

WE ARE HIS SHEEP

[‘We Are’ Series—John 10]

Read John 10:1-18

1 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. 2 But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers. 6 This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which he had been saying to them. 7 So Jesus said to them again, Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. 12 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. 13 He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, 15 even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16 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. 17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. 18 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.

FOUR THINGS THAT SHEEP DO

1. They **know** their Shepherd
2. They **acknowledge** their Shepherd's ownership
3. They **listen** to the Shepherd's voice
4. They **follow** the Shepherd

I. SHEEP KNOW THEIR SHEPHERD

A. THIS RELATIONSHIP BEGINS WITH THE SHEPHERD

1. He knows the sheep, and they know Him—v 14
[He bought them—He birthed them]

2. He personally cares

- a. He calls them by name—v 3

With patience, sheep can be taught to respond to a certain name

- b. They are not just animals only with commercial value

He values each sheep for its inherent worth

- c. Each sheep is individually recognizable

1. Sheep can distinguish each other's face
[They do **not** look exactly the same]
2. Sheep have individual personalities
 - Most are docile and obedient; but some are obstinate
 - Most are nurturing; but some turn away their lambs
3. They form a 'pecking order'—known as 'horning order'

Biblical context—the fat and the lean sheep

***Ez 34:20-22**—Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them, Behold, I, even I will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you push with side and with shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns until you have scattered them abroad, therefore, I will deliver My flock, and they will no longer be a prey; and I will judge between one sheep and another.*

4. Each sheep is marked—ear personally cut by shepherd
5. He is personally invested in each of the sheep
 - a. He owns the sheep
 - v14**—literally: “I know **mine**, and am known by **mine**”
 - v15**—literally: “I **possess** other sheep”
 - b. He has paid the price for the sheep
 1. All shepherds pay for sheep with blood, sweat, and work
 2. He *laid down His life* for His sheep! (**vv 11, 15, 17**)

B. THIS RELATIONSHIP BUILDS ON A BOND OF TRUST

1. What every sheep knows about the shepherd
 - a. He has their best interest at heart
 1. He is the *good* Shepherd—**v 11**
 2. His purpose—is to bring them *abundant life*—**v10**
 - b. He always has taken care of them
 1. This is continuous action—day in and day out
 2. *Many* times he has ‘led them out’ and back again

3. Seen in the daily care of the Shepherd—**Psalm 23**

- He **feeds**—makes us to lie down in green pastures
- He **waters**—leads us by still waters
- He **rescues**—restores our souls
- He **guides**—leads in the paths of righteousness
- He **comforts**—His rod and staff
- He **protects**—prepares table in face of our enemies
- He **anoints**—wards off pests and disease with ointment of oil

c. He is faithful—always there

1. Unlike the hireling—he does not run away at the sign of trouble
2. Sacrifices Himself —lays His life on the line (**vv 11, 15, 17**)

2. **How** the sheep **know** the shepherd

a. **Personal** relationship

1. They are aware of His personal interest in them

a. **verse 3**—being known by name—is two-sided

- They *respond* to their individual names

b. Each sheep has been given personal attention

1. He has delivered *each* lamb in the flock
2. He has taken care of each ailment individually
3. He has spent hours looking for that *each* lost sheep

c. They know His voice—**v 4**

1. ‘Know’—**εἶδον** = perceive—recognize—discern
2. They **recognize** the Good Shepherd’s voice
3. They **do not recognize** the false shepherd’s voice—**v 5**

EXAMPLES—Do you ‘recognize’ these famous voices?

d. But it goes much further and deeper than this—**v 14**

1. ‘Know’—**γινώσκω** = acquainted with, know personally
2. The ‘knowledge’ between sheep and shepherd is intimate
 - a. The **voice**

- *Personally* recognizing a voice—not commonly known to all—but to a relative
- Example: voice of off-stage person in ‘This is Your Life’
- b. The **face**—[proven by scientific studies]
 - Sheep recognize human faces—can recall for years
 - Sheep even recognize stress in human faces
- c. The scent
 1. Sheep have good sense of smell—can differentiate people
 2. Have scent glands in front of eyes—and on their feet!
 3. Ewes and lambs know each other’s smell

Example: finding each other in a few seconds after a large number of lambs has been vaccinated

4. Knowing the shepherd [from Elizabeth Kaeton]
 - They smell the lanolin under his skin
 - From his birthing lambs and sheering sheep

EXAMPLES—Scents

- Perfume—Jennifer—Bourton on the Water
- My robe—Beverly—Desert Storm

C. THREE RESULTS OF SHEEP KNOWING THE SHEPHERD

- ❖ They **acknowledge** the shepherd’s ownership
- ❖ They **listen** to the shepherd
- ❖ They **follow** the shepherd

EACH RESULT BUILDS ON THE PREVIOUS ONE

II. RESULT ONE: SHEEP **ACKNOWLEDGE** THE SHEPHERD’S OWNERSHIP

A. EVIDENCE

1. Implied by their obedience in this passage—**Jn 10**
2. Explicitly declared in **Psalm 23**—“The Lord is **my** Shepherd”

B. THE CHOICE IS CLEAR IN JOHN 10

1. Either they acknowledge it or disavow it
2. Those who are **un**believers disavow this ownership—**verse 26**—are **not** part of His flock
3. Those who **affirm** His ownership—**verse 15**—we are *His* sheep

C. SO—WHAT IS THE PROOF OF ACKNOWLEDGING THIS OWNERSHIP?

- We **listen** to the Shepherd
- We **follow** the Shepherd

III. RESULT TWO: SHEEP LISTEN TO THE SHEPHERD

A. BIBLICAL BASIS

See **verse 3**—“and the sheep hear his voice”

B. MEANING

1. **ακουω**—can mean = to hear, listen, understand, learn
2. Here it means—*listen*
 - They don’t just *hear* sounds/words—they *discern* the meaning
 - They **are not passive**—they hear with readiness/willingness—*with intention of responding*
3. Word usage validated
 - a. What it means for them **not** to ‘hear’ false shepherds—**v 8**
 1. Surely—they receive audible noise made by false shepherds
 2. But they do not *listen* to them
 - a. They have no intention of responding to ‘strange’ voices
 - b. They do not give false shepherds a ‘hearing’
 - **Application: do not give a counsel to strange voices!**
 - b. Same word is used in **v20**—“Why do you **listen** to Him?”
 - c. ‘Listening’ results in *action*—making a choice
 1. Result—**v 16**—others will *choose* to join the flock
 2. Result—obedient action—they will also listen and *follow* Him—as in **verse 4**

IV. RESULT THREE: SHEEP CHOOSE TO FOLLOW THE SHEPHERD

A. BIBILICAL BASIS

verse 4—“the sheep follow Him because they know his voice”

B. WHY THEY DO THIS

1. They know the shepherd has their best interests at heart
2. He has proven this over—day by day—by taking care of them
 - **Application:** 1. The Good Shepherd has our best interests in mind
2. God’s will is best for us—whether we know it or not
3. He has made us—and knows what will make us happiest in the end

C. TWO WAYS SHEEP FOLLOW THE SHEPHERD

1. Into the sheepfold—verse 9
2. In and out to pasture—vv 4 and 9

D. FIRST: ENTERING THE SHEEPFOLD—THROUGH THE DOOR—v 9

1. **Picture**—entering the sheepfold:
 - Shepherd lying across threshold—guarding/controlling entrance
 - Only His sheep are admitted—not robbers or predators
 - The only way into the sheepfold is through the Door
 - The sheepfold is haven of safety—security—and belonging
2. Meaning: this is **salvation**—belonging to God’s flock
3. Biblical background—a problem, a prescription and a remedy
 - a. The **Problem**
 1. We have left the flock—and are lost
 2. We cannot find our way back by ourselves

Is 53:6—*All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way*

b. The **Prescription**

1. The shepherd became a sheep—he became one of us
2. He provided the way for us to come back

Is 53:5-7—But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed . . . like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.

c. The **Remedy**

1. We return to the flock through Him
2. The Silent Sheep has become the Great Shepherd

I Pe2:24-25—And He himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

4. This salvation is **promised twice** in John 10

a. First—**verse 9**—by entering through ‘the Door’—Jesus Christ

1. Universal promise—“if **anyone** enters through me”
2. Exclusive claim

a. Only through the Good Shepherd

- I am **the** Door—not just *a* way—but the *only* way
- **Acts 4:12**—*And there is salvation in no one else*

b. Not through any others—who are false shepherds:

- Have evil intentions—thieves and robbers—**vv 8,10**
- Do not care for the sheep—hirelings (false shepherds)—**vv 12-13**

b. **Salvation** is—**simple** and **secure**—**vv 27-30**

1. **Simplicity**—three simple steps—but **not** easy steps (**v27**):

- a. **Listen**—intent on responding—not just ‘hearing’
- b. **Know**—personally—not just know about

c. **Follow**

1. Meaning of ‘follow’—**ακαλουθεω**

- a. **Join** as disciple—to **accompany**—follow one’s lead
- b. Not just to step out—“come here” (**δευτε**)

- This is just the movement to or away from
- Jesus said to first disciples—‘Follow me’ Mt 4:19
- But his disciples did more than just hear/listen—Mt 4:20
- They actually ‘followed’ Him—**ακαλουθεω**

2. Application

- Following Jesus is more than ‘stepping out’
- It is more than walking the aisle
- It is becoming His follower—**His own** sheep
- It is belonging to His flock

2. Security (vv 28-30)

a. Danger of ‘sheep rustling’

1. **Satan stalks**—a roaring lion—seeking to devour—**I Pe 5:8**

2. **EXAMPLE:** ‘sheep rustling’ on the rise in Britain

- Due to economic downturn—late 2008
- Organized gangs stealing sheep—selling illegal meat
- Counties hit hardest
 - Herefordshire
 - Worcestershire
 - Dorset
 - Durham
 - Shropshire
 -
- Farm in Herefordshire—lost 200 sheep in Fall 2008
- Farm in Dorset—2 breeding rams worth \$800 each

a. The **double affirmation**—of permanent life

1. I give **eternal** life (**positive** affirmation)
2. They will **never** perish (**negative** affirmation)

b. Double security in the Godhead—“unsnatchable”

1. The **Son holds** us securely in His hand
2. The **Father also holds** us firmly in His hand

c. The Good Shepherd’s sheep cannot be ‘rustled’!!

1. **Contrast** to **verses 8, 10, 12-13**—thieves and robbers

2. The Good Shepherd secures and protects His flock

E. SECOND—FOLLOWING THE SHEPHERD OUT TO PASTURE

1. Biblical basis

- a. The shepherd “leads them out”—v 3
- b. They “go in and out and find pasture”—v 9

2. The response of the sheep to His daily care—seen in Psalm 23

- **Contentment**—I shall not want
- **Security**—lack of anxiety—I shall fear no evil
- **Obedience**—goodness and mercy follow us (as we follow the Shepherd!)
- **Faithfulness**—I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever

This is God’s promise—providing us His eternal home

But it is also our pledge—to remain faithful members of His sheepfold—wherever we go!

SAVIOR LIKE A SHEPHERD LEAD US

Savior, like a shepherd lead us,
much we need thy tender care;
in thy pleasant pastures feed us,
for our use thy folds prepare.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus!
Thou hast bought us, thine we are.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus!
Thou hast bought us, thine we are.

We are thine, thou dost befriend us,
be the guardian of our way;
keep thy flock, from sin defend us,
seek us when we go astray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus!
Hear, O hear us when we pray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus!
Hear, O hear us when we pray.

Thou hast promised to receive us,
poor and sinful though we be;
thou hast mercy to relieve us,
grace to cleanse and power to free.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus!
We will early turn to thee.

Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus!
We will early turn to thee.

Early let us seek thy favor,
early let us do thy will;
blessed Lord and only Savior,
with thy love our bosoms fill.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus!
Thou hast loved us, love us still.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus!
Thou hast loved us, love us still.

PSALM 23

¹The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

²He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.