

The Gracious Shepherd

John 10: 7-18

As we continue our study of the passages where Jesus declares “Verily, verily” again we find ourselves in this wonderful passage dealing with the great Shepherd of the sheep. Christ offered Himself as the sacrificial lamb for our sins, and yet He stands as the Shepherd of our souls as well. He continually guides the sheep as they follow Him. We rest in His care.

Our text today deals with the gracious nature and provision of the Shepherd for His sheep. This passage bears great application to our salvation and the continued care we enjoy in Christ after coming to Him by faith. I rejoice He doesn’t just save us and set us out to make our own way. He provided the means of our salvation and He continues to care for us as we journey through life. We are blessed beyond measure to have such a gracious Shepherd to follow.

As we are reminded of our many blessings in Christ, I want to examine the [blessings](#) revealed in the text as we consider: [The Gracious Shepherd](#).

I. The Access through the Shepherd (7-9) – Our opening verses reveal the gracious access we have in Christ. Notice:

A. The Entrance (7, 9a) – [Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.](#)^[9] [I am the door.](#) Jesus had spoken of the door into the sheepfold earlier in this passage. He revealed Himself as the Shepherd with legitimate access to the fold. Now He declares that He too is the door of the sheepfold. He remains the Shepherd, and He is also the only door or means of entrance into the fold. [Acts 4:12 – Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.](#)

- We need to understand what Jesus was speaking of here. He was painting a mental picture that all who heard would comprehend. He is not speaking of a door like the ones we are familiar with. In that day, sheep were kept in an enclosure of stone or branches formed into a wall. An opening was left for an entrance, but there was no literal door hung on hinges. The shepherd became the door of the sheepfold as he laid in the narrow passage way. He was literally their door, their defense, and stay.

B. The Resistance (8) – [All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.](#) Others had come prior to Christ promising acceptance to God, but they were only thieves and robbers. They sought to instill principles that required sums of money given, works

performed, or rituals upheld. These never bring reconciliation to God and only robbed people of their time, money, and peace. Man has always sought another way to please God rather than through Christ. They resist the notion that He is the way of forgiveness and eternal life.

▪ Surely many were deceived, but those who sought the Lord and were sensitive to His guidance did not fall victim to such false doctrine. They embraced the truths of God's Word and recognized Jesus as the Christ. We too are surrounded by many who claim a different way, but we have received truth in Christ. The sheep of His fold will not heed the voice of strangers.

C. The Abundance (9) – *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.* Jesus reveals the great abundance we enjoy through Him. Consider:

- **Our Salvation** – *by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.* All who come to Him **shall** be saved. He doesn't reveal a chance of salvation, but a certainty of salvation. *John 6:37 – All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*
- **Our Security** – *by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out.* We also have the glorious privilege of going in and out. Now, don't misunderstand the text. Jesus is not referring to multiple salvation experiences. The saved are eternally secure in Him. This is referring to the liberty and assurance we have in Christ our Lord. We no longer have to fear death or the storms of this life. We have confidence we are going to make it through Christ. *2 Tim.1:12 – For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*
- **Our Satisfaction** – *by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.* This is a concept that many in Jesus' day were familiar with. The shepherd led the sheep to abundant pastures. It has the idea of "*plenty, not wanting or lacking the necessities of life.*" It is good to be led of the Great Shepherd to His pastures green. I have never found Him to be lacking in His care for me and I have never wanted while feasting upon His abundant supply. The world has nothing to compare with the pastures of the Lord. I have nothing to look back or turn back for.

II. The Attendance of the Shepherd (10-15) – Jesus continues to reveal His great love for the sheep. Notice:

A. His Care (10-11) – *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* ^[11] *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.* Others sought to steal and destroy, but Jesus shows great

love and compassion. He came to offer Himself on the cross so we might be pardoned of sin and granted eternal life. He came to give us life more abundantly. Jesus desires that we live in victory, triumphing in Him. We can have that if we will continue to follow the Shepherd.

B. His Caution (12-13) – *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: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.* ^[13] *The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.* We are cautioned to watch who we follow. There were many in Jesus' day that appeared to care for the people, but they were not diligent in their care. When trouble came they would flee the fold and leave them to the wolves which scattered the sheep.

- We too must heed this caution. There are many today that appear to have the interest of the church at heart, but are only hirelings. They stay as long as the pay is good and things are going well. They do not concern themselves with biblical doctrine or the well being of the church. Be careful who you follow and allow to influence your spiritual aspirations.

C. His Commitment (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 that 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!

III. The Atonement in the Shepherd (16-18) – Here Jesus describes the coming sacrifice He would make in order to atone those who believed in His day and all who would follow. Consider:

A. 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!

B. 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.

C. 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 foretells 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 at 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 is in Christ and Christ alone!

Conclusion: We have considered a rich and meaningful 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.