

## YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS

NOVEMBER 6, 2022 | WALKING WITH JESUS | JOHN 10 | PASTOR SCOTT TURANSKY

[PRAYER] Lord, we love just the coming to church and interacting together as a family. Spending time with children and youth and adults, singing together and praying together. We should appreciate just the worship time that we have and the special music we have each week. Lord, thank you for all of those things. At the center of all of our time together is this focus on your word. And so we're going to do that now. We ask that you would speak to us, that you'd calm our hearts and make our hearts receptive to the truth from your word today. Each of these folks have come today, Lord, expecting something from you. So as you often do, we ask that you would reveal new truth or old truths that we need to be reminded about regarding who you are. Thank you, Father. In Jesus' name, amen.

Today, we're going to look at John 10. This is the passage about the good shepherd. In order to look at the good shepherd passage, this is the one that's going to talk to us about the shepherd knows each one of his sheep by name. That we hear the shepherd's voice, we recognize it, and we listen to it. In order to talk about John 10 though, I want to go back to the favorite psalm we have, Psalm 23, and look at that psalm for a moment. Because it's the shepherd psalm. So would you stand with me and let's just read it together if we could.

Read this with me. This is Psalm 23. Some of you have this memorized, but this is the ESV version. Let's read it together. *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.* That's a great psalm.

You may be seated.

The Bible uses this picture of the shepherd and the sheep a number of times. I think of Isaiah 53:6 where it says – *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.* I think, wow, it is true that we like sheep go astray. We tend to find other grass. We tend to listen to the wrong voices. We have to be careful of that. We're going to be reminded of that today as we look at John 10.

Jesus got out of the boat, and He looked at all the people and the Bible says He had compassion on these people in the crowds because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

There's that one story that Jesus was told to defend Himself against the religious leaders who were saying, "Why does he hang around with all these publicans and sinners, tax collectors?" And Jesus said, "There was a shepherd who had 100 sheep and one of the sheep drifted off and got lost. What would the shepherd do? The shepherd would leave the 99 and he would go after the one." Just describing Jesus' response, even to us. That He wants to connect with us. He wants to find us.

Maybe you feel like you're that lost sheep today. Maybe you don't know the shepherd's voice. And maybe today will be that time where you say, "Yes, you know, I want to commit myself to Jesus. I'm realizing that this understanding of discipleship and following Jesus is different than what I had learned or what I've thought. I want to make that commitment to be a sheep to follow Jesus in my life."

I am privileged as a pastor to see in 1 Peter where Peter takes the same word *poimen* (shepherd) and applies it to the pastoral role. It says as a leader, you need to pastor the flock. I think, wow, what a good picture of the job of a pastor. We're not policemen, we're not guards in that sense. But we're pastors of the flock. What a privilege.

I think we're going to learn some really good things today in John 10. It is the classic passage that teaches us all about the good shepherd. But as we start the passage, John starts or Jesus starts by talking about the other people that interact with the sheep besides the shepherd.

Let's pick it up in John 10. It says this: "*Truly, truly (or amen, amen) I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens.*"

We have to start by recognizing there are other voices out there, there are other situations, there are people who are trying to hurt us and harm us in our world today. They're trying to destroy us. Many times you might start thinking, going down that negative path in your own mind, you start getting anxious, or you start getting angry, or you're finding yourself in despair. You're listening to the wrong voice. There are thieves, there are robbers that are trying to harm us, to damage us. We need to know that. Because it's the midst of that context that we have to realize there is a good shepherd that we want to listen to and pay attention to.

It's describing how they climb up by another way. So let me just show you some sheep pens. This is one made out of stones. You notice there's an opening where the sheep can come in and out. If you're nomadic or you're traveling, then it might look like this where you have all the sticks gathered in a space. But there's this one place where the sheep come in and out. It's that picture that we're going to see now as Jesus is describing this whole scene of the good shepherd as a metaphor, just as a figure of speech here. He's not saying He's the shepherd yet. He will. But right now He's just talking about this idea of the metaphor.

Let's go on and read. I love these verses. In verse 3 it says – "*The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.*" I don't know a lot about shepherding. But I do know that you don't drive sheep; you drive cattle. So you can drive cattle. You don't call your

cows by name. But sheep seem to have this special relationship with the shepherd or the farmer who's taking care of them. You lead sheep, they follow. They're looking for something to follow. We in our own hearts have this need to follow. Who are we going to follow? Whose voice are we going to listen to?

*The sheep follow him, for they know his voice.* There are a lot of other voices going on that are happening outside in our world today. Just think about the voices that we hear. Sometimes we can't hear anything because there's just noise going on continually. Sometimes we have to turn off the electronics if we just want to hear the Lord because we've got so much happening around us that there's no silent time to be able to listen to the Lord and what He wants to say to us. But then there are all those other voices that are out there that are calling us. "Let me tell you how you can get rich quick." Or "let me tell you that you're right and you should be angry with that person. You go ahead and give him a piece of your mind." There are other voices out there. And those voices sometimes crowd out the voice of the shepherd.

But the sheep are listening for the voice of the shepherd. They know his voice. They're attuned to his voice. It's always fascinating to me that if we have a crowd like this and if there's a baby crying out there and we can hear the baby, only one mom is going to get up and go. The other moms know that's not my baby. But the one mom says, "That's my baby. I better go out there and help." That mom is attuned to the voice of that particular child. We tune our ears to listen.

This is one of the things we work on with children. Because sometimes you talk to children and they ignore you. And so we train children how to listen to their parents so that when a parent speaks, a child's tune is in there and they can respond to the parents' leadership. In a similar way, we want to have our hearts tuned to the Lord so that when He speaks we can listen. We need a habit of listening to the Lord because there are other voices that are out there.

That's what's described in the next verse. It says in verse 5 – "*A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.*" That's how it should be in our lives. We shouldn't be listening to the stranger's voice. And you know, sometimes a stranger's voice comes in. When it starts to come in, then we have a problem. You get up in the morning, you're saying, "Okay, I've got to look at the news to find out if World War III started today." Or you get up and say, "Oh no, what's the next disease that's going to hit our world today." Or "I wonder what's happening in the political arena today." If those voices are so strong in our hearts, then we tend to move toward anxiety in our lives.

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He leads me beside quiet waters. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.* There is this sense of leadership that the Lord provides. And *he restores my soul.* That's what the shepherd does for us. So we want to be listening to the voice of the shepherd instead of the voice of the stranger.

Well, He's just telling this metaphor here, this figure of speech. And the people don't understand. It says in verse 6 – *This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So Jesus again said to them...* Now He's going to personalize it. He's going to describe His relationship with the sheep. He says – "*Truly, truly (or amen, amen), I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.*" Now you can imagine the sheepfold there that has this

opening and the shepherd would sit there. If they're going to do an all-nighter, then he would sit there in that opening there. He describes Himself as the door of the sheep. What does the door mean? It means if you're going to get into the fold, you go through the door. Through Jesus. He even uses the word. Look at it. It says – *“I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved.”* That's why we use the term “to get saved” when you decide to become a disciple or a Jesus-follower. It's this term that I need to get saved.

And then it says – *He will go in and out and find pasture.* There's this sense of peace that takes place. *He leads me beside quiet waters.* We're following Him in our lives.

Well, we have to draw a line or a distinction between the bad guys and the good guys in the story. Because with sheep there's always the enemies that are out there, wanting to destroy. So Jesus says it this way in verse 10 – *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”*

There are thieves out there that want to rob us of the green pastures and the quiet waters and the restored soul that Jesus wants to provide for us. There are enemies out there that want to damage us and harm us and that want to distract us, really, from what God has for us. We need to be able to know that's a thief; I'm not listening to that. That's going to lead me in the wrong path. I'm not paying attention to that. Yet at the same time, we need to realize Jesus does have this purpose for us that He's the good shepherd.

He says – *I have come that they might have life and have it abundantly. Surely, goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.* That's the abundant life that Psalm 23 is describing here. This abundant life means we're not just going to have eternal life that starts now, which we do. But we also have this quality of life that's different. That even when the thieves and the robbers, we know they're out there, but he says in Psalm 23 – *He prepares a table before me in the presence of my enemies.* Even when the enemies are around, I can be sitting there enjoying a meal and I'm not threatened by them because I know the shepherd and I follow the shepherd. It's just such a beautiful picture of as Christians we are not entangled with the world. We're not so focused on the world that we get distracted. We want to follow the shepherd.

Let's go on. He says He's the good shepherd. Now we're going to talk about this other guy, the hired hand. *“He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.”*

See, there's a quality of relationship that you have with Jesus Christ. The quality of relationship is high because He loves us, He cares about us. He's not like just some passerby, but He's someone who has this deep relationship and close relationship. Do you experience that? Do you feel the closeness? I think that's what Jesus is trying to help us feel here in this passage. There's a closeness that exists between the shepherd and the sheep that I want to feel every day. When something starts to take away from that, I need to go back and be sure I'm listening to the voice of the shepherd.

He says again – *“I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.”* Just describing the fact, as Jesus is looking forward to the fact that He's going to be crucified, He's laying down His life for the sheep.

*And I have other sheep that are not of this fold.* He kind of throws that in there, maybe to puzzle us. Maybe to puzzle those people who are listening. It doesn't puzzle us. We know that there are other churches that are preaching the word. We know that there are other communities all around the world that are serving the Lord.

My class at Concordia University that I teach every year has now been accepted in China. It's one of the ten classes that they now are going to be teaching (it's a Christian class) in China. I won't be going there, but I'll be teaching it virtually. Because there are a lot of Christians in China who want to learn more about family and parenting. Earlier this year, I did a webinar in Ethiopia and spoke to church leaders in Ethiopia. Every time I do something like that and I see the different places, I know there are sheep in other places. The idea is we're one big fold. And that's what Jesus says.

He continues. He says – *“I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.”* Now what He's referring to as He's talking to these Jewish people, He's talking about there are Gentiles out there that are going to accept the Lord. This is going to be hard for some of you Jews. But we're going to have one big flock is what He's talking about here.

*“For this reason, the Father loves me because I lay down my life that I might take it up again.”* Here we're going to see the authority Christ has to make this decision and lay down His life for us. *“No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”* Oh, that's a big one. That's a statement that the Jews are not going to be happy with. Because they hear Him talking about His Father and they're going, *“What is this guy doing, making Himself sound like He's like God?”* So that's why it says there – *There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?” Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”* He's challenging the Jews and they're thinking. He's challenging them because He's saying that He's God is what He's saying here. It's going to become clearer in the next few verses.

Notice in verse 22, it says – *At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter.* The Feast of Dedication is Hanukkah. That's what it is that they're going to celebrate. The Feast of Lights. It's not a biblical feast, yet Jesus is participating in actually using the feast to teach some kingdom lessons.

Sometimes during this time of year someone will come to me and say. *“You shouldn't celebrate Christmas because it's a pagan holiday.”* I have a sense that Jesus would probably celebrate Christmas, but He would do it in a way that brings out kingdom principles. I think we can do

that. We can use Christmas to draw the true meaning of Christmas out so that other people can see it. I suspect that Jesus would celebrate Christmas. He did celebrate the Feast of Lights, not a biblical feast.

*And Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep."*

The word *believe* here is used seven times. The reason He's going to talk about this belief and the works and so on is because believing is the key to becoming a sheep. Make sure you understand the connection here. Because if you're here today and you're saying, "Wow, I wish I had a shepherd that loved me and knew me by name and I could follow," you can today. The key is this belief. Not just mental assent, but this commitment kind of belief. Yes, I believe this is true. Yes, I believe in Jesus Christ. I want to dedicate and give myself to the shepherd.

Verse 26 says – "*But you do not believe because you are among my sheep.*" So the belief is attached to being a sheep. "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*" This is obviously a passage for people who are interested maybe in becoming a sheep, that is a follower of Jesus Christ. But it's also a passage of scripture that's relevant for us who are already sheep, that we need to listen to the voice of God. There are a lot of competing voices out there. Some of those voices are inside of our heads and they get us going in the wrong direction. We must pay attention to the shepherd. We may listen to His voice and follow Him.

Verse 28 – "*I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.*" There's this picture of safety and protection. He continues by saying this: "*My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*" I would just say this. You're in good hands with Jesus Christ. There's this protection that we have, this enjoyment that we experience.

There's something beautiful about being a sheep. Sometimes as Christians we don't enjoy all of the benefits. We're sheep with anxiety, or sheep with anger problems, or sheep with addiction challenges. Yet He wants to do something inside of us. He wants to restore our souls.

Well, the next statement, verse 30, He continues. He says – "*I and the Father are one.*" He's not saying we're one, that is we have the same goals, we have the same priorities. He's saying, "We're one in essence. That I am the Father. We are one." In other words, He's basically saying, "I am God." That's why you see the response because the Jews realize what He's saying.

It says – *The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."* If anybody tells you that Jesus doesn't call Himself God, they haven't read John 10. It's very clear here. And the Jewish leaders know exactly what He's saying.

*Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'?"* Let me explain this here. In the Old Testament, the word 'Elohim' is usually translated 'God.' But sometimes the word 'Elohim' is translated for a leader, someone who's a god of the people or something like that. It's not translated God, but it's a person with authority in essence. That God has given them authority, so they're called an 'Elohim.' So He's going to take off on that word and He's basically going to say, "You use the word commonly to describe even a person. Why are you upset with me because I use the term to describe the Messiah, the person sent from God Himself?" That's what He's saying.

Let's read it and see what He says. *"Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be broken—do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."* Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained. And many came to him. And they said, "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true." And many believed in him there.

There's your word. *Many believed in him there.* People are coming to know Christ. And when they come to know Christ, they are learning to listen to His voice. Not the voices of the Pharisees, not the voices of the teachers of the law that are missing some of the key elements, not the voices of the pagans that are out there. They're learning to listen to the shepherd.

Likewise in our lives, we want to learn how to listen to the shepherd. How are you going to do that? Well, I think you're going to spend time praying and doing some listening while you're praying. But also, I think we do that by reading God's word. Sometimes God speaks to us through someone else. We have this sense as we're going through life, I'm listening for the voice of God. "God, would you speak to me?" God doesn't speak to me in an audible voice. But He does help me understand who He is. I learn how to follow Him, and I'm then able to pick up some of the errors from the thieves or the wolves or the robbers, or even the hired hand that are mentioned here. That as we interact together, we can share, "Hey, I think the Lord is telling me this," and you can say, "I don't think so." And so we correct each other and we're able as sheep to be able to learn how to listen to the voice of God.

I think the most valuable thing here is to recognize that that voice is calling us out of some of the stuff that exists in our lives. So if you find yourself distracted, you find yourself caught up in the world in some way, or even in your own emotions in a way that's not helpful, you want to listen to the voice of God.

I want to show you a video. I love this video because it illustrates for us the importance of listening to the voice of the shepherd. What's happening in the video is that a tour guide with a bunch of students on it and the farmer go out where the sheep are. He's going to send out three students to call the sheep and see if the sheep will come. Of course they don't. Then he's going to

send the farmer out there. The farmer is going to call the sheep and they're going to come. Watch this and just imagine listening to the voice of the shepherd.

[Video plays]

The shepherd and the sheep. Isn't that cool? It just reminds me, I want to listen to the shepherd. Because I can get so intrigued by all the things around me. And the shepherd's out there calling me away, calling me to a special relationship with Him, calling me to a place of safety. It's a beautiful picture.