

The Good Shepherd

John 10:11-18

In our previous study, Jesus declared Himself as the Door of the sheepfold. Continuing the conversation, Jesus then declared Himself the Defender of the sheep – the Good Shepherd. Such a continuation is fitting when one considers that the shepherd served as both the door of the sheepfold and the defender of the sheep. Being a shepherd had many roles, and these two were very important.

Through this Jesus revealed that He alone was the door into the fold, the sole means of salvation. Those who desire to be part of the sheepfold must enter through the door. He goes on to describe His role as defender and provider for the sheep. Many had come claiming to be the Christ; but these were mere hirelings, seeking their own profit and gain, while caring nothing for the sheep. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, caring for the sheep and providing for their existence.

As we examine the [lessons](#) within the text, I want to consider: [The Good Shepherd](#). There is but one shepherd for the flock, and He is Jesus. If you know Him, rejoice in His provision. If you have yet to come to salvation in Him, I pray you will see your need for the Shepherd today.

I. The Significance of the Shepherd (11) – [I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep](#). With this single statement, Jesus revealed the great significance of the Shepherd. Consider:

A. His Declaration (11a) – [I am the good shepherd](#). Jesus was emphatic with this statement. He declared that he was the good shepherd. In doing so He declared that He alone stood as the Shepherd of the sheep. He had no equal or rival. He had come to provide for the sheep.

- I am thankful to know the Shepherd of my soul. As I pondered this statement, I realized many are seeking guidance and security in life. They long for that source of peace that can satisfy, and yet many of them never look to the Shepherd. Jesus alone can provide salvation, reconciling us to the holy God, and offer peace that passes all understanding.

B. His Dedication (11b) – [the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep](#). Jesus revealed what separated Him from all who came before Him. While these may have been loved by others, offering good advice at times, no one loved them as Jesus did. He had not come to earth to merely walk among men and fellowship with them; He came with purpose, to give His life for the sheep. Jesus came to die so others could live. He was willing to sacrifice His life for the sheep!

- As I consider His marvelous love and grace, I continue to be amazed. He was the holy, sinless Son of God. He inhabited the glories of heaven in eternity past. He is the second person of the Godhead. He came to earth as God robed in flesh, and yet He was willing to give His life for us. He willingly submitted to the death of the cross, bearing our sin, and dying in our place. Christ became the substitutionary atonement for sin. He died so we could live!

II. The Shamefulness of the Hireling (12-13) – Here Jesus described a sharp contrast between His commitment to the sheep and the neglect of a hireling. Jesus spoke of:

A. The Desertion (12a) – *But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth.* Jesus revealed that the hireling was not the shepherd; he was just a hired servant. His commitment and devotion unto the sheep was much different than that of the shepherd. When faced with danger, as a wolf approached the sheep, the hireling would flee, deserting the sheep, and leaving them defenseless. He was only concerned with his well-being and lacked real commitment to the sheep. The hireling did not love the sheep like the shepherd.

- Others had come before Jesus, claiming to be the Christ, but when trouble and adversity came, they fled, leaving the sheep alone. These were identified by their lack of commitment for the sheep. They were not the Shepherd and could not love them as He does.
- Sadly, this truth is seen on the congregational level. We all know Jesus is the Shepherd of the sheep; but He has called pastors to serve as under-shepherds, guiding and guarding His flock. Unfortunately, some are not what they appear. They have not been called of God to tend the flock, and when danger of difficulty comes, they abandon the fold to fend for themselves. These were never there due to a love and devotion for the church, but hirelings there to receive payment.

B. The Devastation (12b) – *and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.* The desertion of the hireling had a devastating effect on the sheepfold. His absence allowed the wolf to enter the fold, scattering the sheep, and no doubt hurting some in the process. Jesus knew the hireling would not defend or care for the sheep, and this would cause devastation.

- I am glad our Shepherd stands as our defense against the attack of the enemy. He will keep us secure within His care. The church needs an under-shepherd who will do the same, standing boldly against the attack of the enemy. Paul knew the importance of a committed pastor and warned of the dangers of wolves. [Acts 20:28-29](#) – *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he*

hath purchased with his own blood. ^[29] For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

C. The Deception (13) – *The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.*

Jesus revealed the deception associated with a hireling. He never cared for the sheep; he was there for the financial gain. He had no burden for the sheep and was unwilling to stand in their defense. A hireling could not be trusted to adequately care for the sheep.

- I am thankful we have a Shepherd who did not flee when trouble came. He was falsely accused and condemned, and yet He willingly died to provide for the sheep. We need those who will follow the example of Jesus and stand firm in defense of the sheep of God.

III. The Security in the Shepherd (14-18) – Clearly seeking to put their minds at ease as they trusted in Him, Jesus declared the security found within in the Shepherd. Consider:

A. The Guardian (14-15) – *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.* ^[15] *As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.* We serve One who is committed to us. I am glad to know Him, but more importantly, I am glad He knows me. He cares for us individually; He knows each of our burdens and needs. We are never beyond the watchful care of our Shepherd.

- Jesus spoke of the hireling fleeing in the presence of wolves. Jesus as the good Shepherd stood His ground and provided for the sheep. In the face of death awaiting the righteous judgment of God for our sin, Jesus never wavered. He willingly laid down His life for the sheep. He died so we might live. He was so committed to us that He gave His life's blood on the cross for our redemption. Surely, we can depend on One who loves so much and has shown such commitment!

B. The Grace (16a) – *And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice;* My what a blessing we find here. Jesus was speaking to the Jews, those of the household of Israel, and yet He declares there are other sheep, not of that fold, that He must bring to Himself as they hear His voice! He is referring to the grace of God that would be poured out on all humanity. The Gentiles, you and I, would also have the opportunity of salvation!

- Aren't you glad His grace wasn't reserved solely for the Jews? Aren't you glad grace was extended to us as well? Jesus knew prior to the cross that He would die for those yet to hear. He knew that we too would be recipients of such marvelous grace!

C. The Gathering (16b) – *and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.* There will be no segregation in heaven. All the saved make up the body of Christ. We are no longer viewed in light of our race, heritage, or social class. We are viewed as the children of God, His heirs and joint-heirs with Christ. There will be one fold in heaven, and we will all worship the same Lord! [Gal.3:26-28](#) – *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* ^[27] *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.* ^[28] *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

D. The Guarantee (17-18) – *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.* ^[18] *No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.* Those who heard these words that day were likely confused. Calvary was yet in the distance; Jesus was yet to die, but He foretold coming events. He would soon give His life a ransom for the sins of humanity. He would soon offer Himself as the atonement for sin. His life was not taken from Him. He willingly laid it down. He possessed power over life and power over death.

- Each of us should rejoice in these words. Had there been no death there would be no life. Had Christ not offered Himself we would yet be condemned in sin. As He died on the cross and declared the work finished, He secured our salvation! We have the assurance of salvation through the finished work of Christ on the cross. We are not depending on the guidance of hirelings or the works of the flesh. Our hope and assurance are in Christ and Christ alone!

Conclusion: We have considered a beautiful passage. I am thankful for the great Shepherd of my soul. I enjoy His tender care and guidance in my life. I rest secure in Him, enjoying the abundant life He gives. I have full assurance of eternal life through Christ.

Do you know Christ as the Shepherd of your soul? Have you believed in Him by faith? He is the only door of salvation. There is no hope beyond this life apart from Christ. Come to Him if He has dealt with your heart in salvation.

Christian, are you continuing to follow the Shepherd of your soul? If you have wandered, He is calling for you to return to Him. Come as He leads.