

Glory Revealed

Week 8-John 10:10-42

Revealed as The Good Shepherd

Jesus was the master storyteller and understood the power of utilizing a commonplace image to unlock the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Perhaps nothing was more familiar to His hearers in first-century Judea than the sight of a shepherd caring for his flock. During Jesus' time, sheep were generally raised for their wool rather than their meat. Once sheered, their woolly fleeces would be sold at great profit. Each sheep was a valuable source of income, often for decades. Therefore, the owner took great care tending his flock and guarding his investment.

I. The Enemy-John 10:10

Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10a). We often quote this verse to describe Satan and his tactics and it is an accurate description of the enemy. However, in context Jesus was referring to the Jewish religious leaders who, rather than shepherding the flock of God according to His Word, were leading them astray. It goes without saying that Satan was behind this, manipulating and using Jewish leaders as his mouthpiece to spread doctrinal error.

The Lord Jesus had just demonstrated His love for the lost sheep of the house of Israel by healing the man born blind. The religious leaders put the newly sighted man out of the synagogue (see John 9:34), revealing their true nature as false teachers. Jesus refers to the religious rulers as "thieves and robbers" (John 10:1, 8, 10) and hirelings (John 10:12 KJV) who care nothing for the sheep.

That is what the religious leaders of Israel had become. Their pride of position and desire for power, their system of Bible interpretation which, far from feeding God's flock, stole away from them their rich heritage, their determination to oppose Christ—all marked them out as false shepherds (John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary*).

Religion blinds and binds. The Pharisees had burdened the Jews with hundreds of rules and rituals added to the Law of God through what is referred to as the Oral Law. The Oral Law consisted of rabbinical teachings and oral traditions given to expound on God's Word. These manmade additions were being taught as biblical truth. The dangers of biblical illiteracy can be traced back thousands of years! This is why, beloved, we must know God's Word!

The Jews had been deceived into believing religious ritual and strict adherence to the letter of the Law could earn a place for them in God's eternal Kingdom. They failed to recognize that no one can keep the Law perfectly (see James 2:10). And their religious activity deceived them, keeping them from seeing their sin and recognizing the fact that they were sinners in dire need of a Savior! Galatians 3:23 says, "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."

In sharp contrast to the current religious teaching Jesus said, “I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10b). Abundant Life: the past forgiven, the present full of purpose and joy, and the future secure. That is what the Good Shepherd provides!

The abundant life is life that never ends; yet we don’t have to wait until the end of our physical life to receive this abundance and to enjoy it. Abundant life includes peace, purpose, destiny, a genuine purpose for living, the joy of facing any adversity—including the grave—without fear, and the ability to endure hardship with confident assurance. (Chuck Swindoll, *Insight on John*, p. 190–191)

II. The Good Shepherd-John 10:11-21

Continuing in His narrative using a familiar scenario of sheep herding, Jesus identifies Himself as The Good Shepherd.

A. He Sacrifices His Life for His Sheep-John 10:11, 14-18

The Good Shepherd does not merely lie across the opening of the sheepfold. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. Five times in this brief passage He says that He lays down His life for the sheep! This refers to the supreme sacrifice of Calvary where Jesus’ substitutionary death would provide atonement for sin on behalf of all sinful humanity.

No one has ever chosen to die but Jesus, because He was the only One who didn’t have to die. All the rest of us are going to die sooner or later. Some people may just choose to die a little sooner, but nobody has chosen to die, except one—and that was Jesus, who laid down His life for the sheep. He said, “No man taketh my life from me. No man can kill me. I lay it down.” (John 10:18) It wasn’t nails that held Him to the tree. It was the silver cords of love and the golden bonds of redemption that held Jesus Christ to that cross, (Dr. A. Rogers, *The Secret of Satisfaction*, *Adrian Rogers Sermon Archive*)

Jesus died as an atoning sacrifice to redeem us from sin. “Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16b). “In Him we have redemption, through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7). Beloved, this is amazing grace. This is agape love. This is the gospel. This is Glory Revealed!

Jesus died for the sin of the whole world (see 1 John 2:2), for the reprobate as well as the religious crowd who substitute ritual for a personal relationship with Him. The invitation to come to Jesus for eternal life remains a clarion call today. Come to Jesus. He will save you today!

B. He Stays with His Sheep-John 10:12-13

Jesus references “a hired hand” (John 10:12). In context, the hired hand was another veiled reference to the religious leaders who had no real investment in the sheep. Their concern was their own power and position.

Shepherds often used hired hands if the pasture was close to a village. In the evening the sheep would be driven from the grazing area to a communal pen. Generally, a designated keeper would be paid to watch over them, sleeping across the door of the enclosure. The hired hand was not a shepherd and he was “not the owner of the sheep” (John 10:12). His interest in the sheep was solely for financial gain. The Jewish oral law obligated a shepherd to stay and fight if one wolf approached the flock but not if two threatened them. The hireling had a limited level of commitment to the well-being of the flock in stark contrast to The Good Shepherd.

C. He Sees His Sheep-John 10:14-15

Jesus said, “I know My own and My own know Me” (John 10:14b). Our Good Shepherd knows each of us individually. Proverb 4:32 says, “He is intimate with the upright.” Psalm 139:3 says that God is “intimately acquainted with all [our] ways.” He knows us the way the Father knows the Son and we know our Shepherd in the same way the Son knows the Father. Selah! Think on that for a while!

D. He Seeks Other Sheep-John 10:16

Jesus references “other sheep” (John 10:16). This refers to Gentiles and the ultimate universal scope of those yet to hear the good news, a statement that further inflamed the Jews and their religious rulers. They relished their ancestral relationship to Abraham and trusted in their Jewish DNA to find favor with God. The idea of salvation being extended beyond the chosen people of Israel was not just contradictory to their false narrative; it was blasphemous. A division occurred again among the Jews because of the words Jesus spoke. Many of them were saying, “He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?” (John 10:19-20). [Others were concerned with the possibility that only One sent from God could perform miracles.]

E. He Secures His Sheep-John 10:27-29

Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27). This speaks of genuine believers who have repented, believed, and received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Jesus said, “I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish. And no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand” (John 10:27). The believer is enfolded and protected in the hand of Jesus, which is enfolded and protected in the hand of the Father. Colossians 3:3 says, “For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

III. The Sovereign Shepherd-John 10:22-42

In John 10:22 the apostle John gives us the timeline. The Feast of the Dedication (also known as Hanukkah) is celebrated roughly two months after the Feast of

Booths. The Jewish leaders and temple officials pressed Jesus says, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly?" (John 10:24). Up to this point Jesus had not identified Himself explicitly in Jerusalem as the Messiah. The closest was the Samaritan woman in Galilee where He was clear on the issue. In reality, they did not recognize their Messiah although He fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament and had produced signs that confirmed His divine identity. They missed Him, largely in part because they were expecting a warrior king in the vein of David who would overthrow Roman and set up an earthly kingdom. The works and words of Jesus had made it abundantly clear that He was their long-awaited Redeemer. The problem was not in their hearing, but in their unbelieving hearts.

They missed His first coming as the Suffering Servant by confusing it with His Second Coming. Blinded by their unbelief and religious ritual, they failed to understand that a bloody cross stood between His first and His second coming! First, Jesus came to save people from their sin. Anyone willing to set aside their preconceived notions long enough to compare His Words and His works with the Scripture would have no trouble recognizing Him as the Christ.

Jesus said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). His hearers understood His allusion to Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!" Jesus' assertion of deity enraged the Jews who would have stoned Him to death were it not for the divine hand of God which restrained them.

The confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees continued to escalate as they accused the Lord of blasphemy. John 10:39 says, "Therefore, they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp." Because His time had not yet come, God allowed Jesus to slip away from His antagonists. This chapter concludes with Jesus withdrawing "beyond the Jordan to the place where John was first baptizing" (John 10:40). The witness of John the Baptist continued to bear fruit. As a result, "many believed in Him there" (John 10:42).

The days of Jesus' earthly ministry were drawing to the cruel conclusion of the Cross. Praise God, the story does not end there. Jesus, having become the atoning sacrifice for sin, was raised from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father! The Good Shepherd died for the sheep; the Great Shepherd rose for the sheep. Hebrews 13:20 says, "Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen." At Calvary Jesus paid our sin debt and saved us from **the penalty of sin**. His resurrection not only paid the penalty of our sin but delivered us from **the power of our sin** because He sent the Holy Spirit to indwell us (see Acts 2:1-4). And one day He will deliver us from **the presence of sin**. First Peter 5:4 says, "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory." In the Bible Jesus is revealed as The Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd, and the Chief Shepherd! Beloved, this is Glory Revealed!