

FOLLOWING GOOD LEADERS Sunday School- May 13, 2012

Unifying Topic: THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Lesson Text

I. Jesus Is At The Gate (John 10:7-10)

II. Jesus Is The Good Shepherd (John 10:11-13)

III. Jesus Lays Down His Life For The Sheep (John 10:14-18)

The Main Thought: And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. (John 10:4, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People often follow strong leaders who may or may not have their best interests at heart. How do we know which leaders have our best interests at heart? Jesus was a strong leader whom people followed and who was willing to give up His life to save them from harm.

Lesson Aim: To teach that Jesus willingly laid down His life as the Good Shepherd for His sheep.

Life aim: To help the students remember that Jesus is the only way to salvation, even though different religions might try to tell them otherwise.

10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

10:8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

10:9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

10:12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

10:13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

10:14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

10:15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

10:17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

10:18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

HISTORY:

Coming from Chapter 9, it illustrates the Light of the World in action as He reaches into the darkness of one man's life, opens his eyes and sets him free. In **Chapter 10**, ¹Jesus describes a sheepfold, which was a circular enclosure, often made of stones. In ordinary practice, sheep were brought into the fold at night so that they would be protected from predators and thieves. During the day, the sheep were taken out of the fold to graze in the pasture. This illustration is spoken to the Jewish leaders who had excommunicated the blind man (9:34).

Chapter 10:1-6— This passage begins the great revelation of Jesus as the Shepherd of Life. *Verily, verily* meaning "truly, truly"; I tell you the truth! The sheep are those who trust and follow after Him. There is a sheepfold where all the sheep are kept; the place of acceptance by God; the place of safety and security in God's presence. Thieves and robbers attempt to enter the sheepfold by climbing in another way— in their time (over the walls made of stone with one door and no roof). The sheepfold was the enclosure of the sheep. The sheepfold can be entered only by the door, the only acceptable way to enter. The true leader enters by the door and He is the only Shepherd of the sheep (Jesus Christ). Sheep is a metaphor for God's people. ²In those days they used to have a servant (the porter, the gatekeeper) always sitting at the door, and therefore he speaks after the manner of those days. The porter recognizes the Shepherd and to Him alone does he open the gate. The true shepherd has a unique relationship with His sheep. He calls them by name and He leads them out. The sheep respond by hearing His voice, knowing His voice, and following Him (**w1-3**). His purpose is not to steal some sheep from the owner (God) and start a flock of His own. That's how a thief thinks. ³Jesus was indicating that there were those who are His, assigned to

¹ <http://www.enterthebible.org/newtestament.aspx?rid=5>

² <http://www.ccel.org/g/geneva/notes/John/10.html>

³ <http://www.purposequest.com/archives/bible.asp>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

Him by the Father, and they will know His voice and follow Him. We just saw that a man born blind was one of those the Father gave Him, but the leaders of Israel, including the Pharisees, were not among those given to Him. They did not know His voice, but God held them accountable. As the Shepherd leads, the sheep follow because they know His voice. Knowing the Shepherd's voice means they won't follow a stranger. Their reaction to a stranger is totally opposite to that of the Shepherd. They will absolutely flee from the stranger; from the false teacher. The spiritual truth or illustration was beyond the religionists and the false teachers. They couldn't grasp the truth with their natural minds. They could not see themselves as false shepherds, and they couldn't see Jesus as the true Shepherd (vv4-6).

LESSON:

John 10:7-10 Jesus Is At The Gate

10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. Jesus brings up the door again; the entrance way. "*Verily, verily*" meaning "*truly, truly*"; I tell you the truth which stresses a critical importance of what He was about to say. "*I am the Door of the sheep*"; the only Door. Therefore, if a man wishes to enter where God is, he must enter the Door of Christ. There is no other way in.

10:8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. All others who claimed to be the door are thieves and robbers. They claim to have the way to God:

- They claim to know the right way and to have the newest ideas and the latest truth and knowledge.
- They claim to have the right teaching, religion, works, maturity, philosophy, psychology, ideas, and concepts.
- They claim to be the door that opens into God's presence.

But Jesus says that they are thieves and robbers. "*Thief*" implies deception and trickery; "*robber*" implies violence and destruction. They are out to steal the sheep, both their wool (possessions), and their lives (loyalty). However the proof that Jesus is the only Door and that all others are false doors is that the sheep didn't hear the other voices. Their voice and message was not the voice and message of the true door, the Son of God Himself! The real sheep know the Shepherd's voice and have the ability to discern it.

10:9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. Jesus, the Door leads to Salvation. "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name, under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved*" Acts 4:12. And there is no other door in which men must enter to be saved. He is the only door that leads to the true pasture.

- His pasture alone can satisfy the soul.
- His pasture alone can restore the soul.
- His pasture alone can give life and give it forever.
- His pasture alone can feed with knowledge and understanding.

Door and gate are used interchangeably. Because of Salvation, Jesus sustains all that go in and out the door to find assurance of provision.

John 10:11-13 Jesus Is The Good Shepherd

10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. Jesus now gives the position of the thief. The one who says there is another door is a thief and a robber; the one that climbs over to get to the sheep another way is a thief. There is a thief that tries to steal the soul of the sheep by leading them away from the restrictiveness of Christ; by deception which leads to destruction and the sheep will be destroyed. He wants the sheep to never know the true Shepherd. The thieves and robbers refer to the Jewish leaders/ false teachers who are trying to lead Israel while avoiding the door (Christ). As we know, the thief, to be the devil. He is the father of lies. Satan's mission is to steal, kill, and destroy. Jesus' mission is to bring everlasting life to those who will accept it. The thief takes away life but Jesus gives life and He gives life more abundantly. "*Abundantly*" means plentiful and rich nourishment.

10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. The word good specifies that there are

some bad and false shepherds. Jesus claimed to be the Good Shepherd!

1. He is called "good" because He risks and sacrifices His life for the sheep (Jh.10:11, 14).
2. He is called "great" because He arose from the dead and He perfects the sheep (Heb.13:20-21).
3. He is called the "shepherd and bishop" because He welcomes those who wandered off and went astray (1Pt.2:25).
4. He is called "chief" because He is to appear and return to earth with great glory and reward the faithful (1Pt.5:4).

The life the Good Shepherd gives comes to a man by believing in Jesus Christ. A man outside of Jesus Christ only exists. This is the reason the Son was sent into the world, to show men what life is and He gives that life for the sheep!

10:12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. Unlike the Good Shepherd, the hireling has no true love or concern for the welfare of the sheep. He is a false, unfaithful, and irresponsible shepherd. His interest was not a calling, but...

- A job and profession
- a position and prestige
- money and comfort
- authority and esteem

He seeks to benefit self, not the sheep. In the moment of danger, the hireling flees; runs away. This causes the sheep to be in danger and in error. They are exposed to the wolf; the enemy.

- Some of the sheep are ravaged and eaten meaning destroyed.
- The remaining sheep are scattered throughout the wilderness of the world and lost to the Owner (God). It would take a lifetime to recover if they are truly the Lord's sheep.

10:13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. It will come out sooner or later what kind of shepherd is over the sheep. A leopard always has spots. When the sheep are not taken care of, the hireling's spots will show up because he is a hireling.

John 10:14-18 Jesus Lays Down His Life For The Sheep

10:14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. Six proofs or facts of the Good Shepherd...

1. Jesus knows His sheep.
2. The sheep know Jesus.

There is an intimate knowledge and relationship between Jesus and His sheep. He keeps His mind on them, looking after them by His Spirit; caring for their needs through intercession and companionship. The sheep in turn recognizes all that He does. And they thereby believe, trust, follow, and are filled by Him.

10:15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

3. The Father knows Jesus.
4. Jesus knows the Father.
5. Jesus will lay down His life for the sheep.

The Father knows and approves of everything Jesus is doing. When Jesus claims to know the Father, He does not mean that He knows God in the same sense as other men may know Him. Jesus knows the Father perfectly because they are one; there is no difference in them. They have the same nature and power and existence. The Father came down from glory wrapped Himself in flesh to die for the sins of man; to substitute His life for man's; to give man a new life. The emphasis is that the Good Shepherd, not a bad one, is willing to lay down His life for His sheep. Therefore, He would face the enemy of the sheep. He would not flee from His calling and purpose. He would stand and fight the enemy as the Good Shepherd was sent to do and place Himself in front of the sheep so the enemy could not get to the sheep. How awesome is that? That Christ would think our lives are worthy of this cost!

10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. The "*other sheep*" was a reference to world-wide evangelism. "*I have*" means close and intimate.

6. Jesus worked to enlarge the fold.

Other sheep are able to come in. He is now stating that His fold will include both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 10:28). A Gentile who follows Jesus is grafted into; adopted as sons into the faith of Jesus Christ. The future sheep were

to become sheep of His by hearing His voice. There is to be one flock, not two. There will not be several shepherds; there is only one true shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself over the church! The very fact that Jesus enlarges the fold is proof that He is the Good Shepherd. He is the Good Shepherd in that He works and labors for both the Owner of the sheep and the sheep. He works to keep the sheep healthy so that they will reproduce and increase the flock. An enlarged and healthy flock, of course, means a pleased Owner (The Father)!

10:17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. The final proof that Jesus is the Good Shepherd is that the Father loves Him. Why? - Because of Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection.

1. Jesus took the sin of man upon Himself to free man from sin.
2. Jesus arose from the dead to free man from death.

10:18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. His death was the supreme act of obedience. It was voluntary. He willingly died. No man took His life. He sacrificed it Himself. The power to take it was His and His alone. This commandment to die was of God. This gives a higher meaning to the death of Jesus than just meeting man's need. It means that Jesus did not just die because of sin, but that He wished to glorify and honor God. This was the highest of callings. God had been terribly dishonored by the first man, Adam, and by all those who followed after him. Jesus Christ brought honor to God by showing that at least one man thought more or God's glory than of anything else.

Jesus showed that God's Will meant more than any personal desire or ambition which man might ever have.

SUMMARY:

In chapter 10 Jesus contrasts Himself with all those who pretended, or had pretended, to be shepherds of Israel. He develops these three points; He comes in by the door; He is the door; and He is the Shepherd of the sheep—the Good Shepherd⁴.

Jesus expounds upon this point again by saying that He is the door for the sheep (v7). Those that had come before Jesus, the true shepherd were thieves and robbers and had no authority over the sheep. Therefore the sheep did not hear them (v8). By entering into the door, the sheep are saved. Jesus is their entrance and authority when going into and coming out of the pasture (v9). All those who enter another way, other than by the door, wish to prey upon the flock. Christ enters in to give life (salvation) and gives it more abundantly (v10).

The mark of the Good Shepherd is that he gives His life for His sheep (v11). But there is one called a hireling. He cares nothing for the sheep, in fact, he runs away when any danger comes about because he neither owns nor has authority over the sheep. Therefore when he sees danger, he leaves the sheep to be caught by the wolf (the enemy) and the rest to scatter and be lost (v12). This is what's expected by a hireling. He has no lasting ties to the sheep (v13).

The Lord Jesus knows whom He has chosen and the sheep know the Good Shepherd (v14). Of course the Father and the Son know each other because they are One in nature, Spirit, and power. And Jesus adds, "*I lay down my life for the sheep.*" The sacrifice of the Good Shepherd goes even as far as death (v15). Jesus also lets the Jewish leaders know that there are other sheep not in this particular fold; not of the Jewish Church or nation, but they are Gentiles. They will hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. They will come into the fold and be one flock because there will be one Shepherd (v16). Therefore, the Father loves the Good Shepherd in that He not only laid down His life but He had the power to take it up again (v17). No other has this power. This was the commandment that Jesus received of the Father (v18).

APPLICATION:

Those leaders that follow Christ will hear His voice. As your relationship matures, you will hear and know Jesus' voice. There was only One who laid down His life for you and there was only One who was resurrected.

Therefore follow this Good Shepherd by reading His Word. His Way will lead to Salvation!

⁴ <http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/john/darby/john10.htm>