

The True vs. False Shepherd

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Date: 04 June 2023

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[0 : 00] I appreciate songs and teaching that says we love God, we worship God because of who he is.

Now what he's done for us is very important. I mean, very, very, very important. But it's interesting that it's who he is.

Why he does what he does is because of who he is. I hope you're getting to know him. I hope you're getting to know him. And I will tell you, one of the chief methods of getting to know the Lord is going through something.

Amen. He reveals himself so supremely when we're going through some times of difficulty and stress and pain.

Because remember, when do we see God declare us in the scriptures? The cross. We see Father, Son working at the cross in the Son's deepest hour of suffering.

[1 : 24] There we see the majesty and the glory of God. So maybe you're going through something. And I pray this message will be an encouragement to you.

It's striking that this is a message that I'm preaching on my 11th anniversary here as your pastor this Sunday. So that's pretty cool.

A good word for me, to me, and to all of us. Father, as we come to your word now, will you bless it to our hearts and open our eyes.

Oh, we need what this passage tells us. We need Jesus. We need a shepherd. So, Father, speak to us and use your unworthy servant.

Speak to him. Speak to all of us. Feed us, oh Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. John chapter 10.

[2 : 26] We've come to this great chapter that is familiar to many of you, I hope and pray. John chapter 10. We're going to look at the parable or allegory, verses 1 through 6.

Hear now the word of God. Truly, truly, 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. The sheep hear his voice and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.

This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. That is the word of the Lord. Please be seated.

[3 : 36] Shepherds.

It's amazing that shepherds are God's method for leading and caring for his flock, the church. And one thing about human shepherds is that they all fail. At some point, they all fail because there's only one perfect, true shepherd.

Moses and David were both shepherds. Actually, of sheep. And then God called them to shepherd his people.

And both these men failed. Moses, you remember, grew so frustrated with the people of God and their foolishness. And they were foolish, my gosh. A million of them, too.

[4 : 39] And he grew so frustrated that he lost his cool. He struck the rock instead of speaking to it. And for that and his self-righteousness, God said, you're not going to the promised land. Let's not talk about David.

You're talking about abusing the sheep. There's a man who did that. Adultery. Murder.

Cover-up. And yet, he, too, was called a shepherd of God's people.

Both needed the grace of God. Both could only continue what they were doing by the grace of God. Human shepherds are in great need of a shepherd themselves.

Because human shepherds are sheep at heart. I'm so glad that the true shepherd of the church leads his sheep through human shepherds.

[5 : 51] But I'm so even gladder that he goes with us. Both shepherds and sheep are called to listen to the voice of the true shepherd.

There's only one true shepherd. And everyone in the sheep pen, shortening, everybody in the pen, needs to hear his voice.

Shepherd and sheep hear one voice. The voice of the good shepherd. Can I ask you a question? And, you know, I always ask questions. Whose voice is controlling your life decisions, desires, and direction?

What would it look like if it was Jesus? Again, we're in this well-known chapter. And our Lord is making a use of a biblical image from the Old Testament.

For God in the Old Testament in many places, but especially, of course, in Psalm 23, is pictured as Israel's shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd.

[7 : 02] I shall not want. We know that by heart. But that means something, too. It means, therefore, that God's people are pictured as sheep. That is not an overly flattering image.

Because sheep as animals are timid, easily frightened, defenseless. No claws, no fangs, no stinger. And they can't run very fast.

Most of all, sheep were considered and are considered dense. Not very smart. Easily led astray. Isaiah says, we all like sheep have gone astray. Hmm? One of my favorite hymns says, prone to wander, Lord. I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love.

We're sheep. And because of these conditions, God's sheep need a true shepherd. They needed the good shepherd in particular.

[8 : 07] Now, keep in mind the context, because if we don't get that, we'll miss what's going on here. The context. Jesus has just rescued. Remember FBB, the formerly blind beggar.

He's just rescued him from physical and spiritual darkness. But those who should have helped him, the Pharisees, well, they weren't all that thrilled about it.

They attacked his testimony and kicked him out of the synagogue as a way of trying to discredit Jesus. Some of the Pharisees, remember in chapter 9, some of the Pharisees are listening to our Lord's conversation with our hero and decide to engage Jesus.

Jesus, you know, that's, if you're trying to get around Jesus or trap Jesus or discredit Jesus, engaging him is probably not a good idea.

They try to engage him and he ends up denouncing them as blind and guilty before God. Chapter 9, verses 41 and 42. Hope you have your Bibles in front of you. Please open something.

[9 : 12] Just your phone, something. They should have opened their mouths. So, since they did, he now turns his attention to them as leaders in chapter 10.

Since they wanted to yik-yak so much with Jesus and try to, you know, discredit or justify themselves in some way, he decides, okay, you want to go in?

Let's go in. Let's go in.

To tell me about him. He's going to explain it start next time. Verses 1 through 6 is the parable. 1 through 5 is the parable. Drop down to verse 7. He begins to explain the parable and we're going to look at that in his time.

But let's look at the parable just now. He shows what false shepherds are like, what the true shepherd is like, and what true sheep are like.

[10 : 31] so first of all our Lord says the false shepherd sees the flock as a means to make himself rich or great that's the first thing that's what you see in here I think when you look at verses 1 and 2 I mean he's he does not enter he says the sheep fold by the door but climbs in another way that man is a thief and a robber he's looking at these guys he's looking at the Pharisees when he says this the sheep here there are two different types of sheep pen in that day this is one type this type here is an enclosed structure with a door and a watchman who's called the gatekeeper sheep stealing was a possibility since sheep were important to the economy wool and food and of course important for worship sacrifices this makes sheep very stealable so sheep had to be cared for and guarded because of thieves and robbers now you we look at those we said thieves and robbers that sound like the same thing to me and pretty much they're it's very similar they're very close you see thieves

were very cunning using stealth and secrecy to take what is not theirs they may pretend to be one thing while hiding their true intentions to get your stuff interested only in themselves

I've known some thieves over in my life not my favorite people but robbers or bandits or brigands all that all together were known for violence the victim in the good Samaritan parable was attacked by such men and in that culture sometimes these men would join themselves to a cause like the zealots of Jesus day they fought a guerrilla war against Rome to drive them out by any means necessary plundering the Romans and those who worked for them was what they did violent both are brought to play here thieves and robbers Jesus likened them to spiritual thieves and robbers these were the false shepherds of the Pharisees verse 6 says they didn't get what Jesus was saying it's amazing that many times when the sermon is going forth the very people who need to hear it don't hear it

Jesus is preaching they don't get it but we do they were disqualified for being shepherds of God's flock because they Jesus says they snuck into God's sheep pen the gate people or the night watchmen didn't admit them they were not sent by God but sent themselves and sent each other they didn't care for the sheep but sought to use the sheep for their own pride enrichment and purpose some scary things are said about these guys in Ezekiel 34 the prophet is given a message from the Lord and here's what he says son of man prophesy against the shepherds of Israel prophesy and say to them even to the shepherds thus says the Lord God ah shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves should not shepherds feed the sheep you eat the fat you clothe yourselves with the wool you slaughter the fat ones but you do not feed the sheep the weak you have not strengthened the sick you have not healed the injured you have not bound up the strayed you have not brought back the lost you have not sought and with force and harshness you have ruled them said he was scattered because there was no shepherd and they became food for all the wild beasts my sheep were scattered they wandered over the mountains on every high hill my sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth with none to search or seek for them that's who he's talking about here in John 10 they had no joy when a man who was born blind was healed of his blindness their rejection of him shows they are not true shepherds and sadly throughout the church in the world we have such men today men and women who make themselves rich and great in the eyes of the world at the expense of God's people they proclaim themselves prophets and apostles and pastors but they don't want to feed and tend or protect the flock every other month there's some scandal they will not sacrifice for the flock but instead sacrifice the flock for their gain scary stuff

I said none of us as shepherds are perfect but this this this is deadly Paul warns us actually against such leaders in 1 Timothy 6 he says these again powerful words if anyone teaches a different doctrine does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness so false teaching is a part of this he is puffed up with conceit understands nothing he has an unhealthy craving for controversy for quarrels about words which produce envy dissension slander evil suspicions constant friction among people who are depraved in mind deprived of the truth imagining that godliness is a means of gain they're using using the preaching of godliness using the preaching of the word in one sense to line their pockets that's why Paul talks about the love of money in that chapter and the thing about such false leaders and they can have very big churches not always why is that we'll come back to that in a few so that's the that's the bad news got to get rid of it but it's there and we had to look at it that's the bad news and every everyone who who's an elder or a pastor needs to look at the bad news and say

Lord keep me from that but notice there's also the true shepherd the true shepherd knows and cares for the flock Moses is about the true shepherd verse 2 to 4 he enters by the door he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep to him the gatekeeper opens the sheep hear his voice he calls them by name he leads them out when he's brought out on his own he goes before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice this is Jesus he's going to expound on this expand on this later in the chapter but this is Jesus this shepherd has the right to be in the sheep pen he comes in by the door you see he's a man of character he alone is holy he is trustworthy above all because he is the true shepherd the gatekeeper or the watchman recognizes him and opens the door it makes me think of psalms 24 verses 7 to 10 lift up your gates lift up your heads oh gates be lifted up oh ancient doors that the king of glory may come in who is this king of glory the lord strong and mighty the lord mighty in battle lift up your heads oh gates and lift them up oh ancient doors that the king of glory may come in who is this king of glory the lord of hosts he is the

king of glory yes the door opens for him he's that good shepherd he's that great shepherd of the sheep he's the chief shepherd he's the holy holy holy shepherd and the door opens keep in mind again like I said there were two types of pens and this one had a gate and but in this pen were all different flocks this was this is more

[19 : 45] I'll call this the public pen so all the shepherds in town and who were passing through would put their sheep in this one pen they all got mixed up hanging out with each other doing what sheep do so how do you separate these because to me all sheep look alike I'm serious y'all I mean even the ones with different specks and whatnot there are other ones with specks too I get confused looking at sheep so how do you separate them the text says the shepherd calls his sheep by name he named his sheep big tail come here white tail where you at black tail I see you come here spotty tail spotty body I mean whatever he called them I don't know maybe he called them skippy I don't know but he knew them all his sheep had names which means that this shepherd is close to his sheep

Jesus is the true shepherd who knows who knows you by name remember when he met a disciple named Simon and he knew him so well he gave him a nickname I'm gonna call you Peter when he rose from the dead I never forget when he rose from the dead we'll see this in John later he rises from the dead and Mary Magdalene goes and she's at the garden tomb with the other ladies they all leave Mary is still there she's upset because Jesus is dead and she's wandering around and she runs into a man who she thinks is a gardener and she says tell me where you laid his body and I'll go and take him and then Jesus says Mary and her eyes will open and she recognized the voice the voice of her shepherd I'm reminded of a man who was dead and in his tomb been dead for three days and Jesus says

I got this roll away the stone and he stands in front of this dead man's tomb and calls his name we'll see it later Lazarus come forth even the dead recognized the voice of their shepherd and Lazarus comes hopping out because he was wrapped up like that I'm reminded of a man named a man named Paul whose first name was really was Saul he became the apostle Paul and I remember when Jesus saved him dramatically saved him and he needed he needed someone to instruct him to give a testimony as it were and help him understand the gospel better and so he has a disciple who's praying he's praying talking to the Lord and Jesus says Ananias I got a job for you you see Jesus those his disciples by name and he commissions them he sends them he comforts them he encourages them are you a disciple are you a sheep you see when you're a sheep you can know the Lord knows you intimately you're not a number or merely an asset he knows who you are you ain't gotta ask anybody else he knows who you are he'll tell you he knows your strengths and your weaknesses he knows your wants and your greatest desires by his covenant he is committed to you to caring for you he promised he promised he would never leave you nor forsake you he promised sheep of the Lord as Psalm 23 says let's make it our own he wants to make you to lie down in green pastures he wants you to be full he wants to lead you beside still waters so you can drink without concern he wants to restore your soul spiritual healing he wants to lead you and pass the righteousness for his namesake so you can do what is right in his sight this is what he came to give those who respond to his call in the gospel what say you are you a sheep you know

I love getting those appointment requests people will send you you know they're on your calendar they'll email you calendar request something like that wherever they call it they send it to you and they say that request will say who you're meeting with where and what time and then at the bottom of that request you'll see it if you haven't gotten one they're really neat it'll give you some choices on how to respond back to the person it'll say yes no or maybe Jesus the true shepherd is calling to take up your calendar for this coming week he's saying follow me because I'm leading what is your response what is your response and by the way let me be honest I didn't go through the whole [25 : 20] Psalm 23 you may have to walk through the valley of the shadow of death this week you may have to face some enemies this week but don't worry the true shepherd has promised to be with his sheep don't fret don't fear fear not little flock it's the father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom fear not your shepherd is walking with you verse 3 is also a great encouragement I think after our memorial day celebration in Bayberry verse 3 says to him the gatekeeper opens the sheep hear his voice and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out remember in our study of John 9 we talked about how God how giving we are to do two things as we testify to the Lord one we are to give the good news of the gospel point to

Jesus tell people what Jesus has done objective testimony and then secondary we are to give our personal testimony tell them how Jesus what Jesus has done for you personally objective and subjective make up the testimony that we are to bear you are to do both both are important now listen listen I gotta tell you I didn't tell you this last time gotta tell you this real quick Jesus has the ability to save with just one of those but ordinarily what I mean by that is this real quick the gospel there are people who just read the Bible by themselves and God say no personal testimony just they read it and Jesus did it there are people I'm sure who just heard someone's testimony about how God changed their life God can do it but normally normally the way we need to be thinking about it the gospel and our personal testimony as the gospel has been applied to our lives maybe you had a chance to do that at Bayberry

I saw a lot of you talking to people my wife and I had conversations praying with people people it was it was an amazing time of getting to know neighbors and sharing with them the one who makes our life worth living here's the thing did you feel adequate if you had a confession do you feel like you did an adequate job do you feel like you got to say everything you wanted to say do you feel like you answered if there were questions do you feel like you answered all their questions listen the question is did you share the gospel did you talk tell them about Jesus listen Jesus calls his sheep by name and leads them out this call is specific it's more than the general call of the gospel it's a specific call of the gospel that goes down into people's hearts this is the Jesus will call Jesus will handle the results your job and my job is to be faithful witnesses to testify to the gospel of God's grace don't worry let him handle the heavy lifting they will respond all true sheep respond to the voice of the true shepherd and follow him and that brings us to the next point the last point true sheep know and follow the voice of the true shepherd they do the sheep in that public pen would have heard many voices many voices of many shepherds would have been out speaking calling their sheep but they would only follow the voice of their shepherd notice our

Lord says that they didn't just ignore the other shepherd's voice verse verse verse 5 says a stranger they will not follow but they will flee from him for they do not know the voice of strangers it's not that the sheep said he ain't talking to me no when they heard a stranger's voice they took off running isn't it that what we teach our children stranger danger stranger danger that's what these sheep understood sometimes we don't get it saints stranger danger D.A. Carson in his comments on this he says unlike western shepherds who drive the sheep often using a sheep dog the shepherds of the near east both now and in Jesus day lead their flock their voice calling them out such a shepherd goes ahead of his sheep draws them constitutes an admirable picture of the master disciple relationship the sheep follow simply because they know his voice by the same token they will run from anyone else because they do not recognize a stranger's voice

Christ's elect sheep inevitably follow him they respond to his word and his spirit because they know his voice stranger danger we need to get that in our souls family many voices are clamoring for your attention and for your compliance we know what's best for you and your family listen to us we know how to make you successful we know who you are and we will tell you and so much of what is said goes against the Lord's word stranger has your stranger danger alarm been going off at all do you have a stranger danger alarm are you sifting what you hear through the voice of the good shepherd okay

[31 : 37] I promise I come back then why do Christians fall for false shepherds I promise I will come back right one not really the Lord's sheep that's one all because you attend church there are many religious people in our churches many many across this line and in this city and a few probably in this church who do not know the true shepherd so they follow what sounds good you will follow what sounds good to you if you don't know the voice of the shepherd you are listening to what just sounds good to you and you're finite you don't know all things listen you you and I just we just don't know right or wrong it gets tickless don't it

I mean you come on parents especially you parents trying to help your kids I know they're saying this and you're trying to figure it out listen do you know the voice of the shepherd you see when you don't know when you lack of discernment you end up following what gives you what you want maybe a little bible sprinkled in that's why the faith prosperity movement is so popular a little biblical stuff sprinkled in giving people what they want which is more material wealth good health prosperity and Jesus has a different way of looking at that he didn't come to make you physically wealthy not in this life he didn't come to you might you're gonna get sick some of us gonna get cancer and we're all gonna die from something but that pernicious false doctrine will tell you if you just have enough

faith see you can move the mountain of your illness you can move the mountain of your poverty you can get go out there and lay hands on that

Mercedes it's yours you're a king's kid I'm not making this up I've had to deal with people I've had to counsel people out of that crazy I've watched people get destroyed when they didn't get I've watched people mortgage their houses to help these people these false prophets brothers and sisters if we lack discernment we'll be ruled by what we desire we'll be ruled by what the culture says is hot we'll end up becoming consumers in the church looking for what we want to hear and how we want to hear it Jesus wants you to get to know his voice he's speaking to you in the gospel his love is real his ways are sure the story is told of a bus tour in Israel they're driving through the wasteland a bit the desert whatever and they're passing through various areas and the bus guy she's telling them all about

Israel and she's going on and on and she said she starts talking about shepherding and how the way they shepherd their sheep is so unique different from westerners and how their shepherds go in front of the flock not behind it driving them like cattle but in front of the flock leading them calling them by name going first into the danger if there is danger and as she's talking about this they pass a flock of sheep but the shepherd was behind them and the people on the bus of course they're from America they're going to miss miss miss look that's not what you said and she looks up the window and goes oh my goodness and she's looking at that stop the bus girlfriend gets off the bus goes over to talk to talk to the shepherd she comes back gets on the bus that's not the shepherd that's the butcher that's what happens when you that's what happens you end up getting butchered Jesus will never butcher you all right we got to end this up time is out that took too long listen family we all need shepherding can I get can I get an amen from everybody we all need shepherding I got shepherding I got lots of shepherding man I got shepherding up the wazoo who's shepherding you who is allowed to speak into your life besides your family I hope your family is allowed to speak but besides your family who's allowed you need others to whom you have made yourself accountable and then who are you shepherding who are you pouring yourself into who are you helping second how do you listen to the word preached with eager ears listening for the voice of your savior praying for him to help you apply the word to your life how do you listen to the word because if it's the scriptures it is the voice of the shepherd speaking third lastly it's time family it's time to prayerfully cultivate a heartfelt desire to know and follow the lord's voice cultivate that prayerfully in the word cultivate individually cultivate and as a body we need to cultivate together hearing the word of the lord worshipping learning and serving together you know

[37 : 55] I'm so glad that smartphones come with GPS's anybody else happy about that when we moved to DC in 94 we still had maps AD ADC maps they were great love those maps people would ask somebody how do I get somewhere they would draw me a map I was like wow but I love my GPS I gave her an Australian accent I want to get a Jamaican one but I haven't found it yet well driving to a place you've never been the GPS is a lifesaver I like putting on that voice you know because it has a very distinctive sound to it it's hard for me to ignore but there's also a silent mode which you can use if you like I like hearing that voice now if you are driving with people in your car and they're very opinionated though they've never been to the place where you're all going they may have lots of advice for you on how to get there though they've never been there before you you will have a choice at that point listen to your

GPS or listen to your friends in the back who've never been to where you're going likely your passengers voices will be louder than your GPS you'll find yourself sometimes being distracted between what they're saying and what your GPS is saying somebody knows what I'm talking about but the question is who are you going to listen to you see the true shepherd is always speaking to you he knows how to get to your destination but there are lots of voices all around you always trying to tell you how to get there they've never been there don't really want to go where Jesus wants you to go but they will tell you how to get there whose voice are you listening to listen don't put the Lord's voice on mute some of you've done it some of you in this room right now have put the Lord's voice on mute because you want to do it your way or the way you're being told family take him off mute the

Israelites were supposed to take a two week trip to get to the promised land it took 40 years they put the Lord's voice on mute family Jesus died and rose again ascended into heaven to speak to speak constantly and to guide his sheep with his powerful presence he wants to guide you he wants to guide you more than you want to be guided he wants to guide you and he will guide you let him

Speak hear his voice open your ears repent turn to him he will guide you even through this week coming because he really is the true shepherd shepherd and the good shepherd of the sheep who loves you father may your word go down deep in our hearts may we learn to listen to the voice of the true shepherd of the sheep help us to drown out the voices of our culture so we can hear your voice to go into our closets as it were to be alone with you to listen carefully to the word that is preached and read in our lives oh God speak for your servants are listening your sheep are listening in Jesus name amen