

Life in the Pen #4: Particular Sheep

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Preacher: Kevin Smith, Senior Pastor

[0 : 0 0] And we pray for now that you would guide us, O great shepherd of the sheep, through the word of God as it is preached now. May it guide us and illuminate us. May it rebuke, correct, strengthen us.

Lord, even heal us according to your will. May someone be brought to true faith today. A living faith. A faith that hears the voice of Jesus and sees him as he is.

The glorious great shepherd, son of God, God in human flesh, risen and ascended. O Lord, open someone's eyes today.

May your word go forth with your power. And may you use your unworthy servant to that end. In Jesus' name. Amen. John chapter 10. Again, we're reading the section 11 to 21.

Where we've been working methodically through the passage. And so we are coming now to the end of this passage. John 11, John 10, 11 to 21.

[1 : 0 3] Jesus speaking. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a higher hand and not a shepherd who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming, leaves the sheep and flees.

And the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he's a higher hand and cares nothing for the sheep. 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. I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also.

And they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock and one shepherd. For this reason, the father loves me. Because I lay down my life.

That I may take it up again. No one takes it from me. But I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down.

[2 : 1 1] I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my father. There was again a division among the Jews because of these words.

Many of them said, he has a demon, man. He's 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? That is the word of the Lord. Thank you, God. Please be seated. Thank you again, praise team, for your leading us so beautifully in worship.

Thank you. This passage is really about the good shepherd.

Sheep secondarily, this passage is about Jesus. But in the midst of it, yes, God calls us sheep.

[3 : 1 6] I want you to see something. That's me.

That's me. Flow motion.

If that was the Olympics, that's a 10 dive, man. I had to show it to you because I don't think I could do justice to just telling you that.

My goodness. And God calls us sheep. And by the way, ask yourself this question. What are the shepherds going to do?

Pull him out. Pull her out. Like there could be a he. I mean, some sheep don't. Some sheep don't have horns. But I'm not a sheepologist. They're going to keep getting that sheep out of the rock, the crevice.

[4 : 36] Out of the hole. Why? Because she's their sheep. They have no responsibility to any other sheep but their own.

So they will keep getting her out. Keep trying to talk to her. And animals behavior modification to try to get her not to do that anymore. No matter what we do.

If we are the Lord's sheep, his love will always rescue us, even from ourselves. You see, salvation is the work of the loving, holy Trinity who in eternity planned to save a people who would belong to the Son.

To cement the deal, the Son would become Jesus and die specifically for us and our crazy. Nothing was left to chance or luck.

The Father set his love on a people, a flock, whom he would give to his Son before the world was created. Therefore, the sheep's sins are eternally, lovingly atoned for by the death of the Good Shepherd.

[6 : 02] Have you really allowed that reality to sink in? Remember the video. And remember the work of Christ. Have you truly allowed that reality to sink in?

I suggest we got to do it time and time again. Let it sink in. Your salvation was planned in divine love and carried out by death.

Yes, yes, yes. So that you, that you might follow the Good Shepherd.

How's your following going? How's your following? A couple things I want to lay before you today. Long points, but you'll see.

First of all, we've been looking. Last week we looked at the fact that the Good Shepherd's death brings together a diversity in his flock. One shepherd.

[7 : 14] One sheep pen. One sheep pen. And a diverse people. Today, the Good Shepherd's death for his sheep displays the Father's love and will.

Verses 17 and 18. Our Lord has declared. I hope you have a Bible in front of you. If you can put it back up there, amen. But the text, I mean.

But if not, just grab the Bible in front of you. Jesus says, for this reason the Father loves me. Because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. And no one takes it from me, but I lay it down.

I have authority to lay it down. I have authority to take it up. But the Father has given me this charge. He declared several times in John's gospel that he came to do the Father's will.

And one of the clearest statements of that is, of course, the passage of John 3.16. That God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son the Father's will. That he would enter into the world.

[8 : 22] Remember, I think we saw last time too, that when the Jews spoke of the world, they weren't speaking of every person who lived in the world. They were speaking of the fact that the world was outside of Israel.

To them, Israel was the people of God. And so when Jesus speaks of the world, he is speaking now of every tribe, every language, every tongue, people from outside of Israel.

Not every single person, but every people group. And God gave his Son that he might have a people representative of all of humanity.

So it was the Father's will to give his Son. To sacrifice his Son for his holy justice and display his holy love. But Jesus is letting us in.

Do you see what's happening? He's letting us in to the inner relationship between him and the Father. It's not just that the Father loves us, but that the Father loves the Son.

[9 : 36] And Jesus says, he loves me for laying down my life to save those whom he's given me. He loves me. This doesn't mean that the Father loves Jesus more because of his obedience.

His love for him is already perfect. But it's like saying, he's proud of me. It's like highlighting that the Father loves me.

Jesus said, I always do what pleases him. Whoa, I want that testimony. Don't have it. This is not the ultimate basis of Trinitarian love, but it is a great revelation of it.

Our salvation is a Trinitarian love affair. Jesus lays down his life out of love for the Father. On the night of his betrayal, as he's heading to the cross, Jesus tells his disciples in John 14, 31, I do as the Father has commanded me so that the world may know that I love the Father.

Did you see that? I'm going to lay down my life so that my testimony before the world, before people from every tribe, language, nation, and tongue, before the world, they'll see that I love him, that the Father is everything to me.

[11 : 05] The cross is a Trinitarian love pact. But in a similar way, our obedience to Jesus is our response to his love for us too.

John 15, 9 and 10, as the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. Remain in my love. I like to say, soak in my love.

Sheep who follow the voice of their good shepherd are living in the love of the Father and the Son. That love envelops you.

This is maximum love. Maximum love. You can't get better love than that. You are remaining in the love of Jesus as you walk according to his voice.

Are you hearing his voice? So that your life might reflect his voice, his leading of you. No, not perfectly. We know this. Let's get that out the way.

[12 : 19] But are you following? Because you're soaking in the maximum love of God. Jesus' love and obedience to the Father are perfect.

And as we trust in him, his perfection covers our imperfection in love and obedience.

You see, yeah, we follow imperfectly. Our obedience, we know the love of God. Yes, if you know Jesus, you know his love.

But let's be honest, you're fickle. If he graded us upon our actions, we'd all fail.

I remember I was in this, my second semester of German at Penn State. I didn't want to take German, but I like German.

[13 : 26] I mean, I really found I like that language. I like gutturals. You know, German, Japanese, Klingon. Those are all, I love, I can speak them. I can, I can, you know, I can do that.

It's the rolling of the tongue. Can't do it. And I remember in the class and I was doing, I was failing so badly, it was ugly. I was feeling, I was feeling so badly that on one exam, I got an F plus.

And my professor said I was doing better. That's us and following Jesus. Maybe not an F plus, but not great.

We're not in the A category, but Jesus A plus plus. He covers our imperfection. He covers our C's and D's.

You see, without Jesus, you're an F. That's an F. That's without Jesus. If you don't know him, you're an F. You're in trouble. But even those of us who know and find that we get, we need his perfection to cover.

[14 : 36] Because see, obedience and love go together. Love and obedience, obedience and love, they go together in Scripture. Loving God is to obey him.

Jesus said it several times and I just quoted one in particular. The Father lovingly sacrifices the Son and loves the Son.

And because he loves him, he gives him, he sends him to die, but listen, he gives him authority to take up his life again. You see, the resurrection of Jesus is the Father saying to the Son, I love you.

I love you, boy. You're my son. And it is not right that death should keep his grimy hands on you. I will not allow it.

The love of the Trinity for one another is astounding. So much so that Acts 2, 24, Peter is preaching, he says, God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

[15 : 47] Why? Because divine love would allow it. It was an insult to his holiness that death should lay its filthy hands on him.

But he did it because of love between him and the Father. You see, first of all, it's not about you. It's not about us.

It's about their love. And I hope you're seeing this. I hope this is blessing you and blowing your mind that your salvation is rooted in a Trinitarian love affair. That first and foremost, it's about them love for each other that moved them to do this.

And love by nature overflows. And so that love overflows and we are swept up into it and made sons and daughters of the living God because of the love of God within itself.

Oh! I'm just having a moment. He was certain his father would not abandon him to grave.

[16 : 56] Let's think about that. Let's let that sink in again. He was certain because he was loved by the Father that the Father would not abandon him to the grave. Are you certain?

Listen, listen. This is deep. Shouldn't we always see the hardships and sufferings in this life in light of the certain glory to come? Jesus knew the glory was coming.

Hebrews 12. He knew. He gave himself to the cross despising the shame. Why? For the joy set before him.

He knew. Do you know? You're carrying your cross now. He told you to pick up your cross. That's what it means to follow me.

That's what it means to be a sheep. You pick up your cross. You follow him who also picked up his cross for all of us who believe. Yes, you follow. But do you not know that even as you go through the valley of the shadow of death, even as you carry the cross up your own Golgotha, do you not know that that is not the end of the story for you?

[18 : 08] I have to remind myself of that. I have to keep coming back to this. that just as he would not allow his son to remain in death out of love, he would not allow my sufferings, he would not allow me to remain in death because he loves me the same.

As the father has loved me, so have I loved you. Holy smoke. Do you know?

Do you see it? Whatever you're going through, you don't have to give in to despair. Sheep of the Lord, I know the grass looks greener on the other side, but it's, but it's actually brown.

Human sheep don't have good eyesight. That's what I'm going to say. You have a good shepherd who will lead you into green pastures. He will lead you even though sometimes it's painful.

Will you follow him? Keep following. Keep following. Don't stop following. Keep following. And if you fall, don't worry, you got a good shepherd.

[19 : 27] He'll pull you out of the hole. Keep following. Keep following. Keep following. Keep following. Keep following. Okay, this brings up something that we have to talk about. And I want to end on this point.

We got to talk about it. It's controversial. But I think it's pretty clear. The good shepherd's death for his sheep guarantees their salvation.

Capital G guarantees their salvation. Why? Because Christ dies for his sheep alone.

Oh, he's in trouble. I'm going to say it. He didn't die for everyone who has ever existed. He died for particular sheep.

Now, we can call this particular redemption definite atonement. The old term, you know, you've heard is limited atonement.

[20 : 37] It spoke clearly to people in that day, but to us, that language is confusing and we don't like that word limited because it confuses us. It seems to suggest that Jesus' death was not enough to save everybody.

And that's not what's meant by that doctrine. Jesus' death was of infinite value and power. It could save everyone who ever lived or ever will live.

But everyone isn't saved. You see that, right? We know this. We're not universalists. We don't believe that everyone is saved. That's easy to disprove even though there's some who still believe that.

those who are not Christ's sheep are not beneficiaries of his death. They're not in his will. You know, we all should make a will.

If you're an adult, you should make a will. Especially if you're married, have children, you should make a will. If you have any kind of stuff. This is so that your wishes are clearly known when you do die and you will.

[21 : 50] Your will will say who gets what. What's your service to look like? We just had in some condition to three funerals recently. Those cited in your will are called your beneficiaries, right?

That means they benefit from your death. But by your choosing. By your choosing. Those who are not in your will are not beneficiaries.

beneficiaries. They do not get anything from your belongings or estate. You with me? They can argue all they want about what they think they earned or deserved. They can talk about how unfair it is that they're not in your will.

But it's your stuff. You determine who receive what and who does not receive what. the sheep.

The sheep. Keep in mind those who are listening to Jesus' voice and follow him. That's what it means to be a sheep. Who he knows intimately. We saw this already. Who know him intimately.

[23 : 01] That's all what it means to be a sheep. They are his beneficiaries. He's their good shepherd. is that everyone? Let's be honest.

Let's think. Look, is that everyone? You have to say no. In Matthew 25, Jesus will separate the sheep at the end, at the very judgment.

You should turn to it. We can get a chance sometimes. Matthew 25, Jesus lines up the sheep on his right and the goats on the left and he separates them. The sheep on his right are welcome into eternal life while the goats are sent into eternal punishment.

Makes me shake. The sheep, therefore, are the Lord's beneficiaries who demonstrated they were his sheep by how they lived.

Sheep live like sheep. Goats are not beneficiaries who also demonstrated that by how they lived.

[24 : 08] The father in love sends the son to lay down his life in loving obedience to save he says it time and he says it several times to save the sheep.

He doesn't die for the goats. He tells us in the text more than once when God repeats himself, please pay attention. I lay down my life for the goats.

I'm sorry, for the sheep. It's in the text. He did not die to potentially save his sheep to give them the opportunity if they were smart enough or desperate enough to see it.

there's no potential salvation at the cross. Who's going to see it anyway? We're all spiritually dead.

Everyone is born unresponsive to God. No spiritual heartbeat as it were. We're all born that way. So who is going to see? Dead people don't see.

[25 : 22] Right? We talked about this before but I'm just rehearsing. I'm just rehearsing. Jesus didn't die for people in general.

He died for a particular definite people. Listen, let this sink in. If you are his sheep, he died for you personally.

He died for you personally. Not potentially, but personally. my pastor Dr. Boyce put it this way. He did not come to make redemption possible.

He died to redeem his people. The word redeem in the New Testament, it means to buy back out of slavery. He did not come to make propitiation possible.

That means to turn aside the wrath of God by sacrifice. He turned aside God's wrath for each of his elect people forever. He did not come to make reconciliation between God and man possible.

[26 : 26] Reconciliation, there's no more war. He actually reconciled to God those whom the Father had given him. He did not come merely to make atonement for sins possible, a sacrifice that brings us back to oneness with God, but actually to atone for sinners.

the cross is God completing the mission in his son. There was no way the mission would fail. Not one drop of his blood is shed in waste.

You know, we don't use the term redemption very much anymore, right? We don't talk about that way. But we still use it when it comes to pawn shops, right? When you, you know, you're on hard times, you go to a pawn shop and you, you know, give me some money for this watch.

And they do. And then at some point, you become less financially embarrassed, and you go back and you can give money to redeem your watch.

Let me ask you a question. if you gave that joker money to cover the redemption price and then walked out the store without the watch, was it redeemed?

[27 : 58] Because you paid the price, that is yours now. There's no potential redemption. It's been redeemed. When Jesus dies on the cross, you're redeemed.

now, if he died for everybody, that means that everyone's redeemed. Because the cross was not a potential anything. It was an actual work of God to accomplish the salvation of his sheep for all eternity.

So that means that the cross must have particular people in its sight. It has to, otherwise. Otherwise, everybody would be redeemed.

Why are not all people saved, you say? Some would say it's because the effect of Christ's death is dependent on you putting your faith in Jesus.

That's what a lot of people say. There's a problem with that thinking. salvation is in your hands. It's really up to you now.

[29 : 17] I don't want that, y'all. If salvation is in my hands, I hope I'm wearing some glue because my hands get sweaty and slick and I drop stuff.

salvation depends on me. That's what this teaching believes. It has to. It's up to you.

We fumble. We fumble. Fly ball. I got it. I got it. I know got it. End zone reception all by himself.

Jackie Smith, talent's cowboy player, playing against Pittsburgh Steelers in the 70s. He was all alone in the end zone. Wide open. Roger Staubach looking good as always.

Zoom. Perfect strike right in Jackie Smith's hands and he dropped the ball. That's us. Remember the sheep? Remember the sheep?

[30 : 24] You see, if salvation is in our hands, woo! And also, by the way, if we take that tact, we turn faith into a work.

And Romans 4, 5 says, to those, it is to the one who does not work, but believes. You see the contrast? Doesn't work, but believes. Has faith in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.

Faith is not a work. Anything dependent on you, family, is unstable. It's not safe. Jesus' death actually accomplished our salvation.

It's in his hands. We're going to come back to this next time when I, when I get back from vacation. We'll come back to it again. You'll see it. You'll say some things. I love it. Richard Mao, Calvinism in the Las Vegas airport.

What a book. He says, when Calvinists insist on the limited atonement idea, they mean to be pointing to the fact that a sovereign God could not have failed to accomplish what he set out to do in sending his only son into the world.

[31 : 42] Jesus knew ahead of time whom he would save. he set out to make their salvation a sure thing. There is no chance he would die for people who would not accept his salvation. From the very beginning he knew that his atoning work would be a mission accomplished.

Mission accomplished. salvation is of the Lord, not us. Listen saints, your faith is not a gift that you give to God.

Faith is God's gift to bring you to Christ. Your faith is not a gift you give to God. It is God's gift to you.

Because he set his love on you. You personally. not you potentially. God was in heaven saying I hope somebody believes. He sent Jesus to grab a people.

So we see things like Matthew 121. Gabriel saying to Joseph, she will bear a son. You should call his name Jesus. Why? For he will save his people from their sins.

[32 : 58] Who's he going to save? He will save his people. In Matthew 20, 28, Jesus says I give my life a ransom for many.

Not for the whole world. Not for everyone who has ever lived that sense. But I give my life a ransom for many. He knew particular redemption. It wasn't everybody.

I give my life for who? For many. For my people. Ephesians 5, 25. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

For her. He gave himself up for his church, his bride. If we say Jesus died for everyone, then the scriptures are saying that Jesus died for his bride.

Don't have significance. If he says he died for his bride, he meant his bride. If it's everyone, then it's like ladies, your husband comes home and says to you, I love you baby, but you know I love all those other women too.

[34 : 05] Would that impress anybody? Would that make you get all warm and fuzzy ladies? I don't think so. Jesus is no polygamist. He's no player.

He laid down his life for his bride, for his people, for his sheep, and we can trust that that is true. He even prays this way in John 17 9.

He says, I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. Jesus is not praying for everyone.

He says, I'm praying for those you gave me, Father. And then he dies for them. You see, it just makes perfectly good biblical sense.

What this means to me is that your DNA was in the blood that Christ shed. Your DNA personally marked the shedding of his blood.

[35 : 12] You say, why is that important, Pastor Kevin? Well, it emphasizes powerfully the grace of God. it puts an exclamation point on it.

Because you were in action and living, you were not a sheep. But 2,000 years ago, plus, although Jesus died, but into eternity past, God has set his love on you, and the son said, I'm going to save you personally.

I'm not going to potentially save Freeman. I'm going to save Freeman. I'm not going to potentially save Sam. If he just believes he has the possibility of being saved, no, I'm going to save Sam personally.

And Jesus, you're going to make it happen. Holy Spirit, you're going to draw him to it. I'm going to do it. Sam will be mine, and there's nothing that can stop it. Oh, the grace of God.

Wow! Wow! Listen, this is a better understanding of the gospel. The gospel is not God has done all he can.

[36 : 21] He just needs you to make the right choice. God, if you just, if you make, if you take, if you, if he take, how did that song go? If you make one step, he'll take two.

That's right. You know, there are no steps for you to make. That's what's he rescued me.

He didn't give me the potential to be rescued. He didn't send the Navy SEALs and they sat outside the door saying, are you coming out, Kevin? We're here to get you. No, God's Navy SEALs kicked the door in and grabbed me and took me out.

I've been rescued. The cross, the cross is God's special ops rescue mission to accomplish the redemption buying out of slavery of his people.

He did it at the cross and remember faith is a gift from God. So therefore my salvation is so secure and so guaranteed.

[37 : 28] Listen, if I know this, I don't have to be afraid of anything. fear dominates, anxiety dominates people and it dominates us.

But listen, I got to go back and remember and I look to the cross and I say, it is finished. He meant it. It is finished.

It is finished. Oh, hallelujah. There's nothing more to be done. Listen, let me be Kevin Smith for a second.

Forgive me. Why is this important? Because God said it.

That's really why it's important. Because God said it. We look at the word of God. I don't see how relevant that is. God said it.

[38 : 32] If he said it, it's relevant. You're the problem. We're the problem. We don't always see the relevancy. But listen, we're not pragmatists. I only believe it if I see how it works.

You know, it just means you just not wise enough yet to see how it works. God said it. That means it's important. I mean, come on. I mean, just somebody help me.

I just don't know what else to say about that one. Well, I'm over time. Yep. The text says, after he said these things, they said he was crazy.

You see it? Come back, look at it. He's insane. He has a demon. After he said those words, people said, what does he think? Because they weren't the sheep.

I laid out my life for the sheep. I take up my life again for the sheep because I love the father and the father loves me. My sheep hear my voice. They follow me.

[39 : 46] They don't follow anyone else. They follow me. They looked at that and said, boy, that man got, he got a demon. You see what unbelief does? Unbelief looks at Jesus in all of his love and says, he's crazy.

He's the devil. I love how the other side of the group corrected. And it's okay to correct people, y'all.

I know this is America, 21st century, and you correcting people, they feel threatened when you correct them now. That's okay. God bless them. Help them. Pray for them. Be gentle. But I love the correction.

The other side of the crowd said, y'all crazy? Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?

Let's be logical here for a minute. Once again, it shows us that Christ's life, death, sacrifice, when you have eyes to see it, it makes good sense.

[40 : 54] There's reason to believe. He did lay that in his life for the sheep. He began proving he would do this by opening the eyes of the one-born blind. That was in chapter nine, we saw that.

Woo! leave you with one more illustration.

You have a loved one who gets arrested, bail is set, bail is \$100,000, you pay \$10,000.

You bail him out. You go back to the house and your wife says, where's Johnny? You say, well, I bailed him out.

But where is he? He's in jail. You bailed him out and left him in jail?

[42 : 27] You're sleeping on the couch at that point. Because if you bailed him out, if you redeemed him, he'd be free.

Jesus on the cross redeemed you out of the prison house of sin and slavery and death and hell. He did it.

And brothers and sisters, if you have grasped hold, if that truth has grabbed hold of you, if he has grabbed hold of you, then you are free and you will never be enslaved again.

You will never be in bondage again. Walk in the freedom with which Christ has set you free. Be not entangled again under a yoke of slavery.

You are free in Jesus. Walk in freedom. Walk in freedom with him. Freedom is not due as you please. Freedom is do as he pleases. Walk in freedom.

[43 : 26] And know that your good shepherd is with you wherever you go. Father, may your word found deep roots in our souls. And may the great redemption work of Christ remind us every day that we are free.

You planned it before the world began and Jesus accomplished it. Thank you for loving us. Thank you for loving each other, Father and Son, Holy Spirit, and thank you for bringing us into that love.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. Amen to our freedom of Christ. Thank you.