

**Title:** **-S-** The Sheep Know The Shepherd's Voice

**Object:** Picture of Dog

**Scripture:** **-S-** "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers." (John 10:3-5)

How many of you have a dog? **-S-** My dog's name is Chewie and he is a Havanese – that means he comes from Havana, Cuba. **-S-** When we are not at home, Chewie stays in the back yard, but when we get home, I open the back door and call his name. When I call his name, he comes running.

Do you know what would happen if you had opened the door and called Chewie? Nothing! Chewie would not come because he didn't know you and wouldn't recognize your voice. Sometimes I open the back gate and call Chewie to take him for a walk. If a stranger had come to the gate and called him, do you think Chewie would come to him? No way! He would bark. A dog knows his master's voice and will only do what his master tells him to do. Did you know that same thing is true of sheep? **-S-** Jesus said that sheep know the shepherd's voice and they will follow him. He then went on to say that He is the Shepherd and we are His sheep. If Jesus is our master, we will know His voice and will do what He wants us to do. Sometimes, other people will try to get us to do something we should not do. If Jesus is our master, we won't listen to their voice. Sometimes, Satan tries to get us to do something that we should not do. If Jesus is our master, we won't listen to Satan's voice.

The shepherd always wants what is best for His sheep. He leads them into green pastures where they have plenty to eat. He leads them to water so that they have plenty to drink. He leads them to the shelter where they will be safe from the storm. Jesus wants what is best for us. He said that He came so that we could have life and have it abundantly. We will always be safe, if we listen to His voice and follow Him.

Jesus, You are the good shepherd and we are your sheep. Help us to listen to Your voice and to follow You. Amen.

## READING – Psalm 23

### **-S-** The Good Shepherd

August 24, 2014

John 10:1-21

Sermon #60

### PRAYER

This week was a mess and terribly hard. I honestly do not know what I would have done without Jesus as my Shepherd. I appreciate that this morning we begin with the parable of the shepherd and sheep. Jesus is identified by many names in the scriptures: **-S-** the Alpha and the Omega, **-S-** the Advocate, **-S-** the Apostle, **-S-** the Author and Perfecter of faith, **-S-** the Author of Salvation, **-S-** the Beginning, **-S-** the Bread of Life, **-S-** Counselor, **-S-** Deliverer, **-S-** Eternal Father, **-S-** the First and Last, **-S-** Great High Priest, **-S-** Holy One of God, **-S-** Immanuel, **-S-** the Light of the World, **-S-** Lord of Glory, **-S-** Messiah, **-S-** Prince of Life, **-S-** Prince of Peace, **-S-** the Righteous One, **-S-** Savior, **-S-** the True God, **-S-** the Way, Truth and Life to name some of His titles and names – all of these names are true. However, I do not believe for me that any name is more comforting than **-S-** the Good Shepherd. Jesus loves and cares for us – even when we cannot.

As I thought about sheep and how we are like sheep I realized that sheep are a good argument against evolution. Sheep simply cannot take care of themselves. Without a shepherd sheep will stray into places they cannot get out of and die. **-S-** Sheep will come up to the edge of an outcrop and jump 10 to 15 feet down to get to the tender grass and then cannot get back up. Without a shepherd they will eat all the grass and then die. **-S-** The shepherd hears the sheep bleating and will climb down and carry the sheep back up. There is no way sheep could have evolved; they simply would have died along the way. So for Jesus to compare people to


sheep is accurate, because without God to set boundaries and care for us, we are like the sheep. We will end up in trouble because of our sin nature. We are spiritually dead without Jesus. To know that this is true, all one has to do is look around and observe people.



The imagery of a shepherd leading and caring for sheep was common in the culture of Palestine. So it makes sense that Jesus would use this imagery in His parable.

**-S-** Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had been shepherds and God used them to lead His people. **-S-** Moses and David had been shepherds and God used their time of shepherding to prepare them to lead His people. These men were shepherds sent by God to the people in order to care for them. **-S-** However, by the time Jesus came to the earth there were false shepherds who wanted the people to believe God sent them. But, in truth, they were fleecing the sheep for their own gain. They were false shepherds and they were self-serving shepherds. Today, it is the same - there is the broad church made up of many denominations, factions and sects, but this is not the true church. **-S-** Jesus' true church is concerned with the Word of God, not the desires of men. Just as Jesus was the true shepherd to His new church, He continues today to be the true shepherd of the remnant church, not the general church that wants to identify with Jesus but desires to do as they please. Jesus' sheep hear His voice and follow Him and they do not recognize the stranger's voice. They know there is safety following Jesus and they have learned to flee from the stranger's voice.

Beginning in verse 1 of chapter 10 we read the parable that Jesus spoke to the Pharisees and the people. He told them this parable just after He had healed the blind man, **-S-** **“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber.**

<sup>2</sup> But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.’ <sup>6</sup> This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them.” Jesus used this common concept of the shepherd and sheep because it was something that the people could easily relate to – the Jewish people had shepherded sheep for thousands of years. It appears by what is written in verse 6, however, that some did not understand what Jesus was trying to get them to understand in this parable.

The sheepfold was an enclosure that protected the sheep at night.  As the picture shows there was only one way in and out. The wealthier shepherds would hire a person to tend the sheep at night while the poorer shepherds would sleep in the doorway to keep the sheep in the fold and the predators out.

Any person who climbed the walls of the sheepfold was there for one reason, to steal the sheep. This is why Jesus says in verse one,  “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber.” We know from past studies that  “Truly, truly” was a phrase used to show that what follows is important. We use the Greek words “Amen, amen,” when we pray and publicly agree that something is of God and when we are affirming something to be important and true. This phrase was commonly used at the time of Christ. Truly, truly or Amen, amen.

Jesus says in verse 2 and 3, **-S-** “But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.” The shepherd would lead his sheep during the day to pastures of green and tender grass for the sheep to graze upon. He talked to his sheep and knew each sheep by name. Shepherds softly sang to their sheep to quiet and comfort them when they were nervous and tense. As the day closed they led their sheep back to the safety of the sheepfold. As they reached the sheepfold the shepherd inspected each sheep as it entered to see that it was not injured. It was common that several shepherds would use the same sheepfold. The flocks would freely mix in the fold and spend the night together. The shepherds took turns guarding the gate or door leading into the sheepfold. In the morning as the sheep came out of the fold the shepherds called each sheep by name and talked to the sheep. Each sheep separated from the other sheep and followed the voice it knew, the voice of its shepherd.

This pattern of the shepherd and his sheep worked well except if something happened to the shepherd, as seen in verses 4 and 5, **-S-** “When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.” The sheep follow the voice of the shepherd they know and trust because they know his voice. However, a problem arose if the shepherd became sick or died. The shepherd had to send someone else to tend the sheep. The sheep would panic and scatter because they did not recognize the voice. The new shepherd would have to work hard at controlling the sheep. Just like the sheep, people know the voice of truth in their hearts, if they will but listen. If they do not listen, they scatter and lose their way in life.

Jesus is telling the people there is a difference between the true shepherd who cares for the sheep and protects them and the false shepherd. **-S-** The Jewish leaders, of which the Pharisees were the most common, were no longer following the voice of God and shepherding the people to spiritually feed upon God, but had become false shepherds who, in truth, served the purposes of Satan. In verse one and eight Jesus refers to them as thieves and robbers.

The Apostle Peter made clear that we Christians are to **-S-** “Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert.” What results in listening to a false shepherd is, **-S-** “Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8) Jewish leaders of Christ’s time and of the time of the early church, and false shepherds this very day work to destroy the church from within and lead people into destruction.

The only true Shepherd is Jesus. He does send under-shepherds to guide His people. However, under-shepherds guide the people as God directs. **-S-** The under-shepherd knows that the guide God has given for the direction of His people is the breath of the Bible and not the whims and fads of men.

Since many of the people did not understand the parable and its meaning - Jesus restates it with slightly different emphasis. Reading at verse 7, **-S-** “So Jesus said to them again, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. <sup>9</sup> I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly.’” Again Jesus begins with “Truly, truly” to emphasize the truth and importance of what He will now say. Jesus in not only the

Shepherd who guards the door to the sheepfold, but **-S-** He is the “Door” itself. Remember there is only one small door to the sheepfold; there is only one-way in and out. Jesus is saying **-S-** He is the only way.

These Jewish leaders are saying they know the way to worship God, but their way is not the one way of the scriptures. They steal the people’s ability to know God, worship God and enjoy God and serve God. Jesus makes clear in verse 9, **-S-** “I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.” If one desires to belong to God, be a child of God and have a relationship with God, he must enter by way of Jesus - the only door. When one receives salvation through faith in Jesus as the Christ he “will be saved” and will feed upon God for spiritual life. Even when this world is in turmoil we believers will feed upon the green pastures of God and have spiritual life, which is eternal.

Jesus continues using the imagery of the shepherd and his sheep, reading from verse 11, **-S-** “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup> He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. <sup>14</sup> I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, <sup>15</sup> even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd. <sup>17</sup> For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. <sup>18</sup> No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.” Just as a shepherd will



lay down his life to protect his flock, Jesus will lay down His life so that people will be able to come back to God through Him. False shepherds, leaders and prophets are not only thieves and robbers who are self-serving, but, like a hired hand, will flee when trouble comes. They are not the under-shepherds of Jesus the Chief Shepherd, so their concern is not for the sheep but for themselves. Unlike the Pharisees, who are false shepherds, **-S-** Jesus is the true shepherd – **-S-** He is “the good shepherd.”

Reading verses 14 and 15, **-S-** “I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. God the Father knows Jesus. Here the word “knows” means intimately and completely. Jesus also knows God the Father intimately and completely. Because Jesus is the Christ, God the Son, He is the only One who can truthfully say, **-S-** “I know My own and My own know Me.” Jesus knows all those whom God the Father has called and He will not lose one. As Jesus calls them, He spiritually awakens their souls and they then seek the comfort and shelter of the “good shepherd.”

Verse 16 has caused division and speculation among scholars and people for many years. Jesus said, **-S-** “I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock *with one shepherd.*” First, I can tell you that Jesus is **not** saying, as the Mormons claim, that He has other planets to go to and will bring the people of other planets to God. What Jesus **is** saying is there are more sheep to be brought into the sheepfold. **-S-** Jesus understood His mission on earth involved the gathering of the other sheep or Gentiles so that all might belong to one “flock.” The issue is significant because not everyone is from the same sheepfold or enclosure (meaning people of different

tribes, cultures and language), but **-S-** all sheep belong to the one flock since there is only one Shepherd – Jesus. Those who are not of Jesus’ flock are the goats referred to in Matthew. **-S-** “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.” (Matthew 25:31-33) Just as the tares are allowed to grow among the wheat and then separated at the harvest, so too, at the final judgment, Jesus will separate the children of God and those who claim Jesus, but are in truth unbelievers.

We close reading from verse 19 to 21, **-S-** “A division occurred again among the Jews because of these words. <sup>20</sup> Many of them were saying, ‘He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?’ <sup>21</sup> Others were saying, ‘These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?’”

From John’s narrative we can surmise that some heard Jesus because **-S-** “division occurred again among the Jews.” The use of the word “Jews” means the Jewish leadership, not the common people. However, most of the Jewish leadership thought Jesus was possessed by a demon. Debate ensued with some saying Jesus was demon possessed, others saying, **-S-** “These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?” As it is today most people have made up their minds without regard to the facts – facts of history and the consistent reliability of the scriptures. Most people spend great effort to find the meaning of life and definition of who they are. They want any answer other than God. Because of their sin nature they do not want to

acknowledge God, for then they would be accountable to Him. They cannot hear His voice.

For our sakes and for the sake of the lost, it is important for us to not only hear His voice but to follow Christ. Jesus came so that we “**may have life, and have it abundantly.**” Knowing this it then is important that we live as Francis of Assisi said, **-S-** “**Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words.**” My beloved, are we daily living the Gospel so that others might see Christ through us?