



Unit .23

Session .05

Jesus Teaches About the Good Shepherd

Scripture

John 10:7-18



7 Jesus said again, “Truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. **8** All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn’t listen to them. **9** I am the gate. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. **10** A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance. **11** “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. **12** The hired hand, since he is not the shepherd and doesn’t own the sheep, leaves them and runs away when he sees a wolf coming. The wolf then snatches and scatters them. **13** This happens because he is a hired

hand and doesn’t care about 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. I lay down my life for the sheep. **16** But I have other sheep that are not from this sheep pen; I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. Then there will be one flock, one shepherd. **17** This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life so that I may take it up again. **18** No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

What are some characteristics of those “thieves and robbers” that threaten the church today?

What are some good things that have the potential to make you stray from following Jesus?



99 Essential Doctrines

Christ as Propitiation

Because of God’s righteousness and holiness, humanity’s sins must be atoned for in order for people to be reconciled to God. As the propitiation for sins, Christ’s death is the appeasement or satisfaction of God’s wrath against sin. Christ’s propitiation for our sins demonstrates both God’s great love toward sinners (1 John 4:10) as well as the necessary payment that results from the penalty of sins (Rom. 3:26).

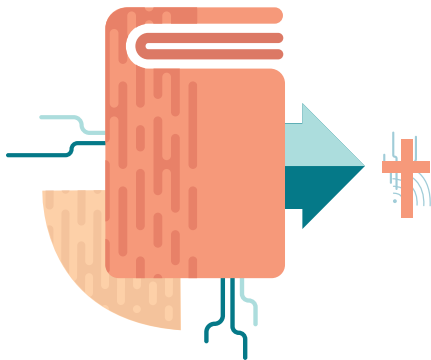
Main Point

Jesus' love and compassion leads to a fulfilled life.

How should the fact that believers are loved by a faithful and protective Shepherd influence the way we think about our relationship with God?

How should it influence the way we think about and treat others?

As the Good Shepherd, what is Jesus calling you away from during this time? What is He calling you to?



Christ Connection

Jesus is the Good Shepherd, sent by the Father, to lay down His life for the sheep so that they might have life. Because of Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection from the grave, we have abundant life in Him and through Him.



Head

Why does Jesus stress that He is “the” gate, and not just “a” gate?

What does it mean that Jesus offers abundant life?



Heart

How does the love of the Good Shepherd lead to faithful and obedient sheep?

Why is it important that we rightly emphasize God’s gracious and fatherly love for us in that, while we were still sinners, Jesus died for us?

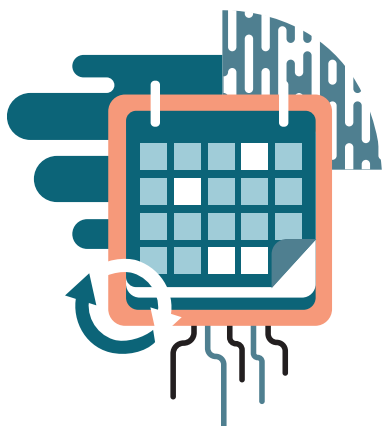


Hands

How can we, as sheep, join the Good Shepherd in His mission of taking care of His sheep?

Who are some wayward sheep in your life who need to draw closer to the Good Shepherd? How can you help with that in the weeks ahead?

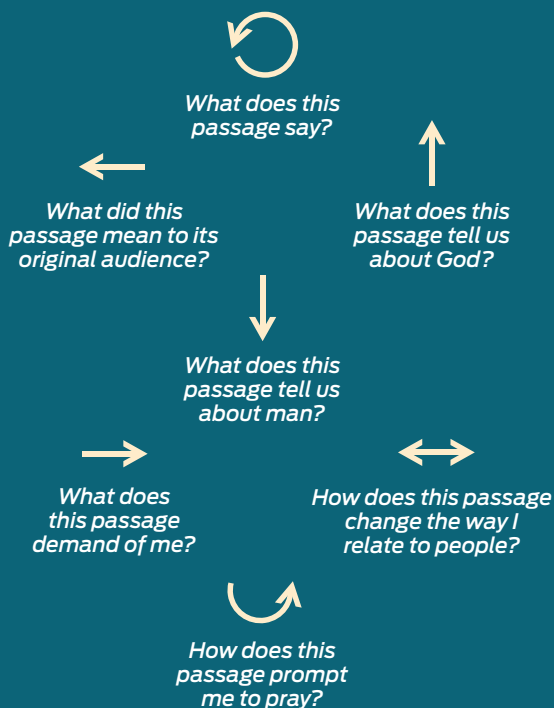
Daily Devotions



Day 1

John
10:1-6

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Jesus painted a picture of two voices calling out to sheep: one is the good shepherd and the other is a sheep thief, and they are both calling the sheep to follow them. The sheep respond to and follow the voice of the shepherd but run away from the stranger's voice, and a good thing too since the thief wants to lead the sheep away to fleece them for personal gain.

Do you ever doubt if you really belong to the Good Shepherd—to Jesus? Sin, shame, and doubt can call out to you to convince you that maybe you don't really belong to Jesus. But Jesus assures us that all who are His sheep recognize His voice and follow His voice. They may not graze in a straight path behind the Shepherd, but they always return. Does the voice of Jesus through Scripture stir you to belief and repentance? If so, take heart because it means you belong to Him. If not, consider whose voice you are following and turn to the Good Shepherd who welcomes into His flock all who believe in Him.

What are some voices surrounding us today trying to distract us from following Jesus?

Day 2

John 10:7-10

We often take doors for granted. What if there were no doors in the world? You wouldn't be able to enter or leave your home. You wouldn't be able to hop in a vehicle to go someplace, which you also wouldn't be able to enter. From another perspective, no doors would mean no sense of safety and security. A doorframe with no door invites anyone to enter, including thieves and murderers. We need doors.

Jesus said He alone is the gate, or door, to salvation and eternal life with God. Without this gate, there is no hope of being rescued from our sin and its consequence, no way of entering into God's holy presence. Furthermore, without this gate, there would be no protection from those whose only goal is to do us harm, notably spiritual harm. But we do have this gate, and those who believe in Jesus ought to be grateful.

What are some ways you will express your gratitude for Jesus as the gate to salvation?

Day 3

John 10:11-13

In this passage, Jesus expanded upon His metaphor of a shepherd at the beginning of the chapter, and He did so, in part, by way of contrast. Previously, Jesus described the bad actors in the scenario as "strangers" and as "thieves and robbers" who climbed the walls of the sheepfold instead of entering by the gate (vv. 1-5). Here He adds "hired hand" and "wolf." The enemies of the sheep come from without and within, unknown and known. They may be among us, but they are not of us (1 John 2:18-19). They are characterized by selfishness, deception, and a desire to hurt and create division.

By contrast, the Good Shepherd lays His life down for His sheep. He won't abandon them but will defend them with His life. His sheep know Him intimately, and where enemies seek to harm and scatter, Jesus binds up and heals. He cares about His sheep; He cares about you.

How does the Good Shepherd's care for His sheep address the pain and struggles you are currently facing?

John 10:14-18

The Bible says it is appointed for human beings to die once and then face judgment for their thoughts, words, and actions in life (Heb. 9:27). All of us are going to die. The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23); we've earned this. And once we have died, we are going to stay dead (until, of course, Jesus returns and brings the promised resurrection). No amount of effort from our dead selves will start our hearts beating, our lungs breathing, or our bodies moving.

But Jesus, as fully human as we are, is unique, for He is also fully divine. By the command of His Father, the Son of God came to earth as a human being for the purpose of laying down His life to save us from eternal death and the judgment of hell for our sin. And He also has the right and the power to take His life up again in His resurrection, because He died not for His own sin but for ours. He died and was raised so we too might be raised in the newness of eternal life.

What are some ways you will show your love and honor for the One who laid His life down and took it up again to save you?

John 10:19-21

The people in this passage came to a crossroads as they debated over who Jesus is. They were split over whether Jesus was demon-possessed or divinely powerful. In his book *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis famously said that when you encounter Jesus, you have one of three conclusions to make: Jesus is either a liar, a lunatic, or He is Lord. [See C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, (New York: Touchstone, 1980), 55-56.] If He is a madman or a liar, then you don't take seriously anything He says. But if He actually is who He says He is, then you must take everything He says seriously. Lewis's point was that you cannot encounter Jesus and remain ambivalent toward Him; Jesus demands a response from you, and failing to respond is in itself a response to discount Jesus.

The blind man whom Jesus had healed made his choice: Jesus is Lord. To make this response means we must submit ourselves to Him and His authority. He is the Good Shepherd, after all.

What parts of your life require your repentance and submission to the Good Shepherd?