

## **The Shepherd of Shepherds, part 2**

(John 10:11-21)

(preached 2/3/19; Pine Grove BC Sun AM)

### **Introduction**

On January 9th, a sheep farmer in Tidworth England was fined 6,500 pounds for unsanitary conditions at his sheep farm.

According to government officials who toured his fields, Michael Tennick put his flock and the general public at risk by not disposing of dead sheep properly..

The task force said that Tennick simply allowed dead sheep to rot in the pastures where his sheep grazed...

In fact, the investigation into his sheep farm uncovered multiple corpses strewn throughout his property.

However, if a concerned neighbor had not reported a very sick looking lamb to officials, Tennick may have continued to offer sub standard care to his flocks..

Tennick eventually pleaded guilty to 6 health and welfare offenses, paid the 6500 pound fine, and will not be allowed to own another flock of sheep for 3 years..

According to council member Roy Perry, “(Officials) are pleased that the farmer responsible for exposing his flock to such terrible conditions has been brought to justice.”

Sadly, there are no investigations into bad shepherds in the church.

There are no government officials to come in and check on the health of people in churches.

Instead, bad shepherds are allowed to abuse their flocks year in and year out with little or no consequences..

I think about the 70 years of abuses that were covered up in the Catholic church in Pennsylvania..

I think about the 100s of thousands of dollars that are spent on supposed faith healers each and every year.

I think about the churches where the Bible isn't taught and the church has simply been a social club for decades..

The same was true in the OT.

For many years, Judaism has slipped into the hands of bad shepherds...

Men who love to wear long robes and sit in the best seats in the synagogue..

Men who loved to line their pockets with the last few dollars of the poor...

This is religious establishment in place when Jesus came on to the scene in 30AD.

Israel as God's flock was in bad shape.

They were a sickly flock because they had poor shepherds..

In fact, Jesus called Israel a flock without shepherds..

In other words, the conditions of the Jewish people were so bad, it looked like they didn't have anyone caring for them..

And it is also within this backdrop of poor and bad shepherding that Jesus speaks the words of John 10, calling himself the Good Shepherd.

Last week, we looked at verses 1-10 of John 10 and we listened as Jesus described himself as the rightful owner of the flock...

And that those sheep in Israel who recognized his voice as their shepherd were coming out of their fold to him..

Now the reality is that most in Israel did not belong to Christ.

Though they were known as God's people, most of the sheep in Jesus' day did not recognize His voice as their shepherd..

In fact, most of Israel not only didn't recognize Jesus' voice as their shepherd, most in Israel wanted him silenced...

However, Jesus continued to call to them hoping that some would hear his voice and follow..

This morning, we continue this picture of Jesus as the good shepherd by looking at verses 11-21 of John 10, so let me read that to us now..

***11 "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. 12 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. 13 He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, 15 even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16 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. 17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. 18 No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”*

*19 A division occurred again among the Jews because of these words. 20 Many of them were saying, “He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?”*

*21 Others were saying, “These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?”*

In case, Jesus’ listeners weren’t convinced of the need to believe in and follow Him, Jesus to offer reason to come to the good shepherd...

In verses 11-13, we see an incredible picture of Jesus as the good shepherd...

## **I. The Good Shepherd Lays Down His Life (11-13)**

To quickly review sheep and shepherds from last week, shepherds are a sheep's only hope.

You see, sheep do not possess a great defense system..

No claws, no fangs, no great speed.

For the most part, their lives are in the hands of the shepherd assigned to care for them..

This is why the character of the shepherd is of utmost importance to the flock..

Get a good shepherd and you survive and even thrive.

Get a bad shepherd and your life is always in danger.

Well, Jesus makes it clear in verse 11 that He is the best of shepherds because he is willing to lay his life down for the sheep of his fold..

***11 "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.***

Now the picture here is really two fold.

One one hand, Jesus is a shepherd like no other, willing to risk his life to save his flock.

Most shepherds would never think of putting their lives on the line for the flock.

And the simple reason for that is that sheep are a dime a dozen..

You could lose an entire flock to predators, but still find another flock to care for..

But Jesus makes it clear that he is that kind of shepherd.

He won't leave his flock when the wolves come.

He will stand and defend them.

False shepherds on the other hand will turn and run when trouble shows.

They will sacrifice some sheep or the entire flock to save their own lives..

But there is more here in these verses that meets the eye..

Jesus is also speaking of the cross here.

His audience doesn't know that the cross is coming for Him.

His audience doesn't know that he will be arrested and tried and found guilty and be sentenced to death.

But Jesus knows that, and verses 11-15 are a picture of Christ's atoning work on the cross..

Jesus is not only willing to lay his life down for the sheep, he will lay his life down for His sheep.

Jesus as a shepherd will become a sacrificial lamb for his flock.

The shepherd becomes the sheep so that the flock can be saved.

This is the incredibly glorious picture of substitutionary atonement.

Christ dies in the place of guilty sinners to take the wrath they deserve on Himself while setting the sinner free..

***2 Corinthians 5:21***

***21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.***

John 10:11 is the heart of the gospel.

Christ died in the place of the guilty sinner.

Christ laid down his life for those who are in His flock.

In an effort to save His flock, Christ went to the cross so that his sheep could avoid being destroyed by the enemy..

This is the most glorious news in all of world history.

The Good Shepherd laid down his life for the sinful sheep.

Notice what Jesus says in verse 12 and 13...

***12 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. 13 He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep.***

The recent history of Israel in the time of Christ was the story of religious leaders that were in it for themselves.

They weren't leading Israel because they loved the people.

They were leading Israel because they loved themselves..

Who we were teenagers, we loved to fish, and there was this one pond where we all wanted to go but no one had permission to fish it.

So one day, one of my friends tells us that he talked to the lady who owned the pond and she was ok with us fishing it as long as we didn't leave trash.

So we take off down there and begin fishing, and this lady who lives up the hill from the pond begins to head our way.

Well, I am on the side of the pond that is closest to her house and I look across the pond at my 3 buddies, and they are all running into the woods...

I ask what is going on, and my buddy yells back..

“I really didn't get her permission. You better run.”

Well, I had nowhere to go so I have to listen to her for 10 minutes.

Threatening to call the cops and my dad...

She didnt end up following through with those threats but she had me real scared for a while..

This is the picture of a bad shepherd, he sees trouble coming and he heads for the woods..

While the good shepherd sees trouble coming, and he steps in to protect the flock.

You see, Christ knew the wrath that Bud Moss deserves.

Christ knew what incredible trouble was coming my way.

And he not only didn't run away, he actually pushed me behind him and took my punishment in his body on the cross..

The good shepherd didn't to save Himself, he died to save the flock..

What an incredible picture of the atonement..

Jesus offers up himself in the place of the guilty sinner...

Christ as the good shepherd atones for the sins of His flock.

But the second note we make about the good shepherd is this..

## **II. The Good Shepherd Knows His Sheep (14-15)**

Look again at verse 14.

***14 I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, 15 even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.***

There are many employers in the world who have no idea who their employees are..

Doug McMillion is the president and chief executive officer of Walmart, and he has 2.3 million people who work for him each day somewhere in the world..

Clearly, it is impossible for Doug McMillon to know all his employees...

The same could be said for the CEOs of Amazon and Kroger who each employ over 400,000 people..

Yet, Christ tells this audience that he knows all the sheep in His flock..

On a literal level, this is easy to understand...

As we said last week, shepherds spend much time with their sheep each day..

Therefore, a good shepherd would take the time to get to know each of the sheep in his flock..

But even beyond that truth is the reality that Jesus knows each of those in his flock personally..

Christ knows the sheep that He has saved, and those he has saved know him..

One of the most disturbing verses in the NT is Matthew 7:21-23..

***21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many [n]miracles?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’***

The Good Shepherd knows his sheep in a real intimate way.

And his sheep know him in a real intimate way.

You see, salvation is not just a matter of knowing that Christ existed.

It is not just a matter of knowing that Jesus died on a cross.

Salvation is knowing and believing those truths, but also knowing Christ.

There are many people who will stand before God and know who Christ was and what he did, but they will depart from God because they never knew Christ in a saving way.

I remind you today.

You need the facts of the gospel.

You need to have knowledge of who Christ is.

You need to have the knowledge of his perfect life.

You need to know that he died on the cross in your place.

You need to know that he was resurrected.

But those facts must lead to faith in Christ.

You must trust Him.

You must love Him.

You must commit to following and obeying Him.

This is what it means to be saved.

You must know and love Christ with all your heart.

The false leaders of Israel didn't know their sheep.

The Pharisees and Saducees didnt care about the people..

The good Shepherd knows and loves and cares for His sheep..

But also, the sheep know and love the Shepherd.

A third quality of the good shepherd is found in verse 16..

### **III. The Good Shepherd Unites the Flock (16)**

***16 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.***

I was reading a book about shepherding that described how to merge two flocks of sheep..

Since sheep can be quite moody and even hostile to newcomers, merging two flocks of sheep requires much patience..

The best thing to do is to let the shepherd be present when the flocks are introduced in order to discourage rivalry and infighting...

Over time, the sheep will grow together since they have the same level of respect for the same shepherd.

And this is exactly what Jesus is talking about here.

The crowds would understand that flocks change over time as sheep die and new sheep are added..

But Jesus is also once again previewing the future...

This time, He is previewing the inclusion of the Gentiles into his fold.

You see, Jesus was calling to the flock of Jews before him that day...

He was calling as their true Messiah and shepherd..

But his death will also make possible the salvation of non-Jews..

The gospel is not just good news for Jews, but it is also good news for Gentiles...

All of us Gentiles are proof that Christ's flock is made up of both Jew and Gentile.

We are the other sheep of verse 16, and we are united to the Jews who came to Christ...

In Romans 11, Paul describes the merging of the two flocks as Gentiles being grafted into the Jewish tree..

And the reality of why Jews and Gentiles can exist in peace is because we both belong to the Prince of Peace.

Now remember, the early church was mostly made of Jewish converts to Christianity, but the years after the early church is mostly the story of Gentile conversion...

Only Christ as the Good Shepherd can unite Jews and Gentiles into one flock under His leadership..

A fourth characteristic of the good shepherd is this..

#### **IV. The Good Shepherd Pleases the Father (17-18)**

Verse 17...

***17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. 18 No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”***

Though none of us fully understand the inner workings of the trinity, Jesus lets us know that he laid his life down on his own initiative in obedience to a command from God..

In other words, he wasn't forced to the cross..

He went because the sheep needed saving.

But he also went because the Father needed a sacrifice for sin.

Did Jesus agonize over having to go to the cross?

Absolutely.

He struggled in prayer looking for another way, but ultimately there is no other way.

He has to die for His sheep to satisfy the Father's wrath against sin.

Yet, that obedience was rewarded as Jesus was raised from the dead.

Jesus gave up his life but he also took back his life once the payment for sin had been made and approved by the Father..

Christ is the good Shepherd because he lived a life and died a death that pleased the Father..

Pharisees and Saducees thought they pleased the Lord, but the reality is that only enraged Him..

A final characteristic of the good shepherd is found in verse 19-21..

## **V. The Good Shepherd Divides the World (19-21)**

Verse 19...

***19 A division occurred again among the Jews because of these words. 20 Many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?" 21 Others were saying, "These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?"***

As we have already seen numerous times in John's gospel, Jesus brings division...

In this case, this is division among unbelievers..

Some unbelievers call Jesus an insane madman..

Others called Jesus rational miracle worker.

And though group 2 may sound better, both of these groups end up hell because Jesus is neither...

He certainly isn't insane.

In fact, you would have to be insane not to see Him as God in the flesh..

But he is also way more than a normal miracle worker..

Though group 2 is on the right track to salvation, they can't be saved until they see Jesus as God in his full glory.

This is what worries me about folks in the south..

No one here would call Jesus a crazy mad man, but many here would fall short of seeing Christ in all his glory.

People love to stick Jesus' name on their cars..

They love to put their fish symbols on their businesses.

They love to pull Jesus into their politics...

It seems that so many people in our area have a favorable view of Jesus, but stop short of giving their lives to Him..

Look, Jesus isn't unclear about what it takes to be saved.

***Matthew 10:32-39..***

***32 "Therefore everyone who [z]confesses Me before men, I will also confess [aa]him before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever [ab]denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.***

***34 “Do not think that I came to [ac]bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.***

***35 For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; 36 and a man’s enemies will be the members of his household.***

***37 “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.***

***39 He who has found his [ad]life will lose it, and he who has lost his [ae]life for My sake will find it.***

You can’t be saved without surrendering your life to Christ.

How sad it will be for so many people who had a respect for Jesus but never surrender their life to Him..

How sad it will be to have a good view of Jesus but not a saving view of him..

The good shepherd creates a divide in history that runs to this very day at this very time..

Please don’t end your life on the wrong side of that divide..

## **Conclusion**

So what do we take with us today from John 10?

***#1 - Like it or not, we are all sheep.***

Though we like to think of ourselves as being self-sufficient, we really aren't.

Though we think that we can take care of ourselves, we really can't.

We are just like the sheep in this story.

Poor and defenseless in the world.

We may think we have it all under control, but we don't.

At any moment, we could be attacked and maimed or killed by the enemies around us.

At any moment, we would starve and thirst to death if not for the goodness of God.

We may look in the mirror and think we see a lion but we really see a lamb.

And because we are sheep, we need a good shepherd..

Look, Satan will be your shepherd but he is far from good..

He will take you to what you think are green pastures but it will turn out that you are eating poisoned grass..

He will take you to what you think is clean water but you will gulp down death and destruction..

Sadly, some people never know the difference and they follow Satan right off the cliff..

AS they walk through the valley of death, they will find no comfort from their shepherd only more pain and an eternity of God's wrath..

Instead of pretending to not be a sheep, admit your weakness and seek the good shepherd.

Which leads to point 2..

***#2 - Like it or not, we are all sinners.***

If you stay in Satan's flock, he will convince you that there is nothing to fear.

He will blind your eyes to what is around the corner..

He will tell you that you will be just fine in eternity since you are a good person at heart..

He will convince you that you are a full and well fed sheep while you starve to death spiritually.

Not so with the good shepherd.

In fact, the first that Christ reveals to you is what is coming.

He tells you that sin has you handcuffed.

He also takes you to the end of your life and shows you the ultimate penalty of sin, which is an eternity in a lake of fire.

And last but certainly not least, the good shepherd not only warns you of what is ahead, he has gone before you to prepare the way.

He went to the cross for his sheep to remove their sin.

Instead of blinding you to the consequences of sin, Christ died for his sheep to remove the consequences of sin.

Like it or not, we are big sinners.

But better yet, Christ is bigger Savior.

Come to the good shepherd today.

Give up the brown fields of sin and self.

And eat the grass of contentment..

Give up the poisoned water that the bad shepherd offers  
and drink the living water of Christ.

The good shepherd is the best shepherd.

But even more, the good shepherd is the only shepherd  
that leads his flock to heaven.

Let us pray.