

The Good Shepherd

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[0 : 00] John chapter 10, verse 1 through 21.

! 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.

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

When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.

This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So Jesus said to them again, truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

[1 : 19] All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 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.

He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father and laid down my life for the sheep.

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.

[2 : 24] For this reason, the Father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on 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. There was again a division among the Jews because of these words.

Many of them said, he has a demon and is insane. Why listen to him? Others said, these are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon.

Can a demon open the eyes of the blind? May God add a blessing to the reading of his word.

Would you please be seated? So Hazel has a t-ball team.

And you know, when you're young, playing t-ball, soccer, basketball, oftentimes the coach will let the players, the children, pick the name of the team.

[3 : 27] And so Hazel plays on a t-ball team of all girls. And you would think that a team of all girls would choose a mascot that is cute and cuddly.

Well, not these girls. These girls are called and wanted to be called the wolves. And as a matter of fact, they so much love being called the wolves that before and after games, they howl together like a pack of wolves.

But you know, typically, don't we? We like mascots that inflict fear in our opponents.

We want a mascot that signifies victory, strength, and ferocity. Bears, tigers, eagles, warriors, mascots with sharp claws, sharp teeth, and sharp weapons.

And if our mascot seems too wimpy, we'll add an aggressive adjective to the name like Notre Dame Fighting Irish. Or my favorite is Campbell University.

[4 : 33] The Campbell University Fighting Camels. Now, while rams are used as mascots by colleges and some professional teams, no team calls themselves, that I'm aware of, no team calls themselves the sheep.

Not even the fighting sheep. Because sheep are dumb. Sheep are dirty. Sheep are defenseless creatures. In fact, in our culture, when people are called or they're labeled as sheep, it carries a negative connotation, doesn't it?

When people say to a group of people, you're all just a bunch of sheep, the implication is that this group that they're referring to is incapable of thinking for themselves, and they're people who are easily deceived.

That they lack freedom of thought. That they lack freedom of choice. Making them then slaves. Lacking in their estimation the things that constitute for freedom.

[5 : 45] However, that's not how the Bible defines what true freedom is. The first words that the Lord God ever speaks to humanity are recorded in Genesis chapter 2.

Before the woman came into being, God said to man, there in Genesis 2, 16 through 17, his first words, he commanded him saying, you may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of knowledge and good and evil, you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die. Now in that passage, I like the NASB, the King James Version 2, the NIV, and the CSB, all translate that as being free.

They say that God's first word there is, to man, you are free to eat of every tree of the garden, but this one. And so we see that Adam's freedom had boundaries.

The Lord gave him a home, the Lord gave him a job, and he gave him a command. Adam's freedom had limitations, which were sanctioned by his creator, God.

[7 : 11] And so Adam lived in freedom, but he lived within freedom, within the parameters that God had set for him. Human freedom, according to God, does not consist of breaking down boundaries and separating ourselves from his influence.

True freedom is found within the boundaries that God has established, and within obedience to him as our creator. Before the fall, before we learn of God's foreknowledge, predestination, and election in Scripture, we learn that man is still, before the fall, totally subject to God and to the terms that he has laid out for him.

Mankind has been and will always be a creature who is fully dependent upon God for existence, moral insight, and knowledge of the truth.

But as a result of the fall, we understand from Scripture that each of us is born sinful, rebellious. Each of us is born straying from our creator, our protector, our protector, our source of life, our source of knowledge, and of truth.

[8 : 40] Paul says it explicitly in Romans 3.23, for all, all, everyone, has sinned and falls short of the glory of God.

And Jesus, in John 8.34, talks about what this means for us. Truly, truly, he says there, I say to you, everyone, and we know that is all of us, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

Slaves have no will of their own. They are literally in bondage to their master. When sin is your master, you are unable to resist it.

And since all are born sinful, all are captive to sin. And sin leads us astray from God like lost sheep. Isaiah 53.6, this is what exactly he's talking about. All we, all of us like sheep, because of sin, have gone astray.

[9 : 49] We have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Now, there's good news in that verse.

There's great news in that passage revealing that God in His grace will provide one for us to overcome sin's enslavement.

a good shepherd who leads His sheep to true freedom by taking their sin upon Himself.

Now, I was reading Psalm 49 this week. It's been an interesting week with all that has gone on and this passage that talks about thieves and robbers and where I've been in Scripture.

This is a psalm which warns those who trust in themselves and seek a life of abundance in material possessions, who seek the world to find worth and happiness in life and who doing so end up forsaking God, their Creator.

[11 : 02] And that psalm tells us that those who deny and reject God as their shepherd have another shepherd and He's not good.

Look with me at Psalm 49 14. Like sheep, they are appointed for Sheol, the place of the dead. Death shall be their shepherd and the upright shall rule over them in the morning.

Their form shall be consumed in Sheol with no place to dwell. If you don't know the good shepherd, your shepherd is death.

And instead of leading them to greener pastures for grazing, death grazes on its sheep. On you if you don't know the good shepherd.

This is bad news, but the psalmist does not leave us without hope. In verse 15 of that same psalm, he says, but God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me.

[12:12] Though the faithless person strays from God, and though they may accumulate all the treasures of the world, they will not be able to buy their way to salvation.

But the faithful one is the one whom God has called, the one whom God has redeemed through the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who was slaughtered on the cross to atone for our sins, and who was raised to life on the third day, our good shepherd, who calls and who leads his sheep to true freedom and abundant and everlasting life, Jesus is a great shepherd, a great shepherd. And in this passage, we see again why he is so great and why we should rejoice in knowing him as our good shepherd.

And that's the main idea for this morning's sermon. Those who know Jesus Christ as their good shepherd should rejoice. Those who know Jesus Christ as their good shepherd should rejoice. And if I could go back and change that, I would say always. Should rejoice always. In this passage, Jesus gives us three reasons why those who know him as Lord and Savior should rejoice in having him as their good shepherd.

[13:46] I'll say to you today, those of you who do not know him as your Lord and Savior, you must understand that you have a shepherd and he's not good.

You are a slave to sin. And if you die in your sins apart from faith in Jesus Christ, you will suffer eternally in hell as a consequence.

And so my hope this morning is that those of us who know Jesus as our Lord and Savior will rejoice and being reminded of how great he is, that we will rejoice. and also that those of you who do not know him as your Lord and Savior, as your good shepherd, my hope and my prayer is that you too likewise would rejoice at the end of this sermon as a result of God's calling your name and you responding to him and you realizing how great of a shepherd you have who would lay down his life for you.

So the first reason that Jesus gives us this Jesus is the good shepherd who never leads his flock astray.

Jesus is the good shepherd who never leads his flock astray. And so Jesus begins by saying truly truly I say to you.

[15:08] That's a phrase that Jesus often used whenever he had something notable to say. Now everything he said was notable but especially whenever he was talking to people who would be tempted to doubt or question what he was about to say.

He really wanted to capture their attention. Truly truly listen here what I'm about to say to you is so important you must understand. And so he continues on by saying he who does not enter the sheep fold by the door but climbs in by another way that man is a thief!

and a robber. So now we've got to do some digging into the context of what's happening here of what has happened before this moment in order to fully grasp and understand what Jesus is saying. There's no gap between chapter 9 of John and chapter 10 where we're at right now. If you recall Jesus had healed a man who was born blind.

The Pharisees the religious leaders of the day scrutinized him and challenged! Him and opposed him for what he had done. Jesus then told them that they who thought they see were in fact blind.

[16:23] Spiritually blind. That though they thought they knew God the reality was that they were far from him and they were leading others astray from God and the truth.

And so as Jesus is speaking here they are the thieves and the robbers that he is referring to. They match the description of false shepherds that had plagued Israel throughout its whole history as expressed repeatedly in the Old Testament.

That is who Jesus is comparing them to. Ezekiel 34 7 through 10 would have been fresh in their minds. This is what he means. This is what he is saying about us.

Therefore you shepherds God speaking hear the word of the Lord as I live declares the Lord God surely because my sheep have become a prey and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts since there was no shepherd and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep

but the shepherds have fed themselves and have not fed my sheep therefore you shepherds hear the word of the Lord.

So God is speaking to those who should be the shepherds of his sheep the religious leaders of his people thus says the Lord God behold I am against the shepherds and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep no longer shall the shepherds feed themselves I will rescue my sheep from their mouths that they may not be food for them the Pharisees would have known that this is what Jesus was indicting them of being and his metaphor of shepherds and sheep and sheep folds and gates were all things that those in that crowd who he is speaking to would have been very familiar with but few of us have spent much time shepherding in our church and so again we need some background information some knowledge in order to capture the full idea of what

[18:37] Jesus is communicating here and so he talks about a sheep fold a sheep fold so in the regions of Palestine you had different shepherds with different flocks and they would go out and they would graze in their different areas and then at night time they would come back to a common sheep pen a sheep fold and so that's the thought here these shepherds would graze their sheeps and then bring them collectively back into this communal kind of sheep pen in the evening it made me think of if you ever go to the mall I think they have them in our malls but somewhere in the mall there is like a communal playground for kids to play in and parents just take all their kids in there and let them run around and do what kids do and it's this community kind of playground but each parent in there has their own child same kind of idea it's a community sheep fold but each shepherd has their own sheep that have been gathered together in this place and so there in the sheep fold the shepherd would carefully inspect each of his sheep once in the fold the responsibility of the sheep's care was given to the door keeper who was usually hired by the shepherds an under shepherd who would keep watch of the sheep at night the door keeper's job was to keep the sheep in allow entrance only to the shepherds and to prevent or not allow strangers access to the sheep but we know that there is profit to be gained for thieves and robbers to sneak in other ways and to steal the sheep and as thieves do they seek access to that which is not theirs by deceptive and undetectable means thieves and robbers do damage they plunder what others have worked hard for they have no respect for those who they take from and they profit off of whatever they take without care for anyone but themselves if if you've been stolen from maybe your house has been broken into or your car or your office at work it makes you feel sick doesn't it to know that somebody has been through your stuff and they've handled it without care and they've sought to take things from you of value to profit themselves it leaves you angry it leaves you frustrated it just gives you a sick feeling in your stomach and if you've had that experience before you've got to know that as

Jesus here is saying these words he is looking at these Pharisees and he's feeling the exact same way you sicken me what you say that you are and what I see that you do!

you're detestable to me you take advantage of these people and you do so in the name of God how dare you do that to my people my sheep how dare you profit from them for yourself so he's indignant he is filled I believe with righteous anger they are profiting from their deceptive religious system that they designed and created to build themselves up and to fleece the flock to profit off of them and then also leading them astray and again in this way they're not different from past shepherds false shepherds have come before them Jeremiah 56 my people have been lost sheep their shepherds have led them astray turning them away on the mountains from mountain to hill they have gone they have forgotten their fold there are false shepherds there are evil shepherds with bad intentions!

But there is a good shepherd there is a good shepherd who does not lead his people astray there is a good shepherd who does not fleece his flock but who truly cares for them and who also seeks them when they stray Matthew 18 12 through 13 Jesus says but what do you think he asks the question if a man has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray does he not leave the ninety nine on the mountain and go in search of the one that went astray and if he finds it truly I say to you he rejoices over it more than over the ninety nine that never went astray and I know personally that I've been that sheep that has strayed multiple times and I thank God that Jesus has never said you know what that's it stupid how many times do I have to leave and drag your your behind back here to this flock

I'm tired of it I've had enough never once never once amen because I think all of us have been in that position where we've strayed but Jesus has found us and in his grace he has brought us back

he continues in verse two and three by saying but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep to him the gatekeeper opens the sheep hear his voice and he calls his own sheep by name and he leads them out again for those of us who especially like me if you've grown up not in the country but in the city and you've not spent a lot of time around livestock you're missing something here I was talking to Ben Grasser about this passage you know he spent time in China as a missionary and he said he loved to preach this where he was at in his context there's a lot of Chinese farmers and he would talk about how in shepherds you know how your sheep hear your voice and they automatically yeah exactly I know what that's like they knew and if you have experience like that you know and maybe you can a little bit with your dogs they understand the sound of your voice they can distinguish it from other sounds and they hear it and they understand that it's their shepherd or their master who is calling them and they follow them knowing that you are a trustworthy guide verses 4 and 5

[25 : 57] Jesus said when he has brought out all his own he goes before them the sheep follow him for they know his voice a stranger they will not follow but they will flee from him for they do not know the voice of strangers and how many times parents have we spent talking to our children especially when they're young about stranger danger if you don't recognize them even if they look nice even if they say that they're going to do nice things for you have nice things to give to you do not follow a stranger I know it's a terrifying thing for me whenever my kids are out even in the front yard who would have thought a day would come for fear of the strangers that are out there and the danger that they we would play all throughout our neighborhoods and we were boys and we would get into all different kinds of trouble we would be all over the place but when mom called us to come home we all recognized the voice of oh that's my mom it's time for me to go home right it's time to eat and you knew whatever you're doing you better stop especially in the cases with some of to to eat you recognize the voice of those who care for you and you run away from the voice of those that are not familiar the world is full of false shepherds and they claim the name of

Christ but they'll fleece you they'll take from you they'll profit from you and once they have whatever it is they want from you they'll leave you and they'll forsake you. But Jesus isn't like that. And as we'll soon see, he doesn't fleece the flock, but he lays down his life for it. So, with so many false shepherds that are out there, how can we discern who is true from who is false? Well, I would say the easiest way is to be familiar with the voice of the Good Shepherd. And the way that you can be familiar with the voice of the Good Shepherd is to be in his word, that his word abides in you. And then, with his word abiding in you, you can hear people who claim to speak for God in the name of Christ and ask yourself, does that match? Does that match? And if what they're saying doesn't match what God's word says, you have a false shepherd on your hands. But if what they're saying matches what God said, you know that this is one who's truly been called to this ministry. And I encourage you guys, look, I'll make mistakes. I've done that before. But I encourage you to know your Bibles and listen to what I'm preaching to you, and you better make sure that it matches what God's word says. Otherwise, I have no business to be up here or anyone else. Are you familiar? Do you recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd?

So, growing up again, I had a best friend in the neighborhood, and this was before cell phones. This was before caller ID. When someone would call the house phone, and you'd have to answer, you know, Scrivani residence, remember those days? Who would you like to speak to? And so, I knew when I picked up the phone when it was my friend John, instinctively. I heard the first word he said. He didn't even have to say my name. I just knew it was him. And I became very familiar with his voice. And likewise, I mean, I could pick out his voice in a crowd. I knew instinctively when he called, that's my friend.

We grew up, and as we grew up, we kind of drifted apart, went our own ways in middle school and high school. And then after college, he got married and invited me to his wedding. And at his wedding, we caught up and renewed our old friendship. And we began to hang out again. But I remember that first time he called me, after all those years after his wedding, and it was so much different, so much more formal. Hey, is this Mike? And I couldn't remember who it was. I didn't have his phone number. I was like, yeah, this is him. Hey, it's John. Oh, okay. But my point is, is that when we become less familiar with God's word, we don't hear Jesus' voice as distinctively as when we are.

You can't get yourself to that point. Now, thank God that he is the good shepherd who will bring us back when we stray. But all that to say is that there's so much deception in this world, and if you're

not in his word, you can be deceived for a time. Be in the word of God.

[31 : 14] Know the voice of your shepherd. But there's good news again. Even when we stray, this good shepherd finds us and never lets us go. Though again, we're prone to wander. We're prone to leave our good shepherd. We understand from his word that he never lets us out of his sight. He never lets us go outside of his reach. He whom he saves, he keeps forever. Matthew 24, 24.

For false Christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect, Jesus says. And I take great confidence in that scripture that, yeah, they'll try to come and take my sheep, but it's not possible for them to lead my sheep astray. So, rejoice, child of God, if he's called you by name out of the fold into his flock. He'll guide you. He'll keep you through this life into the next life. He knows your name. He knows your name. He's called you, and he's enabled you to hear and to come and to follow him, and you will never be lost by Jesus.

So, we should rejoice that our good shepherd never lets us stray from him. Second reason we should rejoice. Jesus is the good shepherd who gives his life to save the flock. Jesus is the good shepherd who gives his life to save the flock. And so, now in verse 6, there's a transition here in Jesus' teaching.

[33 : 07] Not quite fully understanding the point that Jesus was making, he moves beginning with verse 7 to draw out the spiritual implications of his metaphor, beginning there by saying to them again, truly, truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. So, here Jesus modifies his metaphor slightly. In verses 1 and 5, he is the shepherd, but here he describes himself as the door or the gate or the entry point.

Sometimes shepherds would sleep in the entrance of the sheep fold as a sort of human door. Jesus' point here is that he is the only access point by which sinful man can enter into the safety of God's fold, going in and out, finding rich pasture of God's blessings.

So, you must understand, Jesus did not teach that all roads lead to heaven. That was not a message that he taught. Sinful man only, only finds peace with God through Jesus Christ, his Son, again, who is the good shepherd. He says it here very clearly and he'll say it even more clearly in John chapter 14 verse 6. Jesus said, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Jesus was not a universalist.

He is the way and the truth and the life. He is the truth and the life to the exclusion of all others. To the exclusion of what all other things people say about life and peace with God in heaven and eternity.

No one has peace with God except through Christ Jesus, his Son, by faith in him and him alone.

[35 : 32] Trusting in him alone, in his life, in his death, in his resurrection for their salvation. There is one way to heaven and Jesus has paved that way by the cross.

So here we see in this text God's sovereignty and man's responsibility in salvation. Only God can save. Only God can call his sheep by name. They don't call out to him.

He calls out to them. He calls them. They hear. They come. But the promise is extended here to anyone who enters by him. Those who are called enter into peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Who repent of their sins. Who truly turn from their sins. They turn to the voice of the one who is calling them by name. And they come to him gladly.

Rejoicing. Knowing that they belong to him forever. And that through him they receive abundant life.

[36 : 39] Jesus continues on in verse 10. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

But here we must understand that the abundance of life that Jesus is referring to is not an abundance of earthly possessions. That's not what he means.

We are fleeced. We are taken advantage of by false shepherds who promise us that if we have enough faith in this life, we can have our best life right now.

But I love what John MacArthur said in response to that. And it's true. The only way you're living your best life now is if you're going to hell.

That's true. If this is the best there is, then we're in trouble. Because you know what? Honestly, if we really think about this life, it's not that great.

[37 : 43] Certainly, apart from Christ, it's not very good. Those who are called by him, who enter into his peace, experience abundance of life, eternity is abundant.

And that's what he's talking about. Literally, it's life. It's an abundance of life. It's life forever. When we sing amazing grace in that verse that we are so familiar with, flashes on the screen and we sing it.

When we've been there 10,000 years, when we sing that, that's not wishful thinking. That is the reality of the child of God.

When we've been there 10,000 years, and then forevermore. Forever and evermore. To dwell forever and evermore in the peace of God.

In heaven, where there is no more sin. Where there is no more death. Where there is no more heartache. No more sleepless nights.

[38 : 58] Spinning up, being filled with anxious thoughts. No more guilt. No more shame. No more thieves. No more robbers.

No more destruction. Only peace. Only grace. Only bliss. Always and forever and ever and ever. And the good shepherd makes it possible. How does he make it possible? Jesus explains in verses 11 through 15. I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 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.

The wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me. Just as the Father knows me, I know the Father.

[39 : 53] And I lay down my life for the sheep. As the forces of evil align themselves against the people of God, we must understand that Jesus is not a coward king.

He is not sitting in sight, but way behind the battle lines, behind his armies. That's not where he's at. He leads the charge.

He's front and center. And he is powerful enough to vanquish our foes, Satan, sin, and death, on his own. He doesn't need us to fight this battle.

He does it on his own. Our Lord is a warrior king, a fierce defender of his people. He is mighty to save.

He does not run away and hide when we are in danger, like the hired hand, who flees in the face of predators and heads for the hills.

[40 : 56] No. Our Christ, our good shepherd, our warrior king, leads the charge down the mountain. And he did in his first coming, in his incarnation.

He came as a humble servant to save his people, to defend the sheep by enduring a horrible death on the cross, which he willingly endured because he loves us, to atone for our sins that we've committed against God, to set us free from sin's curse by becoming a curse on the cross for us. And then on the third day, he arose from the grave and then after appearing to many of his disciples, he ascended to heaven, but our good shepherd hasn't left us.

He lives. And he promised before he ascended that he would come back. But before he comes back, he told us, you have a job to do. Go and make disciples.

And he told us in that, that he is with us always until the end of the age. He's with us. Our good shepherd has come to save us by laying down his life for us.

[42 : 03] And again, he's coming back. And that is a fearful sight. That is going to be a fearful sight for those who have dared to oppose and reject the good shepherd.

Revelation 19, 11 through 16, John's vision of this coming day of judgment when the good shepherd returns not to save but to execute his justice.

then I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse. The one sitting on it, Jesus, is called faithful and true.

And in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire and on his head are many diadems.

And he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood. And the name by which he is called is the Word of God.

[43 : 27] And the armies of heaven arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations and he will rule them with a rod of iron.

He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Fear not, child of God, and rejoice. your Lord is a Savior who loves you so much that he willingly took your place on the cross dying there to redeem you and now he fights for you.

You, his sheep saving you and vanquishing all opponents who would try and dare to take you from his hand. Nothing, nothing can take you out of the firm grip of your good shepherd.

Romans 8, 38-39, a good one to highlight in your Bible. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all of creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[44 : 56] Lord. And it's not because of you. It's because of him. It's not because of your grip. It's because of his grip on you.

Verse 16, Jesus says, 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.

And here, specifically, he's talking to the Israelites, those who are in Israel who were part of his flock, and he's talking about those who are us, the Gentiles, who he will bring into this flock, and we will be one people with one shepherd.

So there's a couple of things for us to understand here. First of all, that God is sovereign in salvation, but we don't know who these other sheep are, but he does.

Their names are recorded in his book, so we share the gospel. Ultimately, it's God who calls them. Secondly, what we must understand here is that our unity is integral to our success, to advance the gospel together.

[46 : 11] We are one flock, and we have one shepherd. And while there are boundaries to our freedom, there are and should be no boundaries within the fold of God.

We have walls there, boundaries to our freedom, God's commands and what he expects, but we don't erect walls separating this group of sheep from that group of sheep.

We are one, and we have one shepherd. And right now, in a world that is divided in so many ways, what a great opportunity for God's people to declare to them that oneness and unity is possible, but it's not made possible by human achievement, but by God and his spirit alive in us whom he saved. our purpose, then, and our goals must be the same. Whatever it takes to make much of the name of Jesus Christ, we do it and we do it together, loving God, loving others.

No divisions in God's house. third reason why we should rejoice in our good shepherd does not lead us astray, who saves us, is that Jesus is the good shepherd who should be totally trusted, totally trusted.

[47 : 39] and so I covered a lot of verses today which I normally don't do, I didn't have time to talk about the fact that Jesus says here when he declares I am the good shepherd, when he declares I am the door, he's calling himself God.

He is ascribing deity to himself. And so, make no doubt, you who say that you follow Christ, you must understand that Jesus is God.

If you don't believe that Jesus is God then you are not truly a follower of Christ. And so he says this, he declares this, and that creates a division.

Some denied that he was the good shepherd, they denied that he was God. Wanting to hold on to their own version of the truth, they accused him of being satanic and insane.

But others heard his voice. And they had their eyes opened to the truth. To see that his words and works were evidence that he was exactly who he claimed to be.

[48 : 52] And so, my question to ask you is, what about you? What about you? What about you?

What have you decided about Jesus? Who do you know him to be? Who do you say that he is?

You see, our Lord who gave his all does not call for half-hearted commitment from us. You must totally trust him. Do you hear his voice calling to you today?

Go to him. Go to him. Go to him as you are. Don't think that I got to clean myself up in order to go to church.

I got to buy a suit and a tie so that I look nice. No. Go to him when he calls your name. As the good shepherd, he's the one who does the cleaning. He's the one who does the dressing of the wounds.

[49 : 55] He's the one who forgives and saves. Go to him. And you will know him as your good shepherd who saves you totally, completely, and eternally.

As a pastor, I've spent many times with many people who have been close to death, either in the hospital or in their house, believers. And oftentimes what I'll do is I'll ask them, do you have a scripture that you would like me to read?

Or I ask them, do you have a scripture? And they know that they're going to die and they know that they're going to be with the Lord. Say, do you have a scripture that you would want me to preach from at your funeral, one that you would want to have read?

And you know what the one that is most often asked for is? We could all say it together. Psalm 23. Psalm 23. And it's amazing that as I've read this scripture, to those who are close to death, how filled with joy they were.

A smile on their face because they knew Jesus as the good shepherd in their life, and they were experiencing him as the good shepherd even though they walked through the valley of the shadow of evil, of death.

[51 : 19] not fearing because they knew what awaited them. Let's read that psalm together. the Lord is my shepherd.

I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.

Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows.

Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. But you know, as I was reading over this again, even this morning, the thought I had is how terrible this passage would be with the absence of the good shepherd.

[52 : 31] Think about it. If the Lord is not my shepherd, I'll always be wanting. I'll never lay down in green pastures. My life will never be content.

I'll never feel like I have enough. There will be turmoil and struggle. I'll walk through the valley of the shadow of death and I will be terrified.

I will fear. No one will be with me to comfort me and to guide me. My enemies will overcome me and there will be no goodness and there will be no mercy for the rest of my days.

I will not dwell in the house of the Lord forever. That's terrifying. And it should break our hearts for the lost. And I encourage you today, if you don't know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, as your good shepherd, I pray that you hear his voice.

And I hope that you go to him. and I hope that you rejoice in knowing him as your Lord. And you can read Psalm 23 with gladness. You can read John 10 with hope.

[53 : 46] If he's calling you, go. Go. You'll never regret it. Three questions of application for you to talk about.

We'll discuss these tonight at our community groups. First question. In what ways did Jesus distinguish himself from false shepherds? How do these distinguishing marks help us detect false shepherds today?

How do these distinguishing marks help us detect false shepherds today? Question number two. Why is it essential that we preach and teach that Jesus is the only way?

And then what role do elders and teachers have in the church to protect the flock from spiritual deception? Question three.

What confidence and hope does this passage provide to you in knowing that Jesus knows your name, calls you, lays down his life for you, and will never let you stray from him?

[54 : 54] Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we rejoice in knowing a good shepherd like Jesus.

A shepherd who does not flee from predators, does not flee and leave us defenseless to fend for ourselves, but who has come and who has laid down his life to save us from our sins, to save us from judgment, to give us eternal life.

Truly, Lord, there is no shepherd like you. God, I pray for us as your people that we would be in your word, that we would recognize your voice in a deceptive world that seeks to deceive us and cause us to stray from you.

Yet, God, we rejoice as well in knowing that even if we stray, that your eye is always on us, that your hand is always upon us, that you never let us go. God, we rejoice in these truths that we know in Christ we have an abundant life, that we aren't living this life seeking the best life now, knowing

that this life, no matter how good it could be, pales in comparison to the eternity that awaits us. So, Lord, may we as your sheep live with minds focused on Christ and focused on our eternal home, and that we would spend most of our time sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, telling people about the good shepherd, and hoping that they hear your voice called to them, that we may rejoice with them.

[56 : 42] Father, we thank you that you are a warrior king who doesn't not sit idly by, but who defends and fights for the sheep, who loves us and saves us and keeps us forevermore.

Lord, what more reason could we have or need to rejoice in you always? We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.