

John 10:11-18

There was this pastor who started going to this gas station on the way to his church to get a cup of coffee. Among other friends he made, there was this guy named Stu. Stu was kind of a scruffy looking guy who always seemed down on his luck.

Stu knew this guy was a pastor. One day at the coffee area Stu said, "Hey, preacher, there are some of those born-again Christians at my office who won't leave me alone. What can I say to get them to stop talking to me about being a Christian?"

Stumped by the question, the pastor said, "Why don't you tell them that you'd rather not talk about that right now, but you wouldn't mind if they prayed for you." And that's what he did.

On a Sunday, Stu was there. The pastor was wishing (not even praying, just thinking) that Stu would ask what the sermon was going to be about that morning. Out of the blue Stu asked, "What are you going to talk about this morning?"

I'm going to tell the story of the Good Shepherd looking for the lost sheep."

Stu replied, "I'm a lost sheep." Just like that. "I'm a lost sheep."

"You, uh, ought to come to church this morning," I stammered.

He didn't come that day, but eventually he started coming occasionally. He's gradually feeling more comfortable around church and around God. And I keep praying for and getting together with the man who came right out and told me, "I'm a lost sheep."

Maybe you are a lost sheep. You hear his voice, but just have not yet responded to Him. Listen to how Jesus describes himself as the good shepherd.

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."

Jesus restates his story told in verse 1-6. This time He uses the imagery of the Good Shepherd.

Again, there is a contrast drawn between the good shepherd and the hired hand. There is actually a message about the mentality of the hired hand that our young people need to be aware of.

You young people, listen to me:. I am addressing youth who are about to get into the workforce, and you 20 something year olds who are in the workforce. We have a number of employers in this church. You know what is the number one complaint I hear from them and others? They can't find good help. The jobs are there, but the employers just can't find good help. Why is that? Many today are kind of like this hired hand. He's only in it for the money. Does that make a difference? Yes, it does. There is a difference between working for the money and working for the pride of the job. Those who work for the pride of the job have attitudes that they care about the people and the companies they work for. They give their all to do the job well. Those who are like the hired hand will only do the minimum requirement. Get me through the hours necessary to get the paycheck and I'm gone. If you want a good Bible verse to use that is a principle for work, it is Colossians 3:23. "Whatever you do, do it heartily or with all your heart as to the Lord and not unto men."

Now let's get back to Jesus.

I I am the good shepherd. This is the fourth of the seven I am statements of John. Again it is the claim to deity. When Jesus made that statement, there were all kinds of OT scripture that was being linked to his statement.

What did Jesus mean by I am the good shepherd? He is good not in the sense of moral goodness. He is already that. But the good here means good as in the sense of .

What follows this statement are the reasons that Jesus is the Good Shepherd for His flock.

He loves them.

He dies for them.

He unites them.

There is nothing there you haven't heard before, perhaps. But listen and watch how Jesus reveals these truths.

He loves them.

Preacher, the word love is only mentioned one time. It's in verse 17 and has nothing to do with the love of Christ for us. You're right. The statement of love actually comes in verse 14.

I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me.

This knowing us and us knowing him means a close, intimate relationship. In passages such as Genesis 4:1; 19:8; and 1 Samuel 1:19, the term know tells of an intimate love relationship between a husband and wife.

Remember me talking about Johari's window? There are four panes to that window. The top corner represents what we and others know about ourselves. The bottom-left corner represents what others know about us, but we don't. The bottom-right corner represents that which neither

we nor others know about us. Jesus knows what you and others don't know. He in love knows His own. They in love know Him. The Father in love knows Jesus, and He in love knows the father. Believers are caught up in the same kind of deep and intimate affection with Jesus the shepherd as that which is shared between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

You think you're hiding things from God. He knows. You haven't taken things to God that bother you. Why don't you? He knows. He wants to help. He knows you. You have to know Him back, though. He's your shepherd.

He dies for them.

We've talked about how the shepherds in those days love their sheep and would protect their sheep even if it meant death for the shepherd. That is the extent of the love Jesus has for us as His sheep.

Now I want you to catch what Jesus says in these verses. Look at the end of verse 14. "I lay my life down for the sheep." Look at verse 17-18. "*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."

Jesus laid His life down. That is huge. He wasn't killed by the initiative of the Jewish leaders or the Roman soldiers. He initiated it. He laid His life down. He delivered Himself up to the worse that man could do.

John Piper takes a passage where the Pharisees went to the Romans and said that they wanted a guard on the tomb because of the claims of resurrection. The Romans said, "You have guards. You guard the tomb." They did—in vain.

Listen to what Piper writes. "They made the tomb as secure as they could. They gave it their best shot in vain.

What was hopeless then is hopeless today; and it will always be hopeless. It's not hard to figure out: He can break out (of the tomb) because he wasn't forced in. He lets himself be libeled and harassed and blackballed and scorned and shoved around and kill. No one can keep him down because no one ever knocked him down. He lay down when he was ready.

He lay his life down. Because he had the authority to do that. He had the authority to take it again.

That's the good shepherd. He took our death. He was raised from the dead so that by our responding to the voice of Christ to come to the flock, we by faith accept His death for us so that we live in resurrection power.

Piper writes. "For 20 centuries, the world has given it their best shot—in vain. They can't bury him. They can't hold him in. They can't silence him or limit him. Jesus is alive and utterly free to go and come wherever he pleases. All authority is given to Him in heaven and earth. All things were made through Him and for Him and He is absolutely supreme over all other powers.

Trust Him and go with Him, no matter what. You cannot lose in the end. Stand in awe of His freedom and quiet, invincible power.

He unites them.

Verse 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.*

The other sheep are the Gentiles. That's us. Christ issues the call to them. They hear. The Jews and Gentiles become one flock. There is no hyphenation. There is no Jewish-Christian. It is Christian. It is Christ-followers who lays aside anything that divides and unites under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

¹⁴ *For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,*

¹⁵ *by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,* ¹⁶ *and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.*

He is the good shepherd. He loves you. In love, He knows you. He knows exactly what you need. He died for you and lives to give you resurrection power to live. He unites us into one body.