

Feeling Insecure?
November 17, 2013
Allen Power

John 10

Opening Question: What do you know about the nature of sheep? How are people often like sheep?

Kent Hughes quotes from Phillip Keller's book: "A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23":
The overall thrust of his book is how utterly helpless sheep are! Among the animal kingdom sheep seem to have come out on the short end. From all accounts they are of limited intelligence. When it comes to finding food, they are definitely uncreative. As creatures of habit, they will follow paths through desolate places even though not far away is excellent forage. Sheep are also given to listless wandering. They are definitely at the lower end of the intelligence scale. There are even accounts of their walking into an open fire! Shepherds confirm that they are timid and stubborn. They can be frightened by the most ridiculous things, though at other times nothing can move them. They are absolutely defenseless. There is no way a sheep can defend itself. Furthermore, of all the animals subject to husbandry, they take the most work. — Hughes, R. K. (1999). John: that you may believe. Preaching the Word (pp. 262–264). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Chapter 10 is a continuation of what we studied last week as the religious leaders cast the blind man out of the temple. Jesus contrasts Himself with the religious leaders using an illustration people in that day would have easily grasped.

- We're beginning at verse 1. To set the tone, let's jump to verses 14 and 15 which sum up this passage. Jesus said:
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.
- Then He says in the last of verse 10: *I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*

Those two and a half verses say so much, we could sing the doxology right now and go home. We won't because there's so much more in this passage! Let's begin in verse 1:

John 10:1–5 (ESV)

"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."

- Verse 1: Let's understand this illustration.

- The sheepfold was usually an enclosure made of rocks, with an opening for the door. The shepherd (or a porter) would guard the flock, or flocks, at night by lying across the opening. It was not unusual for several flocks to be sheltered together in the same fold. In the morning, the shepherds would come, call their sheep, and assemble their own flocks. Each sheep recognized his own master's voice. (Bible Exposition Commentary)
- Verse 2 tells us the TRUE shepherd entered the sheepfold by the door. Verse 1 says, anyone who comes in over the wall is a "thief and a robber." **Any idea who he's talking about when Jesus described a "thief and a robber?"**
- Verse 3: The sheep respond to the shepherd's voice. **What do you think happened over time that made the sheep respond to the shepherd's voice? What "noises" in life keep us from hearing Jesus' voice?**
- Verse 3: Jesus is our Shepherd. **How do we learn the sound of His voice?**
- "He leads them out." The sheepfold was a holding pen to keep the sheep safe at night. They couldn't stay there. They were meant to be in green pastures near cool water. (Psalm 23:1-6). Jesus does that for believers, takes us out of bondage into freedom.
- Verse 3: **How does he call His sheep?**

Max Lucado writes:

When we see a crowd, we see exactly that, a crowd. Filling a stadium or flooding a mall. When we see a crowd, we see people, not persons, but people. A herd of humans. A flock of faces. That's what we see.

But not so with the Shepherd. To him every face is different. Every face is a story. Every face is a child. Every child has a name.

The Shepherd knows his sheep. He knows each one by name. The Shepherd knows you. He knows your name. And he will never forget it. I have written your name on my hand (Isa. 49:16).

He's a PERSONAL Shepherd. Are you and I following Jesus as a PERSONAL shepherd, or as a distant, abstract IDEA? Is He a REAL, LIVE person in our lives?

- Verse 4 says, "He goes before them." **Why would Jesus as our personal shepherd "go before" us day to day?**
- Sheep are dumb. **How does verse 5 say sheep are smarter than some people?**
- The people didn't get what Jesus was saying, so in verses 7-10 he illustrates again.

John 10:7–10 (ESV)

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.

- Jesus said, "I am the door." Sometimes the shepherd slept in the opening to the fold.
- Verse 8: The "thieves and robbers" Jesus referred to in this context were the religious leaders of that day. Jesus was the only legitimate "way" to the Father. (John 14:6)

- Verse 9 concisely describes the life of a believer in Christ. **First, the "door" allows us to be...what? Then the rest of our lives the "door" allows us to do what?**
- His statement, verse 10, is one to UNDERLINE and put a STAR by in your Bible.
- Verse 10: **First, who is the THIEF? How does the thief kill, steal, and destroy?**

Rick Renner gives us an interesting study of these three Greek words:

The word "thief" comes from the Greek word klepto, which means to steal.

Often the devil injects thoughts into a person's mind to steal his peace, his joy, and even his beliefs. Not only does the thief come to steal, but Jesus said that he also comes "to kill." At first glance, it appears that this means to ...take someone's life. But the Greek word is thuo, which means to sacrifice. ...if the thief hasn't already walked away with everything we hold precious and dear, he will then try to convince us that we need to sacrifice or give up everything he hasn't already taken from us.

Then Jesus went on to say that the thief also comes "to destroy." The (Greek) word (for)"destroy"...ruined, wasted, trashed, devastated, and destroyed...if the thief is unsuccessful in his attempts to steal from you or convince you to sacrifice what you hold dear, he will then try to ruin it! — Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

- When Satan whispers in your mind to kill, steal, and destroy...FLEE to the Shepherd!
- **What about the Shepherd? What does Jesus reveal about himself in verse 10?**
- **How would you describe the "abundant life" Jesus offers?**
- Jesus, our personal Shepherd doesn't just offer salvation (although that would be more than we deserve), He offers so much more!
- Even in the midst of chaos Jesus offers the FRUIT of the Spirit of God (Gal. 5:22-23) love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, kindness, self-control.

Warren Wiersbe writes:

When you go through "the Door," you receive life and you are saved. As you go "in and out," you enjoy abundant life in the rich pastures of the Lord. His sheep enjoy fullness and freedom. Jesus not only gave His life for us, but He gives His life to us right now!

John Stott told of a Salvation Army drummer in England who was beating his drum so hard that the band leader had to tell him to tone it down and not make so much noise. In his Cockney accent the drummer replied, "God bless you, sir, since oi've been converted, oi'm so 'appy, oi could bust the bloomin' drum!" (Christianity Today [June 12, 1981])

- When people talk "religion" they always complicate it. It's really very simple.
- Verse 10 outlines our two choices: Satan (the thief) or Jesus (the Shepherd).

John 10:14–18 (ESV)

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.

- Verse 14: Jesus KNOWS His sheep and they know Him. **If you REALLY know someone and they REALLY know you...what do we call that?**
- Jesus is God so he's OMNISCIENT. **What does it mean to be OMNISCIENT?**

- **Why is it a comfort to realize Jesus KNOWS everything about us?**

The old African American Spiritual said it well:

"Nobody knows the trouble I've seen
Nobody knows but Jesus"

Isn't it LIBERATING to know we can tell Him ANYTHING? Our fears, our concerns, our insecurities, our sinful thoughts. He already knows it all and STILL LOVES US!

- Verse 14: He knows US; a believer who follows the Shepherd also knows HIM.
- **What has your walk as a believer taught you about Jesus? Not what you've read in scripture...tell me what you've EXPERIENCED!**
- Jesus came to be the Good Shepherd of ALL people. Verse 16:

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.

- Verse 16: The "other sheep" the Shepherd "must bring" are the Gentiles. One flock, one shepherd...Jesus.

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."

- Verse 17: Jesus was not a victim, He was a VOLUNTEER. He willingly gave His life as a voluntary SACRIFICE for our sins!
- In response, the religious leaders said: *"If you are the Christ, tell us plainly!"*
- He's been doing that for three years in his earthly ministry.
- In reply Jesus again makes WHO HE IS, and WHAT He came to do, clear to them:

John 10:25–28 (ESV)

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 among my sheep. 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.

Any other questions or thoughts?

So, What's the Takeaway?

- Jesus, our GOOD SHEPHERD promises to care for us day by day; to give us the ABUNDANT LIFE while we're on earth; and ETERNAL SECURITY forever.
- Have you accepted this FREE GIFT of eternal life? It's as simple as BELIEVING WHO He is; What He did; TURNING from sin; and letting Him be LORD of your life.
- You can do that TODAY!

- For those of us who HAVE received that gift of salvation, let's ponder two questions:
 - This week, how can I develop a closer relationship with Him?
 - How can I learn to hear his voice even more clearly?