They held out promises of life. Isn't that a politician's way?

They hold out the promise of life, but secretly, or not so secretly, they're killing. They're stealing. They're destroying. And how many false messiahs have there been?

How many saviors have there been? Self-proclaimed saviors. Muhammad and Buddha and Joseph Smith and Jimmy Jones.

All those other leaders, all those other men, they break in and they destroy. But Jesus comes in through the gate. Comes in through the gate.

[6 : 48] Many have gone before, and many will probably come after, but Jesus alone has come in through the gate. He alone has the Father's approval.

This is my Son with whom I am well pleased. And the Father has approved him, and him alone to be the shepherd of your soul.

And so he's the good shepherd because he's the only lawful shepherd. He's the only one with the Father's seal of approval. And he uses the gate to come in and deal with his flock.

He's the good shepherd, secondly, because the sheep listen to his voice. God has a special, chosen flock who have special, God-given ears to hear the voice of the one shepherd.

Later in chapter 10, Jesus says in verse 25, 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.

[7 : 53] My sheep listen to my voice. And by God's grace, if you're a believer here today, you have been given those specially tuned ears where when Jesus speaks, you hear.

You listen to Jesus when he calls you. You listen to Jesus when he called you for the very first time. And the call goes out to many. And many hear, but only the sheep listen to his voice.

Do you remember where you were when Jesus made his voice heard? When he raised his voice and called you? And it was such a powerful call, wasn't it?

You weren't even looking for Jesus. And his voice came into your heart and took a hold of it and drew you sweetly to himself.

And you heard the gospel and suddenly it clicked. It made sense. The gospel is exactly what I need. Jesus is exactly what I need.

[9 : 01] See, Jesus bore holes into your ears. Where they were stopped up, he went in by the Spirit and bore out new holes and he spoke into your heart and into your mind. And you couldn't resist his sweet siren song.

You had to go and be with Jesus. And he wooed you out of your sin. He wooed you away from it and he sweetly called you and your heart was humming in tune with his in response.

See, brothers and sisters, Jesus is your good shepherd and you listen to his voice. What a beautiful shepherd he is. What a glorious shepherd's call this is.

See, you were chained hand and foot to your sin. You were enslaved to sin and you were in love with sin. You were a willful slave.

You were a glad slave and he called you out of your slavery and you were trapped in a filthy pit and he called you with his voice out of the muck and the mire and you were at war with a foe that was too strong for you.

[10 : 12] You were at war with God and Jesus called you to the peace table and you came and you made peace with God and you were sweaty and you were dirty in your sin and you were undefiled or you were defiled and unholy and impure and he called you to holiness and it was such a gracious call.

He called you by name. He knew who you were. He knew exactly what you were when he called you. He knew your personality.

He knew your evil, unbelieving, unclean heart and he knew how unshamedly you loved sin. How shameless you were in your sin and he called you by name.

He said, Jason, come to me and I came and he took a hold of you and he wouldn't let you go. He grabbed your heart and he drew you in and he called you to himself.

The king of kings, the lord of lords, called you to himself. He's the perfect prophet, the perfect priest, the perfect king, the beloved of the father and he called you to himself.

[11:34] You would count it a great privilege if some imminent godly man called you on the phone and wanted to be your friend, wouldn't you? What would you say if J.I. Packer rang you up on the phone and said, you know, I've heard about you and I want you in my life.

I want to take time for you to be with me. Or I will say, John Piper, he calls and he says, I'm a very busy man, but you know, I want to be your friend.

I want to have dealings with you. You come and you be my friend. And probably the next Sunday you would come to Little O Grace Fellowship and you say, you would not believe who called me on the phone.

You'll never believe who wants to be my friend. But that's nothing. It's absolutely nothing compared to what Jesus has done for you. He's called you to himself.

He's the only God-man. The judge of the whole earth. He's the final word of the Father. When Jesus was given, that was it.

[12:41] There was no more to be said and he called you to be his friend. He called you despite all of your sin and despite everything that you were, he called you. And that's grace.

That's so sweet grace. Amazing grace. And if you're lost here and you're hearing Jesus' shepherd call, God's awakened you to your sin, then come follow Jesus.

You say, what about what I want? What about the things that I want? Leave it. Leave it all behind.

It's nothing compared to Jesus. It's nothing compared to the loveliness of this shepherd. Nothing compared to this good shepherd. You haven't tasted anything like Jesus.

So leave it all behind and come. And sometimes you stand up here and you want to say, am I mad? Am I telling you the truth? If I'm telling you the truth, then come.

[13:52] Come to Jesus. He's a good shepherd. Why is Jesus the good shepherd? Thirdly, He knows you. He knows you.

You've already said this, but look at verse 14. I'm the good shepherd. And I know my sheep. And my sheep know me.

Just as the Father knows me and I know my Father. How close is our relationship to our shepherd? Well, it's as close as God the Father and God the Son.

What that means is beyond me. But He's called us to union with Himself. He knows us so intimately. And the marvelous thing is He lets us know Him as intimately.

There's no distance between you and your shepherd. He knows you. He knows your troubles. He knows your weaknesses. He knows the secrets of your heart.

[14:59] He knows the things that you would be ashamed to tell your spouse. He knows your fears. He knows the things that excite you. He knows your temptations.

He knows your needs. He knows you. And brothers and sisters, He opens His heart to you so that you can know Him.

So, we have this entire book from back to front. It's opening up Jesus' heart to you. What's going on in His heart?

What He longs for? What He desires? What He's doing? What He's planning? So, look at the Psalms. And those Psalms are the thoughts and the expression not only of David, but David's greater son.

And so, when you read those Psalms, those are the heart of Jesus being exposed to you. That's the unveiling of His heart. In every page of the Bible, Jesus is revealing Himself to you.

[16:05] And so, there's no distance between you and your shepherd. That's why He's so good. Fourthly, Jesus is the good shepherd because He guides us through life.

He guides us through life. 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.

So, Jesus doesn't save any of His sheep and then let them wander aimlessly through life. He

guides you through your entire life. And sometimes He does that incomprehensibly.

incomprehensibly. We don't know how He's doing it. We don't know where He's leading us. I mean, sometimes the sheep don't know where the shepherd is taking them.

And we wake up and there's cliffs, steep cliffs on all sides. And we hear the howling of the wolf. And we wonder, where are we at? This doesn't look good. But Jesus is guiding us.

[17:08] And He never fails. And sometimes He leads us by speaking to us. And we listen to His voice and we follow Him.

He leads us by commanding us to do things. He tells us the way to go and He says, this is my way. Walk in it. This is where I'm going. Follow me. And His commands are so gracious.

So precious. And so you're never so safe as when you're obeying Jesus. His word never leads us astray. And He's your good shepherd and He guides you through life.

He guides you with His spoken word. And sometimes He takes your hand and He just takes you through life. Well, fifthly, Jesus is your good shepherd because He's the gate of salvation.

And that might sound odd because how can a shepherd be a gate? And you have to remember these are metaphors. And metaphors have a tendency of mixing. And so Jesus is the good shepherd because He's the gate of salvation.

[18:13] I am the gate. Whoever enters through Me will be saved. How are you saved from God's wrath, believer? You are saved by going through Jesus Christ.

And there is no other gate. There is no other gate to salvation. Church is not the gate. Teachers are not the gate. religion is not the gate.

Vague spirituality and psychology and medicine and self-enlightenment. All the modern so-called ways of salvation, they're all lies. There is only one gate and it's Jesus Christ.

And I am the gate and whoever enters through Me will be saved. Jesus alone is the gate. And so where were you? What were you doing when Jesus called you?

What was your situation before God? You were guilty. You were guilty before God. And what was the message that you heard? The message you heard was come to Jesus.

[19:13] Come to Jesus and you'll be saved. Jesus alone can save you. And what happened? You went to Jesus and He saved you. You entered through Him.

And when you entered through Him, you entered into everlasting life. You entered into salvation. So Jesus was your pathway to the kingdom of God.

He was your gateway into the family of God. He was your gateway into favor with God, the smile of God. He was the gate to the forgiveness of your sins.

And though your sins were as scarlet, and they were as scarlet, they became as white as snow. Because He's the open door to eternal life.

He's the open gate. And so, brothers and sisters, how much do we owe to Jesus? All that sin, all of that wrath was turned away.

[20:13] The sin was removed from us because Jesus is the gate. Jesus is your good shepherd, sixly, because He gives you pasture.

He gives you pasture. Whoever comes through Me will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes in only to steal and kill and destroy.

I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. Jesus compares finding pasture to finding life, to living life to its fullest.

And so, this is the abundant life. It's not measured in worldly terms, it's measured in heavenly terms. And Jesus says, I have come that they could have eternal, everlasting, abundant life.

And, friends, hasn't Jesus been abundant, blessed life to you? Haven't you finally been made alive when you came to Jesus and He now gives you life?

[21:19] Life is still hard, isn't it? In many respects, being a Christian, it makes it harder. But would you ever go back? Would you ever turn away from Jesus and what He's done for you?

See, before our lives and our souls, we're wasting away in spiritual anorexia. We were starving to death, suffocating in our sin.

And now, Jesus feeds you. He gives you pastors to give you pasture. And He gives you teachers to instruct you on where to eat and they give you good food.

See, He's the good shepherd. And that's what He does. He looks at what you need and He feeds you. And He gives you good pasture. So He's the good shepherd because He feeds His sheep.

He feeds you. Haven't you experienced that? His Word has come and your soul has been nourished. And don't look at that as the pastor's doing that on their own strength or just something that happens.

[22:32] That's Jesus feeding you. That's Him looking to see what you need and giving you good food to eat. Lastly, Jesus is your good shepherd because He laid down His life for you.

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. Everything up to this point was in the realm of the comprehensible.

You could understand it. And it was within the realm of the expected. Shepherds were expected to feed their sheep and shepherds were expected to go through the gate and not sneak in.

And shepherds were even expected to risk their life for the sheep. just like David did to fight off a lion or a bear.

He fought those animals to rescue the sheep. But if you're going to understand this, you must see that when Jesus says, I lay down my life for the sheep, this is over the top.

[23:42] This is blowing up the metaphor so it doesn't work hardly anymore. Because it doesn't say I am the good shepherd because I risk my life for the sheep.

It says, I'm the good shepherd and the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The word lay down is the same word that we would say, I'm going to take off my clothes and put them down.

It's the same idea. And see, Jesus didn't risk his life for you. He took off his life and he set it down for you willingly. He sacrificed his life for the sheep.

No shepherd ever went out deliberately looking to die for his sheep. William Hendrickson, the commentator, put it like this, in this sense in which it is met, it cannot apply to an ordinary sheep herder, no matter how good he may be.

Such a shepherd may indeed risk his life in the defense of his sheep, but he does not really lay down his life, i.e. he does not yield his life as a voluntary sacrifice.

[24:54] Also, in ordinary life, the death of the herder means loss and possible death for the herd. In this case, the death of the shepherd means life for the sheep.

An ordinary shepherd couldn't die for his sheep. He might endanger himself for them, he would risk his life, but if he died, they also would die.

But you see, Jesus is no ordinary shepherd. When he lays down his life, we get life. When he sacrifices his life, the sheep gain life.

And he gave his life for you. His death means your life, and so he does it for your benefit, for your sake.

He dies instead of you. And so your life hung in the balance. Your life hung in the balance.

[25:54] You were under the wrath of God. What does it mean to be under the wrath of God? what is God's wrath? It means that God is so good that he cannot help but to be indignant about your sin and about who you are.

See, his holiness means that he hated your sinfulness. He felt the way, he felt about your sin the way you feel when you hear of a man who's beaten a child.

Does that make you angry? That's nothing compared to what God's wrath is. Because we're finite creatures, we don't know, we don't understand what holiness is.

And that's what God's wrath is. He wanted to destroy you because of your sin. You didn't deserve to live. and your life and your sin was a stain on creation and he wanted to rub the stain out.

And all of God's goodness and all of his holiness was inflamed against you. See, everything obeyed but you. Stars obeyed but not you.

[27:14] And dirt obeyed but not you. And animals obeyed but not you. You alone rebelled. You alone dared to stick out your tongue at your creator and so you deserve God's wrath.

You deserve the bottom of hell because you had offended infinite holiness. But do you see the goodness of Jesus? Do you see the love of God?

Jesus stepped in. He laid down his life for you. And so you are a wretched wicked sheep. And the shepherd stood in your place.

And the shepherd was so good that he gave his life so that you could walk away. And he loved you to the very last breath when he said it is finished and it was finished. Your sin was no more.

And that's what we remember tonight. Jesus sacrificed himself on the cross. He set aside his life willingly just like tonight you're going to take off your clothes and put them aside.

[28:14] He did it willingly. No one could take his life from him. No one had the authority to do that. God had given Jesus Christ the authority to take up his life to lay it down to take it back up.

And that's why Jesus said to the disciples at his arrest do you think that I cannot call on my father and he will at once put at my disposal more than if I give it you will have it but if I don't give it you will

not have it and do you see the goodness of Jesus 12 legions or the cross and he chose the cross for your sake see no one could force his hand no one could make him give his life away for you but he gave!

it freely he gave it recklessly! without counting! the cost he gave it to you he didn't begrudge his life for your life because he is that good that's why he's the good shepherd see occasionally someone will dare to die for a righteous man won't they but God demonstrates his own love for us in this that while we were still sinners he died for us Jesus died for us and so his love and the way he is a shepherd it breaks all categories of thought it it blows everything about ordinary love away and so he set aside his life to give you life and it was your life or his life he gave you life and that's why he's the good shepherd so as we go to the table remember his love for you remember his dying love remember all the ways that he has shown his love for you he's the father's chosen shepherd and he loves you he calls powerfully and he saves you and he knows all about you and he still loves you he's the gate of salvation and he gives you green pastures but above all that he laid down his life for you so remember his love brothers and sisters if you're older here and your heart is cold and the world seems gray and you feel your love your affection for

Jesus Christ is just withering under the heat remember Jesus and his love for you and let it warm your heart back up to live for him let it refresh your heart tonight and if you're younger here remember his dying love just think how long have you lived young people how long have you lived and have you given it to the world when Jesus gave you his life so go and live for him live the rest of your days for him he's your good shepherd so think about it how can I stretch myself out how can I give myself more completely to my good shepherd he lived and died for me what can I do for him remember!

his love and let it motivate! you to live every day of your life for his glory husbands remember his love remember how he's been your good shepherd husbands love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her he's your standard gentleman remember his love and you'll live up to his standard or at least better up to his standard let Christ love soften you towards your wives Paul says husbands don't be harsh with your wives has the Lord Jesus been harsh with you then how can you be harsh with your wife if he's been so kind and so gentle and so giving then you should do the same for your wives so gentlemen remember his love for you and brothers and sisters as we come to the table remember what he has done for you remember his love and as you leave the table and you go out remember his love let it mark every step that we take let it mark every day that we live we live in this big room called grace and

[33 : 14] Jesus Christ has won it for us by his death so live every day for his glory give your life to him because he has given your life his life for you so as we take the bread and cup remember how good and beautiful Jesus your good shepherd is