

#52 John 10:1-21

I Am the Good Shepherd

REVIEW / INTRODUCTION

The context of the events in chapter 9 and 10 are a blind man for whom Jesus created new eyes restoring His sight. This public miracle was the type of action that a true prophet of God performed in order to authenticate his calling. This formerly blind man could see the physical world with his new eyes. But more importantly he had spiritual sight with which he believed and received Jesus Christ.

The Pharisees had physical eyesight to witness His miracles, but many of them were spiritually blind. They had strong evidence that Jesus was sent by God but they refused to believe. And now Jesus continues his rebuke of the Pharisees and false leaders with his parable of the Good Shepherd.

READING THE TEXT

John 10:1-21 (ESV)

¹“Truly, truly, 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.** 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. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ This figure of

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

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. 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?”

PREACHING THE TEXT

BACKGROUND

****Picture:** This is a picture of a sheepfold much like those seen by Jesus as he walked from one town to another. In this parable Jesus is comparing His followers to Sheep and himself to a Shepherd who takes care of the Sheep. Later He compares Himself to the gate.

There is only one way in and one way out of the Sheepfold. Several flocks would often share the same sheepfold and they would hire or take turns serving as the gatekeeper. The Shepherd or hired gatekeeper would sleep at the gate so that if a vicious animal would come for the sheep it would have to get through the shepherd. This is the setting in which King David killed a lion and a bear as they tried to get past him to devour the sheep.

Now that we understand the illustration let's talk through our text.

John 10 (ESV)

¹“Truly, truly, 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. 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. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”

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

In the parable Jesus is comparing the Pharisees with the false prophets and wicked leaders mentioned in Jeremiah. He is the good Shepherd promised by Jeremiah and the Pharisees are the wicked Shepherds that are not seeking God's will.

THOSE WHO CLIMB IN BY ANOTHER WAY

The person who climbs over the wall into the sheepfold are the Pharisees and Sadducees. They did not go through Jesus who is the gate. If you want to be a true shepherd of God and lead His people you must shepherd as a servant of Jesus.

Today there are many shepherds who represent their own flesh and desires to enrich themselves by shaking down the sheep like the Pharisees. His audience did not grasp the meaning of His analogy, so Jesus told the parable again using more detail.

⁷ So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

When Jesus calls Himself the door that means that there is only one way into the shelter of God's presence. This echoes

John 14:6 esv

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

There is one door (like the sheepfold) for us to enter into the presence of Jesus. That door is Jesus. If someone claims that all roads

lead to God they are lying or ignorant. If someone claims that there is a way to salvation that does not include Jesus Christ dying on the cross and rising from the dead they are lying or deceived. The Pharisees claim to know a way of salvation that does not include Jesus Christ The Messiah. But Jesus is the only door for the sheep to enter safely into His protection. Here is what Jesus says of the Pharisees who are standing nearby.

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.

ALL WHO CAME BEFORE ARE THIEVES AND ROBBERS

Jesus is calling the Pharisees and Sadducees and all false teachers thieves and robbers. In what way are the Pharisees thieves and robbers? Here is one example;

The Pharisees had a nice little racket going at the temple. At various festivals throughout the year all of God's people would come from all over the world to worship in the the temple and offer a sacrifice for their sin. So the Pharisees gave a license to some of their buddies to open animal markets right next to the temple. They charge a huge markup for cheap defective animals that people must purchase to make their sacrifice. The Pharisees get a cut of all the profits. So this huge mark up puts a burden on the worshipper who comes from a long distance and can not bring their own animals to sacrifice in the temple. No wonder Jesus turned the tables.

THE SHEEP DID NOT LISTEN TO THEM

Jesus also said that His sheep would not listen to anyone but Him. If someone is a believer they will not follow anyone who tries to leave Jesus out of the plan of salvation. The Spirit of God testifies to our human spirit that Jesus Christ is Lord. The Spirit gives us the faith to know Jesus intimately. We know His voice. And when we hear something that is false we do not respond that same way we do to the gospel and the work of Jesus in our heart.

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.¹¹

The thief in this context are false teachers like the Pharisees. They steal money from the poor and from people who come to the temple to worship. They killed the prophets who truly spoke for God.

They have come to steal the sheep and get them to follow their false teaching. They are not looking out for the sheep because of true love and concern like Jesus. They are trying to get followers in order to increase their power and wealth. So in respect to Pharisees, they are thieves who care nothing for the sheep. They climbed over the wall to steal the sheep. On the other hand Jesus says of Himself for the third time;

(11 continued) I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

So unlike the Pharisees who are looking out for their own interest, Jesus is like the shepherd who sleeps in the doorway of the sheepfold and dares the bears and lions to come through Him to get to 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.

THE HIRED HAND

The hired hand is a person who claims to be watching over God's people. But you can discern that they are just a hired hand because they do not truly love the sheep. They do not truly love God's people like the true Shepherd and owner of the Sheep loves us.

Jesus loves us so much that He was willing to lay down His life so that we could be saved. He did this on the cross. He is a good shepherd and He loves you. False teachers disappear when times are difficult. Jesus then claims;

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.

I KNOW MY OWN AND MY OWN KNOW ME

The reason the sheep know the shepherd and share love and trust is that the shepherd is there when the sheep are born. He feeds the sheep

and guides the sheep from birth until death. They have a bond with their own shepherd. Jesus says; ***“I know my own and my own know me.”***

Later in the book of John we will see a profound reality that is offered to every believer. Jesus claimed He and the Father are one. There is no greater love than the love shared by the Father and His Son Jesus. And when we get to John 17 we will read about Jesus offering to draw us into this deep intimacy and love that He and The Father share.

John 17:20-21,26

20 “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ... 26 I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Just like the Sheep in a Sheepgate respond only to the call of their own shepherd, true believers who have been given the faith to believe Jesus will respond to His voice alone. Our connection with Jesus is so intimate, profound, life changing, and heart healing because knowing Jesus our Good Shepherd is to be pulled into the love that the Father and Son have shared from eternity past. This love should so profoundly affect our lives that it becomes proof to the world that Jesus is real.

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.

Who are the sheep not of this fold? Jesus was a Jewish Messiah. He was speaking to a Jewish audience. And the Jews believed that the Messiah would come to save only fellow Jews. But as we will learn in the book of Acts Jesus is the Savior for any Jew or any non-Jew who will respond to His call to salvation. There is only one body of believers. There is only one church that is comprised of Jew and non Jew alike that hear and respond to the call of salvation from our Good Shepherd Jesus Christ. There is not a Jewish plan of salvation and a non-Jewish plan of salvation.

Ephesians 4:4-6

⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Way before the church wrestled with this idea of Jews and Gentiles fellowshiping together in the same church Jesus revealed His plan. He did so by intentionally speak to a non Jewish woman at a well. He alluded to this reality in the parable of the Good Samaritan in which a non-Jewish person found favor with God through His good deeds and generous heart. So this flock whom He loves and speaks tenderly to and protects with His life is comprised of Jew and non Jew who respond to His call.

¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.

One of the things that the Father loves about His Son is that by laying down his life He gave the world a clear idea of God's love for humanity.

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.

Jesus was not forced to lay down His life to save people from their sin. Jesus was not a passive victim. He was in on the plan. He died on purpose because He loves you and wants to save you from your sin and death.

This charge I have received from my Father.”

It was The Father who gave this mission to Jesus. And Jesus willingly agreed with the plan. Jesus drank the cup of God's wrath and hatred toward sin so that we who believe in Jesus would be spared the wrath of God.

So the Pharisees responded. Some of them believed the words and works of Jesus and some responded in pride.

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?”

CAN A DEMON OPEN THE EYES OF THE BLIND?

Demons can screw up what God made. But demons can not perform a creative miracle in which something is made out of nothing. Jesus made new eyes out of some dirt for the man born blind. This miracle was the sign of a prophet. Jesus was a prophet, but He was so much more. He is the Savior of the world. And if He gives you the faith to believe Him for

salvation you will soon find yourself crying out to God and turning from your sin. You will find yourself responding to His voice and following Him wherever He leads. Some of the Pharisees understood and believed Jesus. And others mocked him. Afterall, that is what you do when don't want to listen to the truth. You mock the one delivering the message.

TAKING IT HOME

1. Do you hold to a biblical view of Jesus as a good Shepherd who is speaking into your life and offering to guide you?
2. What does it mean in your life and worldview that Jesus is the gate?
3. Who are some of the people in our day that are climbing over the wall and convincing the sheep to follow them? What are some ways that Jesus may be calling you and I to protect the sheep from false teachers and scam artists who are climbing over the wall?