

“Jesus said I Am The Good Shepherd” by Ed Terry Delivered 10-13-19

1st John 3:16 – 24; Psalm 23; Luke 15: 3 – 7; **John 10:11- 18 (Sermon)**

On 7 different occasions in The Gospel According To John Jesus said, ***“I am”***. Each time Jesus said ***“I Am”*** Jesus was clearly claiming to be God. When Jesus said, ***“I am the Good Shepherd.”*** Jesus was describing who He was and **Jesus** was describing the role Jesus was prepared to play for all of His followers.

If Jesus is the Good Shepherd that makes every one of us the sheep. So I want to begin by telling you a little about sheep.

- Sheep are not very bright. Think about it - Have you ever seen a trained sheep in a circus.
- Sheep are very stubborn. They want to do their own thing.
- Sheep cannot be driven. Sheep must be led.
- Sheep are easily frightened. They have been known to go over a cliff in confusion or if they are frightened.
- Sheep are very dirty and they cannot do anything to clean their own wool.
- Sheep are defenseless. They have no way to protect themselves. Sheep need to be protected.
- Sheep are totally dependent. They require as much or more attention than any other animal.
- Sheep are so helpless that if they roll over on their back they cannot get up. If the shepherd does not turn them over they will die.

When Jesus compared us to sheep Jesus was not being very complimentary. But Jesus knows us really well and if we are honest with ourselves many times we are not too bright and we often do stupid things. People are easily frightened and people often panic if no one is in charge. People go charging off in the wrong direction and we often find ourselves in trouble and in dangerous situations. People are prone to wander and are easily distracted. People act as if we are defenseless against the things going on in our society. People need constant guidance and people need lots of assurance.

While Jesus had adequate justification in comparing people to sheep, I believe Jesus’ reason for this comparison was to fully explain the role Jesus wants to play in our life. Jesus likened Himself to a shepherd to show us how much Jesus loves us, how much Jesus cares for us, how much Jesus protects us, and the many ways Jesus provides for us. Jesus totally gave Himself so that everyone could experience abundant life while we are on earth and throughout eternity.

In the first part of chapter 10 Jesus contrasts the difference between a shepherd and thieves. Then in our text, Jesus contrasts Himself as the Good Shepherd with a hired hand. Jesus really shocked His listeners when He said, ***“I am the Good Shepherd.”*** Jesus was also declaring Himself to be good and the Jews thought only God was good. Jesus declared Himself to be their Shepherd and in their minds only King David was their shepherd. Jesus was saying He was greater than their shepherd David.

In verses 12 and 13 Jesus contrasts Himself with the Jewish religious leaders. Jesus was saying the Pharisees are no more than hired hands and they do not really have your best interests at heart. Then Jesus said, *“Listen and I will prove it to you.”*

Jesus said the Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. A good shepherd puts his sheep before himself. Jesus makes it clear He is willing to die for us so that we can live. A good shepherd sacrifices his life for his sheep. Whereas a hired person puts their own life first because the sheep do not belong to them and the sheep mean nothing to them. The hired person puts their needs first and when there is danger, the hired hand leaves the sheep to take care of themselves. You see the only

reason a hired person looks after sheep is for the money. Whereas a good shepherd looks after the sheep because He loves them.

When Jesus said, ***“I am the Good Shepherd.”*** Jesus gives us eight (8) major roles that Jesus wants to fulfill in our lives.

First Jesus wants to provide for us. We see that clearly in Psalm 23. ***“I shall not want.” “He leads me to green pastures”, “beside still water”, “my cup overflows”.***

Next, Jesus wants to protect us. In verses 11 and 15 the Good Shepherd willingly lays down His life for the sheep. (John 10:11) Jesus stands between danger and each of us. Jesus willingly laid down His life for us because He loves us.

Next, as the Good Shepherd, Jesus pursues us when we wander away. In the *Parable of the Lost Sheep* (Luke 15:3 – 7) Jesus explained how much He loves us and how much Jesus wants us to be with Him at all times. When one of the 100 sheep wandered away Jesus searched and found the one lost sheep.

Next, as the Good Shepherd, Jesus leads His flock. In verse 16 He said, ***“They listen to my voice and they follow me.”*** The sheep know their shepherd will lead them to food, water, and safety so the sheep willingly follow. The sheep do not resist because a good shepherd leads from the front instead of prodding the sheep from the behind. When the shepherd is ready to move he calls his sheep. And while sheep are not the most intelligent animals, sheep know their shepherd’s voice, From experience the sheep know that their shepherd provides for them and protects them so they willingly follow their shepherd.

The Good Shepherd also calms and comforts His sheep with His gentle voice when they are afraid. Often a shepherd sings to his sheep or plays a flute so the sheep will rest and sleep at night.

The next aspect of a good shepherd is redemption. In verse 15-18 Jesus is clearly stating He is willing to die on the cross so that we can live. Jesus is predicting His death and His resurrection. Jesus loves us so much that He willingly suffered and died on the cross to pay the price of our sins. Remember Jesus was not murdered. Jesus loved us so much He willingly laid down His life to pay the penalty of our sinful nature and all our sinful acts. Jesus spoke and created the world however it cost Jesus His very life to pay the price for our rebellion. Then in verse 18 Jesus says He will rise from the dead. Jesus rose from the dead so we could have victory over the power of sin in our lives and so we could live with Him in heaven throughout eternity.

The next aspect of a good shepherd is ownership. A shepherd places his mark on each one of his sheep so that everyone will know those sheep belong to him. In baptism Jesus places His mark on us. As Christians we belong to Jesus because He made us and Jesus redeemed us when He voluntarily died on the cross to pay the penalty of our sins.

And lastly a good shepherd is totally committed to his flock. The life of any shepherd is a lonely one. Shepherds choose to live with their sheep. Shepherds are often out in the field with their flock for months at a time. A shepherd chooses to be with their sheep because they are totally committed to their sheep.

But note that it is a reciprocal relationship. His sheep know their shepherd’s voice, His sheep know His touch, His sheep know He cares for them, and His sheep know their shepherd’s discipline. His

sheep experience their shepherd's leading every day. The question for each of us this morning is: *Do you know Jesus' voice? Do you know Jesus' touch? Do you know Jesus provides for all of your needs? Are you following Jesus every day? Are you experiencing this close personal relationship with Jesus?*

This leads us to the overall teaching in this passage which is relationship. Throughout this whole passage Jesus is teaching us about our relationship with Himself. Look at verses 14-15. ***"I know my sheep and my sheep know me."*** The Greek word translated as "know" here is a personal intimate knowledge. The relationship Jesus is talking about is much more than book knowledge. In Matthew 10:30 Jesus said even the hairs of our head are numbered. Psalm 139 describes how completely God knows our thoughts, our words, and our actions. The Good Shepherd has a name for all of His sheep and calls His sheep by their name.

This morning Jesus is calling each one of us by name. If you do not really know Jesus' voice or if you are not experiencing Jesus' love in your life please talk to one of your Pastors before you leave here today. Tomorrow may be too late because The Lord may call you home tonight.

Jesus is also calling for all of His sheep to follow Him. So we each need to ask ourselves exactly how committed am I to following Jesus? You know it is really easy to say we are committed Christians, but be honest and ask yourself:

- Am I really committed to praying and studying my Bible every day so I will know God and so I will know God's will for my life?
- Am I really committed to being a faithful steward of the time, the talents, and the money God has entrusted me with?
- Am I really committed to obeying all of Jesus' commandments and living like Jesus taught?
- Am I really committed to making sure my friends, neighbors, and co-workers know I am a Christian?
- Am I really committed to following Jesus' lead and serving Him each and every day?

Jesus loves each one of us and Jesus is totally committed to providing for you, protecting you, leading you, redeeming you, and to having a close personal relationship with you. Jesus willingly does all of these things with joy because Jesus is motivated by His unconditional love for you. The question for each of us is; Am I totally committed to Jesus. Today if you hear your shepherd's voice do not harden your heart. **AMEN.**