

Gospel of John #17
The Good Shepherd
John 10:1-18

Eric Cepin
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Psalm 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want.

The Old Testament talks about both kings and God as being shepherds (esp in Jeramiah and Ezekiel). If this is true, I need to understand that I am a sheep. Sheep get a bad rap because they



aren't that smart if they aren't following a shepherd. I was discipled by someone who once was a real shepherd. They told me that sheep will keep eating and eating and fall over with gas, unable to get back up. God says he is the shepherd because it's a parental role: sheep are like children. What's amazing is that sheep can distinguish their name from another sheep as the shepherd calls them!

As an elder and shepherd at the Village, I am also a sheep. We are all sheep, Jesus is the shepherd. We follow like kids and we are required to be engaged like children.

First I want to look at John 10;1, 5, skipping verses 2-4 for a couple of minutes.

John 10

1 "Truly, truly,

This is a shepherding term: it's like putting your hands on a child's face and saying "what I'm going to say to you is very important."

Next, he talks to Pharisees:

I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber.

5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."



The thieves and robbers aren't the Pharisees: it's the other messianic leaders who are trying to lead people astray. We can see these leaders mentioned in Acts 5:

Acts 5: 36, 37

36 Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. **37** After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered.

Jesus wasn't the only one claiming to be the Messiah; there were others. But the Romans crushed and scattered the people, unlike Jesus, he comes through the front door and doesn't climb over the wall. Let's look at more examples of this:

I Pet 5:8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

This is all about humility: the enemy is looking for proud people so he can devour them.

Psalm 120:5

Woe to me that I dwell in Meshek, that I live among the tents of Kedar!

Kedar and Meshek represent as far as you can get from Israel, where death and war is the value system. If you look at your own life, you can see this. During Lent, I gave up TV only to become a Doom scroller (picking up the values of hate and war). Now, I took it all off my phone.

James 4:1-3

1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? **2** You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. **3** When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

YOU can also climb over the wall with selfishness. Jesus is trying to establish a picture of shepherd and sheep. The shepherds will often put all their sheep into the same pen with a guard. In this situation, they aren't worried about wolves but are worried about those within the pen.



The sheep listen to the voice of their shepherd and each sheep has a name. When the shepherd has brought his own sheep out, they follow them. There is an intimate relationship between the shepherd and sheep!

2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. **3** To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

The Pharisees are confused and don't understand:

6 This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

Jesus then calls himself the door and the gate. This is a transition from a pen in the city to a pen out in the field. This is only for the sheep who follow that particular shepherd. Jesus is not just the shepherd but he is also the gate. He's drawing a picture for us:

7 So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. **8** All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. **9** I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. **10** The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

You enter the gate through Jesus and find the pasture you need. Robbers only come to kill and destroy. Here is the problem: I have a long list of what makes me happy: a good bank account, no one is angry with me, a happy wife who cleans up after me, children who are financially independent at age 15. *I want to define an abundant life.*

But life really has nothing to do with me and everything to do with the **shepherd**. I can actually be diagnosed with cancer tomorrow and still live life abundantly. I can lose people I love and still have life abundantly. Abundant life is not me getting everything I need. Life is messy and

painful: tomorrow could bring you winning the lottery and having every relationship repaired and yet you could still get run over the next morning as you walk in the street. But these don't give me life. Life comes from the shepherd and following him. Otherwise, there is death and scattering.

Jesus now puts his cards on the table: he is declaring himself to be the shepherd. He is the summary of all the shepherd references in the OT.

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 does not own 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 cares nothing for the sheep. **14** I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, **15** just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. **16** And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. **17** For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. **18** No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

19 There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. **20** Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?” **21** Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

22 At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, **23** and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. **24** So the Jews gathered around him and said 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 bear witness about me, **26** but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock. **27** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. **28** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. **29** My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. **30** I and the Father are one.”

31 Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, **32** but Jesus said to them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?”

33 “We are not stoning you for any good work,” they replied, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.”

Let's look at **3 things about the Good Shepherd:**

1. **Intimacy** (vs. 14, 15): Jesus has a name for you! There is an intimacy between you and God!
2. **Protection** (vs. 12, 13). He isn't like the hired hand but he also doesn't jump in from of the car trying to run you down. Jesus doesn't also let you roam free (like parents in the 70s). He roams with you: he will not run away and he will lay his life down for you. He provides you with
3. **Eternal Security** (vs. 27, 28). IF you are a follower of Jesus (by saying you are a follower, you submit to him and declare Jesus as your good shepherd), no one can yank you out. You are secure, intimate, and not alone. NEVER, no matter what you face. It won't be easy but it will be good pastures with life abundant.

Two applications:

1. **Way of the Sheep:**

This choice causes confusion, division, and violence. Notice the Pharisees are confused when Jesus talks about this topic. If you want to know where you are with Jesus, look at where confusion is in your life:

What produces anxiety? This will tell you if Jesus is the shepherd or you are following the ways of the world. Vs. 19, 20 Division is a sign of the sheep. I'm talking about people of God who cannot resolve division.

Violence: vs. 31-33 When violence and anger become part of your narrative, you are in the way of the shee resulting in anger, contempt, and wanting to hurt others. What has Jesus confronted me with that I don't want to face? Jesus will push us toward humility, not violence.

OR

2. **Way of the Shepherd:**

Alert and sober-minded: God will interact with YOUR BRAIN; some of you will hear words and feelings. Some of you will just KNOW something. Others will see visions. Line this up to scripture and communally investigate what you are hearing. You will miss these conversations if you aren't alert and sober-minded. This means to be intentional: our default is to be lazy (like the sheep who eat too much and blow up!)

- **Speaking for peace:** we must get our voice not necessarily to fight for justice but to fight for peace. This is Jesus's value system: when we speak for war, words don't penetrate.
- **Sacrificing:** (others-centered). We will be asked as people who lay our lives down. This will ultimately give you what you want and help you hear what the shepherd wants.

If you choose to sit in confusion, you are choosing confusion. If you follow what the shepherd is asking, you won't have confusion.