

A Journey with Christ the Messiah

I AM the Good Shepherd

John 10:11-18

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are continuing a new series that I have entitled *A Journey with Christ the Messiah*. We have explored the Old Testament prophecies concerning Him and the fulfillment of those prophecies in the New Testament. We have looked at His birth. Now we are looking at what Jesus revealed concerning Himself.

Through this journey, our goal will be to fully understand that Jesus WAS Who He claimed to be, the Messiah, the Son of God and the Son of man. During this journey we will also fully understand that the Bible HAS to be the inspired Word of God.

Let's continue the journey!

All Stand and Read Scripture

John 10:11-18 (NASB)

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."

As we prepare to continue this journey, let's bow in a word of prayer.

Prayer

We have been looking together at the "I AMs" that Jesus said about Himself in John's gospel. We are at the fourth of the seven. Last time we looked at the beginning portion of John chapter 10 where Jesus says "I AM the Door to the Sheep". This morning we take it further in John chapter 10 where Jesus goes on to say in verse 10 "**I AM the Good Shepherd**".

Once again, Jesus Christ is making a very bold statement. The "I AM" statement. He is saying "I AM God and I AM the Good Shepherd".

This reminds us of the language is Psalm 23.

Psalm 23 (NASB)

¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters.

³ He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me;

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Some have called this portion of John the New Testament version of Psalm 23.

What we need to understand is that Jesus is confidently announcing that He is the fulfillment of that well known Psalm.

There are some things that I would like to bring to your attention in light of what Jesus is saying about Himself. "I AM the Good Shepherd".

BODY:

I. The Intimacy of the Good Shepherd.

We learn first about His intimacy. As opposed to the Pharisees that He is speaking to in these verses and designates as a hired hand, Jesus **KNOWS** His sheep. We are taken back to the image of the shepherd coming to the sheepfold early in the morning to rouse his sheep and to lead them out to pasture. That is the way sheep were cared for in that day. Many shepherds did not watch their sheep through the night, but had them kept in the sheep fold guarded by the gatekeeper. The shepherd would come along in the morning and rouse his sheep from sleep and lead them out to pasture. Immediately, as he calls, they know and recognize his voice, and he knows all of them.

Jesus is saying this in regard to himself. He knows His sheep well. He knows their weaknesses. He knows their struggles. He knows their fears.

As opposed to the Pharisees, whom Jesus also calls "thieves and robbers", Jesus owns the sheep. They are His sheep. Jesus says, "I know my sheep and my sheep know me". These are the bought and paid for sheep. They are **His** flock.

Jesus purchased the church (His sheep) with His own precious blood. In contrast, Jesus is warning that the other shepherds are the "hirelings". He warns us that the hirelings care nothing for the sheep. The hireling, or hired hand, is the one who stands in for the shepherd. They are not the shepherd that owns the sheep. Some hired hands might care for the sheep, but not these guys. The ones Jesus is talking about and warning about are the type that don't mind tending someone else's sheep when the sun is shining. Or when there is no threatening danger. Or when the pay is good. But the moment disaster strikes, as soon as the wolf comes, they are off like scared rabbits.

They would say, "Are you kidding, I am not messing around with any wolves. I am not risking **MY** life for a mangy bunch of sheep. They are not even mine."

If you remember earlier in John 8, the Pharisees had not shown a hint of pity for the woman caught in adultery. There was not a speck of concern for the man born blind in John 9 that Jesus had healed. No, in both cases, they were more concerned about their own laws and carrying out punishment than to give any thought to concern and mercy.

Jesus told the Pharisees that instead defending Israel from the spiritual dangers that surrounded it, they were like hirelings who were focused on themselves and their own comfort instead of the sheep.

But Jesus is different. He reveals "I AM the Good Shepherd". No one is going to snatch the sheep from Jesus hands. Jesus is NOT a thief and robber. He owns the sheep. He is not a stranger. He knows His sheep. He is not a hireling. He cares for and LOVES His sheep! He lays down His life for His sheep. That is what He has come to do and that is what He WILL do!

Jesus explains that He knows His sheep just as well as the Father knows Him.

John 10:14-15 (NASB)

¹⁴I 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.

Jesus is so committed to the well-being of His sheep, He will lay down His life for them. The intimacy we know through Christ, our Good Shepherd, is grounded in the love of the Father and the Son. Since the Son loves the Father, He is willing to do His Father's will and lay down His life for the sheep.

Here we will shift from the intimacy of Jesus to His **Intentionality**.

II. The Intentionality of the Good Shepherd.

Jesus was committed to do what He had come to do. A good shepherd will not flee when danger comes. He will stand up for the protection of His sheep.

There are real life examples of this in the Biblical record itself.

We have the instance of David in the Old Testament who slew the bear and the lion in defense of the sheep. We know that as good as any shepherd might be, none would actually willingly lay down his life for the sheep because, if he did, the sheep would be without a shepherd and defenseless. Shepherds have, sometimes, lost their lives fighting in defense for the sheep. But that was certainly not their intention. Their death was a tragedy both for the sheep and for his family. However, it does occasionally happen.

Not so in the death of the Good Shepherd! His death was not a tragedy in that regard.

John 10:17-18 (NASB)

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."

Jesus is beginning to speak more and more about His coming death on the cross. With each of these "I AM's" He is directing attention of His hearers. He is directing yours and my attention that He is going to lay down His life. This will not be a tragedy! The cross was not an unfortunate incident that just happened. NO! It was an action. It was a deed. It was a commitment. It was a work of **love** on Jesus' part. "No one takes my life from Me. I lay it down on my own accord and I will take it up again". Jesus will pour out His soul unto death as was prophesied.

Isaiah 53:12b (NASB)

¹² ...Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.

Jesus gave His all. He gave it ALL for His sheep. He gave it in place of His sheep. He gave it as a substitute for His sheep.

You see, WE have ALL sinned and deserve eternal separation from God, our creator. We had no way to reverse the sinful things we have done and will continue to do despite our best efforts to avoid sin. Yet, Jesus, lived a perfect life on earth without sin. Thus He was the ONLY person who was qualified to be the "Good Shepherd" Who could **save** His sheep. Jesus was willing to take on **OUR SINS** in Himself by dying on the cross for the very sins that **WE** had committed! The sinless Son of God took on the sin of all of His sheep for all generations in order to save us! Our sins were removed from us and transferred to Him. When Jesus removed our sin from us, He replaced it with His righteousness in us, once and forever. Now, we can stand before God at judgment in robes as white as snow.

Thank you, Jesus, for loving us that much!!!

John 3:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Jesus took on the punishment we deserved by giving His life on the cross for **OUR** sins, **NOT** His.

The blessing, of course, is that unlike when the earthly shepherd who is killed and leaves the sheep to fend for themselves and then face their own certain death, Christ's death was not the end. After death, Jesus was going to follow His death by His resurrection.

This is why Jesus is the Good Shepherd. It should be understood that Jesus is **THE** good shepherd, not simply **A** good shepherd. No other religious leader has ever risen from the dead. They are still buried in the ground. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead required divine intervention from God, His Father. As we saw in Isaiah, the Old Testament had prophesied that the Messiah would die to save people from their sins and that He would rise from the dead.

Jesus also revealed His resurrection to His disciples and many others before His death, so that when He DID rise from the dead, they remember what He had told them and have full assurance that He was Who He claimed to be. The Son of God, the prophesied Messiah, our Lord and Savior, the "Good Shepherd".

John 10:17b-18 (NASB)

17...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."

Christ could have chosen not to give His life for us. But He was here to do the Father's will and His Father's will was that He would "Seek and to Save those who are lost". Jesus gave His life willingly. His death was not just a tragic accident. No one could have taken His life without His consent. As the song goes "He could have called ten thousand angels, but He died alone for you and me."

Christ also teaches us here in John 10...

John 10:16 (NASB)

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.

Here, we can again, shout "THANK YOU JESUS FOR INCLUDING ME"! **I would like for you to repeat it with me: "THANK YOU JESUS FOR INCLUDING ME"!** There is a glimmer of hope for you and for me. In addition to the lost sheep of Israel, there is the whole world of the Gentiles. (Men and women, boys and girls, every tribe and every nation, every language and tongue on this earth).

We have **all** been included in God's plan of salvation. That is GOOD NEWS for you and for me! The gathering of His flock also includes us.

Listen to what Jesus just said here. He said that there are other sheep that He must bring to the fold. Jesus said "**I must bring them also**". Jesus knows each and every sheep that will ultimately be in His fold. He **MUST** make sure that they are gathered. It is a must because such helpless, stubborn, foolish, and sinful sheep as we are would never make our way to Him. We would never make our own way to Him unless we were gathered. We know this about ourselves. "**All we like sheep will go astray**". But Jesus will seek out His sheep. It is a **MUST** that Jesus would bring us to Himself. He does that as His Word goes out, even as it goes out today. My sheep "**will hear My voice**" They **will** follow me and they will become part of the flock of the **ONLY TRUE** Shepherd!

Remember how I told you that the shepherd will arrive at the gate early in the morning for His sheep and he will call out to them. His sheep may be mixed with several other flocks of sheep. But His sheep will come to attention when they hear **HIS** voice. Notice that the shepherd will not have to herd his sheep or go out and gather each one. The sheep will hear his voice and **FOLLOW** him out of the fold into the pastures. They obey His calling and follow Him.

CONCLUSION:

Toward the end of this chapter, chapter 10, John goes on to inform us that Jesus returned to the discussion with the Jews some time later and said what is my most favorite verse in the Bible.

John 10:27-28 (NASB)

27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

These sheep do not listen to the voice of strangers. But they will listen to the Good Shepherd. Jesus says, "They hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and I give them eternal life, and they will NEVER perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand." WOW!!! What a PERFECT Shepherd! What confidence we can have that He will protect us night and day. He is both the DOOR and the Shepherd who owns the sheep. "I AM", Jesus says, I AM the Good Shepherd". He purchased us with the blood that He spilled on the cross. We are His, He KNOWS us, and He LOVES us! And **IF** we are **His** sheep, we will follow Him!

Listen Carefully! If you want to be a part of His flock, you cannot be neutral. You will either be IN His fold and following Him or following a "thief or robber".

Time is consistently moving closer and closer to His second coming.

Many will not hear His voice. We see it over and over with the Jews.

John 10:24-26 (NASB)

24 The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." **25** Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. **26** But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep.

Jesus says, "I AM the Son of God. I am the One that can place you in My flock. I am the Door and the Owner of the Sheep. No one can snatch you out of My hands.

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand."

Jesus is the True Shepherd. He does not jump over the fence. He does not come without authority. He doesn't acquire His sheep by snatching and stealing. He simply walks through the door with the approval of the gatekeeper, calls you by name, and leads you out. He lets us follow Him all day. We can have life abundantly.

We no longer fear death. Jesus has made us righteous before God. He comforts you and gives you His life so you can live. He knows you intimately. He is the One Who puts you in the fold. He does not allow anyone to remove us from the fold.

This morning when I woke up, I had no fear that my Shepherd was gone. Did you?

I had no fear that if I become lost that He could not find me. If something would distract me and I would wander away, He would seek me and bring me back.

You and I, as God's sheep can have total confidence that can never be lost. It is not dependent upon me. He **GIVES** me eternal life. I just listen to His voice and follow Him.

Do you hear the Shepherd's voice this morning? Are you ready for Christ's second coming?

If you do not know Christ as your Lord and Savior, I invite you to come forward this morning and place your faith in Christ and be immersed in the waters of baptism for the forgiveness of your sins and become a part of the true flock of God.

He is Lord!