

Sunday, Jun 13, 2021 am

**THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS 2020-21 (49)**  
**I AM the Good Shepherd**  
**John 10:11-30**

Today we continue our theme for 2021 – the teachings of Jesus. We are in the midst of our examination of the I AM sayings of Jesus. Last week, we talked about Jesus being the door (gate) to the sheepfold, as recorded in John 10:1-10. Continuing in that same narrative and theme, Jesus THEN declared Himself to be the Good Shepherd. In our lesson today we want to talk about this a little.

**I. Background and context \_ John 10:11-30**

- a. Shepherds in the Bible – what exactly is a shepherd.
  - i. The importance of sheep to Israel
  - ii. Leaders were described as shepherds -held accountable. We noted last week that in many of the prophets, they referred to leaders as shepherds. Many had failed to properly lead their sheep and were to be held accountable for that. Most prominently would be Ezekiel 34 and Jeremiah 23. These are passages where the leaders are rebuked as bad and selfish shepherds. And BOTH passages have messianic implications as deliverance is promised from a shepherd – a servant of David (Ezekiel 34:22-25ff, Jeremiah 23:4-8)
  - iii. Leaders today are described as shepherds (pastors) –
    1. The word “pastor” is based upon a shepherd in the New Testament. The word is ποιμην (poimēn).
    2. The word found in our text in vs. 11 is the same word we find in Ephesians 4:11 (leaders, functionaries), 1 Peter 5:2 (verb form), Acts 20:28, etc.
    3. In the New Testament the word has reference to the elders over a congregation (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1), NOT the preacher. The elders are the ones who “shepherd” the flock over whom they have been made overseers.
    4. Our passage is a good one to study to appreciate the responsibilities elders have.
- b. The occasion, as noted in our last lesson, is likely related to the previous chapter in which He healed the blind man and called Himself the light of the world. In that chapter we noted that Jesus is the “Light of the world” – our guide out of the darkness around us.
- c. Then Jesus described Himself as the door (gate) meaning the ONLY way to salvation. Any who seek to enter by another way are not true.
- d. Now we find Jesus describing Himself as the Good Shepherd.
  - i. Notice the term **good** – it is a term that is defined a one with good moral quality. But it can also mean something that is better (cf. Mark 9:42-47). BOTH apply with Jesus. In this passage He will demonstrate His good moral quality AND that He is better than the “shepherds” they currently had.
  - ii. Vs. 11 – **He gives His life for His sheep** – this shows how much He cares. And in this description Jesus is addressing what He is going to do for us (John 15:13, Romans 5:6-8)
  - iii. Vs. 12-13 – **contrast this with the hireling**. A hireling is there “for the paycheck.” He cares more about himself than those over whom he is entrusted. At the first sign of danger he will flee.
  - iv. Vs. 14 – “I am the good shepherd” is again stated.
  - v. **I Know My sheep** – Jesus knows each one by name.

- vi. ***His sheep know Him*** – they recognize Him and trustingly follow Him
- vii. **Vs. 15** – He also notes that the Father knows Him and He knows the Father – Jesus is here again describing His relationship with God, the Father.
- viii. **Vs. 15** – again, He lays down His life for the sheep.
- ix. **Vs. 16** – Jesus notes that He has other sheep – this is a passage misused by some. The point Jesus is making here is a reference to Gentiles. Jesus is noting that not only are faithful Jews His followers, but also there are Gentiles who will follow Him. This goes back to how He is available to ANYONE who chooses to follow after Him.
- x. ***WHEN the other sheep come, they will be ONE flock and ONE shepherd.*** Jesus is speaking of the coming unity. This is something that was continually foretold of in the prophets.
- xi. **Vs. 17-18** – Jesus again notes why His relationship with God the Father is so powerful. His Father loves Him because He is willing to do what is necessary for the sheep to be brought to Him.
  - 1. NOTICE how Jesus declares here that He lays His life down Himself. This verse shows that what Jesus did for us was voluntary.
  - 2. Matthew 26:53, as Jesus is being arrested and Peter seeks to defend Him with His sword, Jesus tells him to put it away and notes that He could pray to God and He would send 12 legions of angels (that is about 72,000 angels).
- xii. **Vs. 19-21** – we find the reaction to this declaration. The Jews were divided over who Jesus was. Notice how in vs. 21 while some wanted to associate Him with demons, others said, “Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?” (Yet another passage that shows the purpose of miracles to confirm).
- xiii. **Vs. 22-24 – *At the feast of Dedication*** - we now come to a different time. We are told in vs. 22 – this feast is interesting because it is not one of the original feasts commanded in the LOM. This was an annual celebration the Jews had created to commemorate the rededication of the temple after it was defiled by Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabees revolted and took it back. IN 165 BC, they purified the temple and yearly they created a celebration (memorial) to remember that. We do NOT read about this in the Old Testament, but it is recorded in the books of 1 Maccabees 4:52-59, 2 Macc. 10:5) Today, this feast is called Hannukah (or feast of lights) and takes place around December. NOTICE how our text tells us it was winter.
- xiv. The Jews surround Jesus and demand that He tell them plainly if He is the Christ.
- xv. **Vs. 25-31** – Jesus revisits the shepherd analogy and this time He declares.
  - 1. I told you, but you do not believe. He exposed their motives.
  - 2. He again appealed to His works (miracles) – they bear witness
  - 3. He noted concerning these corrupt leaders, “But you do not believe because you are NOT Of My sheep.” They had no intention of following Him.
  - 4. Vs. 27, My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.
- xvi. **Vs. 28** – I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. Neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.
  - 1. This is yet another verse that is misunderstood by some. Some use this to teach “once saved, always saved” or the impossibility of apostasy.
  - 2. But, AGAIN, when we consider the context we find the point Jesus is making is that these leaders would NOT stop His plans. They would not be able to take away those who truly belong to Him.
  - 3. He clarifies this by noting that His Father (God) is greater than all (including them). You will not stop Him from accomplishing His will.

4. The text says, “neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.” The idea being, you cannot defeat Jesus.
  5. FURTHERMORE, consider this in light of vs. 27 – “MY sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” His sheep are those who are faithfully serving Him. In vs. 27, “hear”, “know” and “follow” are ALL present tense verbs. This is describing one who is faithfully following Him. Question: While those who belong to God cannot be taken from Him (because no one is powerful enough to defeat Him), is it possible to wander away? Is this not what is taught in many other places of scripture (cf. Luke 9:62, Hebrews 6:4-6, Hebrews 10:38-39, etc.)
- xvii. Vs. 29-30 – Jesus concludes by noting again His relationship with the Father and then declares, “I and My Father are one.” They are united and equal. We know the Jews understood this by what happens next – they take up stones to kill Him.

## II. How is Jesus the Good Shepherd?

- a. This is something addressed in other passages –
  - i. Hebrews 13:20 – that great Shepherd of the sheep
  - ii. 1 Peter 5:4, 2:25 – He is the Chief Shepherd that will appear
  - iii. Isaiah 40:11 – He will feed, gather, carry and gently lead
  - iv. Psalm 23.- The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want...”
- b. As our Shepherd – Jesus is our guide. He gets out in front and leads us as a shepherd would do. Our text describes many ways and qualities about Him, which is the basis of our lesson.
- c. He knows us – mentioned last week, but worthy of further consideration.
  - i. Jesus personally knows all who belong to Him.
  - ii. This is mentioned twice in this text - John 10:14, 27 – in BOTH texts we are also reminded that His sheep know Him. They recognize His voice and follow Him.
  - iii. 2 Timothy 2:19, *Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”*
  - iv. What a comfort to know that our Lord knows us personally. Consider this as He intercedes on our behalf. He knows our strengths and weaknesses. He knows what we have been and are going through. He knows what we need. Hebrews 4:15-16 reminds us that He can sympathize with our weaknesses, being tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.
- d. He leads us (rather than driving us) – a shepherd is not like a cattle rancher... He goes ahead and clears the way for us. Hebrews 12:1-2 – as we run this race, we can look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. He has finished the journey and is awaiting us at the “finish line”. When in 1 Peter 2:21 we are reminded of the example of Jesus, we know that He has been there.
- e. He provides for His sheep – John 10:10 – He gives life, abundantly.
  - i. Matthew 11:28-30 – Jesus invites all to come to Him and He will give you rest.
  - ii. Matthew 5:6 – those who hunger after righteousness will be filled
  - iii. He proved this by feeding the 5000 (and 4000) that we addressed in a recent lesson.
  - iv. Matthew 6:25-34 where Jesus calls for us not to worry or be anxious, He reminded His audience of how God provides for us. Certainly, He is a part of that provision.
- f. He protects us – even to the point of laying down His life for His sheep. Throughout our illustration Jesus points out how much He cares about us. He is not like the hireling who doesn’t care. He is willing to do whatever is needed to protect and deliver us.
  - i. In His death, Jesus provided the ULTIMATE protection for us.
  - ii. You also find this in His intercession on our behalf – Hebrews 7:25

- iii. We also saw this in the parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15:1-7 where He leaves the flock of 99 to find the one that wandered away.
- g. They belong to Him and no one can snatch them away – again we are reminded that He is our owner. He treats us as His prized possession. And He will do whatever He needs to do for us.
  - i. Be reminded again of the previous section where we noted His power to keep us. But such does NOT mean we cannot willfully walk away from Him. WE HAVE TO keep following Him!
  - ii. Romans 8:35, nevertheless there is comfort in passages like this, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Vs.37, in all these things we are more than conquerors...*
- h. He is available to all –
  - i. Jesus spoke of “other sheep” in John 10:16. As we have noted, Jesus is here speaking of the Gentiles. His work would not be complete until salvation is made available to ALL mankind.
  - ii. Romans 5:6-8 – Christ died for us, including the ungodly.
  - iii. Romans 6:10 tells us, For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.
  - iv. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says He died for all, and as such we no longer live for ourselves but for Him.

### III. **Some applications**

- a. If Jesus is our Shepherd, will we follow Him? This is the ultimate take away from this application. Since Jesus is the good shepherd, we NEED to follow Him. It is the ONLY way to eternal life.
- b. Do we really know Him? Philippians 3:10, Paul’s goal in his sacrifices was that He might know Him (Jesus) and the power of His resurrection.  
The only way we are going to get to know Him is if we learn about Him through His word.  
Mark 12:37, *Therefore David himself calls Him ‘Lord’; how is He then his Son?” And the common people heard Him gladly.*
- c. How do I act in the flock? While another lesson itself, when we think of Jesus as the good shepherd, we must remember that we are part of His flock. Are we acting loyal to Him and are we loyal to one another as brethren?
- d. Will we look for other “sheep”? Again, we need to realize that the door to the sheepfold of Jesus is open to all. Will we fulfill our duty in trying to win others to Him?

And thus, we see Jesus as the good Shepherd. Is He your spiritual shepherd? Are you part of His flock? Do He know you and do you know Him? If not, how can we help you make that right? Think about it!