

The Good Shepherd

Luke 10:1-10

Life Group Discussion – November 4th, 2018

The Bible tells us that Jesus is the shepherd, and we are the sheep.

What is the relationship between these two?

The sheep cannot live without the shepherd. Sheep have special characteristics...they are easily tricked, they cannot stand back up when they fall, they only care about what is in front of them.

An important characteristic that many may not know is that sheep have terrible vision. However, their hearing is very good. This is why they can hear a voice well, but may not see a person at all. The relationship between the shepherd and his sheep is through his voice.

We are the same.

The gatekeeper 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." (John 10:3-5)

The sheep are able to tell the voice of their owner. The sheep know that the voice of their shepherd is a matter of their survival. This is why our faith is not built from what we see, but from hearing and understanding the word of God.

If Jesus is our shepherd, this means we must listen and recognize His voice, and follow and obey. Even if other voices in the world sound good, we cannot trust in those strangers but only follow the word of God.

The Bible says there are two types of shepherds.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own 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. (John 10:11-15)

There is a good shepherd and a bad shepherd. What is the difference? The desire of the good shepherd is for the life of the sheep but the bad shepherd only cares for himself. The bad shepherd has no interest in caring or treating the sheep.

What kind of person is a good shepherd? This passage can first be applied to the members in the church, and second to the leaders in the church.

1. A good shepherd focuses on life

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (John 10:10)

Jesus came to Earth to give us life, to save our souls from death. The purpose of the church is to save lives; this is the one true purpose of everything we do.

2. A good shepherd gives abundant life

Jesus doesn't just give us life, He gives us abundant life. This means He provides above and beyond what we can imagine because He loves us.

3. A good shepherd is fair

A good shepherd is able to take care of his flock equally. He loves His sheep fairly and without favoritism. If we are leaders in the church and there are members who give more, serve more, and pour out more, we cannot give favoritism or care for those members more than others. If the sheep are good or bad, there cannot be an unfairness in the way they are treated.

4. A good shepherd sacrifices himself for the sheep

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (John 10:11)

The shepherd of Israel protects His sheep by giving His own life for them. But other shepherds will run away and only save themselves when danger approaches.

Jesus gave His life for us. He came to Earth, died on the cross, and paid our sins so that we could live. This is the way the good shepherd laid down his life for his sheep.

This is all from His grace alone. We did nothing to deserve what Jesus did for us. We are like sheep; blind, unable, and incompetent. But Jesus loves us and he desires us to be with him. This is the unfathomable grace of God.

5. The good shepherd helps us to understand

“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.” (John 10:14-15)

Jesus says he knows us. This should give us peace. This world doesn't have many people who understand us. There are not many people who we can turn to for guidance and to share our hearts with.

But Jesus knows us already. Our situation and our pain, our confusion and our desires. Even when we don't say a word, when we just silently cry, God still hears us and knows.

My brothers and sisters,
When you need help, look not to the world but to Jesus Christ alone. Whatever situation you are going through, look up towards God and open your ears to hear His voice. He knows us the best, and He understands what you are going through.

We are weak sheep, and we need a good shepherd to take care of us. Jesus gave His life so that we could live, and He is our good shepherd.

SHARING-----

1. We talked about the characteristics of sheep. What characteristic(s) stuck out to you, and why?
2. We talked about the difference between a good shepherd and a bad shepherd. What aspect of the good shepherd stuck out to you the most and why?
3. Jesus is our good shepherd. When was a time when you did not know what to do or where to go but Jesus was able to lead you?