



Jesus: The Good Shepherd

John 10:11-18

INTRODUCTION

One of the aspects that I have always liked about England is all of the sheep. Everywhere that you go you can see sheep grazing in the fields. On our last trip to England, we were there at lambing season, one of the most amazing times of the year. We were able to walk through fields with new lambs bounding around. Out of curiosity, they would come close to us and then bound off to the safety of their mother.



Caring for a flock of sheep in Palestine is different from England. The pasture is much sparser and more dangerous. The shepherds have to constantly be watching to ensure that the sheep don't wander off or get attacked.

Ray Vander Laan, in his series “Walking with God in the Desert”, pointed out how the shepherd sings to his sheep as he leads them along the rocky paths. The sheep are safe to graze as long as they can hear the voice of the shepherd.

It was King David who likened the Lord to a shepherd who cares for his sheep. (Psalm 23) Jesus picked up on this image when He declared that He is the Good Shepherd. Unlike the hired hand, the Good Shepherd cares for the sheep, even at the cost of his own safety.

Study 1: John 10:1-6

1. How does Jesus describe the person who does not enter by the gate? Who might Jesus be referring to?
2. Who is the watchman who opens the gate for the shepherd?
3. What is the significance that the shepherd calls his sheep by name?
4. Why do the sheep follow the shepherd?
5. What is the significance that the shepherd leads the sheep?
6. How do the sheep respond to a stranger's voice?



MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. Who are some of the counterfeit shepherds who try to steal sheep today?
2. What does it mean for you to recognize the voice of Jesus?
3. How does the Holy Spirit help us to recognize Jesus' voice?
(John 16:12-15)
4. What does it mean to you that Jesus knows you by name?
5. What are some clues that you are hearing a voice other than Jesus' voice? (1 John 4:1-6)

Study 2: John 10:7-10

1. In Jesus' day, at night the shepherd would place his sheep in a pen without a gate. He would lay across the opening to keep the sheep in and to protect them. What does it mean for Jesus to be the gate for the sheep?

2. What did Jesus say about those who had come before Him?

3. In what way is Jesus the true gate? (John 11:25-26; 14:6)

4. What image does Jesus portray of those who enter through the gate, which is Him?

5. What is the ultimate purpose of those other than the Good Shepherd?

6. What does Jesus promise to those who follow Him?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. What are some of the false “gates” that people are tempted to enter today?
2. Why do people rebel against the idea of Jesus being the only true gate to eternal life?
3. In what ways are false teachers thieves and robbers? (1 Timothy 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 3:1-9)
4. What does it mean for us to be free to go in and out and find pasture?
5. In what ways does Jesus offer us an abundant, full life?

Study 3: John 10:11-13

1. What does it mean for Jesus to be the Good Shepherd?
2. In what ways does Jesus lay down His life for the sheep?
3. How does Jesus contrast the hired hand with the Good Shepherd?
4. Who might the hired hand be referring to?
5. Why would a hired hand abandon the sheep?



MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. What does the image of the Good Shepherd mean to you?
2. Other than dying on the cross, how did Jesus lay down His life for the sheep?
3. How does Jesus continue to lay down His life for us today?
4. How can we recognize the hired hands today?
5. What kind of wolves are attacking the church?
6. What can we do to protect ourselves from the wolf's attacks?
(Ephesians 6:10-20; 1 Peter 5:8-9)

Study 4: John 10:14-18

1. How does Jesus describe his relationship with the sheep?
2. Who are the other sheep that Jesus will add to the flock?
3. What does it mean that there will be one flock and one shepherd?
4. Why does Jesus say that the Father loves Him?
5. What does Jesus say about His control of the situation He is in?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. What does it mean for you to be known by Jesus?
2. What does it mean for you to know Jesus?
3. How is Jesus foreshadowing the global nature of the church?
4. What does it mean for us to be one flock with Jesus as our shepherd?
5. How can we strive for unity within the church without a forced uniformity?
6. Why is verse 18 a very important statement about Jesus?