

Life in the Pen #2: The Good Shepherd Part 1

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[0 : 00] You may be seated. Sorry, please stand. Yes, there is a bomb in Gilead.

And that bomb flows throughout all of the kingdom of God. Touching his people wherever they are, whoever they are. Touching churches wherever they are, whoever they are.

Thank you, Lord. Father, as we come to your word now, we ask, oh Lord, that you would apply that bomb through your word to our hearts.

For Lord, we all need a touch from you. We all need to know Jesus better. We all need to grow in grace and in knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

For we are just sheep. And you know that, Father. We're just sheep. All of us. And thank you for our Savior, who is our great shepherd. Father, may your word go forth with your anointing and power.

[1 : 13] May it comfort those who need comfort. Be with the Barrels family. Be with Juana and Clint. Oh Lord, comfort your people. You are the God of all comfort and Father of mercies.

We trust you. And all who need comfort, we trust in you. And may your word, may you use your word in whatever way you see fit to touch the lives of those who hear this message now.

Use your unworthy servant. Use your unworthy servant. Have mercy on him for your glory's sake and for the good of your people.

In Jesus' name. Amen. John chapter 10, verses 11 through 21. We're going to look at this in two messages, kind of bite-sized chunks, if you will.

Hear now the word of God. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 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.

[2 : 26] And the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired 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.

And 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, 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 and 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.

[3 : 27] Many of them said, he has a demon and is insane. Who, 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.

Praise team. Thank you for leading us so well. Beautiful. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Came across a story of a shepherding couple. A true story. This is true. Shepherding couple, husband and wife team. It says, one evening just after dark, the wife is speaking here.

I was driving my Buick up our gravel driveway. As I rounded the first turn, my headlights illuminated a flock of sheep standing about 20 feet in front of me.

[4 : 30] One of the evangelical ones must have whispered to his buddies, run to the light. Because they all turned and headed straight for the car.

Bonk, bonk, bonk. One after the other, they plunged head first into my front grill and then staggered off to the side to let the others have a turn.

I honked the horn, but that just seemed to confuse them more. The sheep sped up and my car rocked as every ewe threw herself at it.

Finally, when they were all sprawled on the edges of the driveway, I edged past them and drove on to the house.

They staggered to their feet and followed me in. Honey, she says, you won't believe what just happened.

[5 : 36] I shouted to my husband who was reclining and his lazy boy watching the evening news. That's right, controlling everything from the chair. He listened as I told him the story and then he laughed and said, sheep are always looking for an excuse to die.

And God calls us sheep. My name is Kevin M. Smith. I'm a sheep.

I'm a sheep. We need a shepherd. But not just any kind of shepherd. God has sent us the good shepherd that we might not die.

And that shepherd paid the ultimate price to secure us. Are you allowing that truth to transform your life?

Are you allowing that truth daily to draw you to God? Will you be a Kevin Smith and just admit, I'm just a dumb sheep.

[6 : 51] Thank you, Jesus, for being my shepherd. Keep in mind where we are. Life in the pen, kind of quick review.

Life in the pen brings you into close proximity and union with the good shepherd. We saw last Jesus as a door to the sheep pen or the pen.

The kingdom of God. And even that small portion of the kingdom we call the church. Remember when Adam and Eve were thrown out of paradise, an angel with a flaming sword barred access again.

You remember that? In the tabernacle, in the temple, only the high priest once a year was permitted into the Holy of Holies, which was the very presence of God. And there was a thick curtain separating the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple.

But you know what happened when Christ died on the cross? The curtain that divided the most holy place, the Holy of Holies, from the rest of the temple, that curtain was rent in two.

[7 : 57] Now, note the language of Scripture. It tore from the top down. That's not an incidental remark. No one could have reached it up there and torn it.

That tells us it was a divine moment that God was giving access to the pen. He was opening the door to his presence for his people.

Which leads naturally to the supreme reason that Jesus alone is the good shepherd. And that he brings us by his grace many benefits.

What is that reason? Point one, the good shepherd's death for his sheep shows his great love for us. I know you've heard that before.

But do you really know it? The New Testament refers to Jesus as shepherd on several occasions. In Hebrews chapter 13, verse 20, he is called the great shepherd of the sheep.

[9 : 05] In 1 Peter 2, 25, he is the shepherd and overseer of our souls. In 1 Peter, again, chapter 5, verse 4, he is called the chief shepherd.

I commit to you to study those aspects of his ministry to you, to your family. Do it in your devotions, in your family devotions or small groups.

Look at each one of those and ask, what do we learn about Jesus? But here in this passage, he is called simply the good shepherd. Now that word good is powerful, y'all.

That's not our English word good. It's powerful. It has different meanings, but they coalesce. It can mean right, beautiful, fine, excellent, and of course good.

Something that is precious, flawless, or even perfect. And all of those words fit Jesus as our shepherd. He is beautiful, right, excellent, good, precious, flawless.

[10 : 18] He is fine. But why does he deserve such a description? Why does he, of all the shepherds Israel ever had or the church has ever had, why does Jesus alone deserve that description?

One theologian was asked, what is the most important word in the Bible? Now, that's just nuts. That's one of those questions some theological student asked.

I mean, because, come on, that's impossible to say. But he gave an interesting answer. He said it's the word for. In English, for.

Hupere. Hupere. He said huper, actually, the Greek word. It means for. Jesus, the text says, he, Jesus says, he lays down his life for the sheep.

It's so important that he says it about five times in verses 11 through 18. I was trying to emphasize it as I read it to you. He keeps saying it five times in this passage. I lay down my life for the sheep.

[11 : 27] I lay down my life. I lay down my life. I lay down my life. The word for. The word for can be translated in the place of or on behalf of.

Elder Gilbert yesterday at the first responders breakfast talked about from John 15, greater love has no one than this, that someone laid down his life for his friends.

He talked about how, as the first responder, you may be called to do that, to lay down your life for your friends, for your neighbors.

But here's the deal. No one ever done it like Jesus. No one comes close to Jesus and laying down his life for his friends, for his sheep.

And that's the overarching message in this section of Scripture. He wants us to get this. Imagine you were talking to someone, having a conversation, and they kept saying the same thing over again at different intervals in your conversation.

[12 : 38] What would that tell you? Thank you, Brother Bill. This is important to them. This means something.

When you keep repeating yourself, this means something to you. Jesus saying this tells us he lets us into his heart, saints. Do you see it?

He is saying this means everything to me. That I will lay down my life for my sheep. That I will lay down my life on behalf of or in the place of my sheep.

Hmm. You know, I've never been a sheep shepherd. But I can only imagine if I had little furry things running around.

Cute little buggers. I would think that in order to protect my investment, I'd be willing to go to battle. The thief coming in there trying to get my sheep.

[13 : 44] You know how you are about your home. You know, your family's in there. Dads, moms. Shoot. My mother packs, all right? I'm going to tell you right now. My sister Jeanette Smith.

I imagine you will protect that which is yours. And if it's precious enough, you are willing to risk your life to protect them from predators.

Four-legged and two-legged. But here's the thing about being a shepherd of sheep. I have to wonder that when they go into this business, that they don't go in with the purpose of dying for these animals.

Does that make sense to anybody besides me? I have to assume that that is not the goal. Practically speaking, what good would it do? If the shepherd dies, then the sheep are left helpless and defenseless and they'll be scattered either way.

I mean, even if he manages to fight off that wolf, now he's dead. And other wolves and thieves will show up because, remember, the sheep have no defenses.

[14 : 58] And they can't run fast with those little tiny legs. So, I can't understand.

But Jesus shows up and he flips the idea of the shepherd on his head because his life's purpose was to die for his sheep.

Why would he do that? There are a couple of reasons. I'm going to start with one right now. Because he cares for you. You see, this is the contrast our Lord makes between the hired hand and the shepherd.

He goes out of his way to make this contrast. Remember, the hired hand here, he's talking about the Pharisees. And I would point to the future and to the present, he's talking about all false shepherds that were into and to our churches after him.

The hired hand, he says, will not even risk his life for the sheep, let alone give it for them. He's a hired hand. He's a hired hand. He's in it for what he can get out of the sheep.

[16 : 07] Someone, one dear brother texted me, and I think it was this week that he was saying that one of these false shepherds has come to our city to rake the sheep of their money. To gather their money, to get the sheep's money and go off back on his private jet likely to his mansion.

Listen, Jesus says, the hired hand cares nothing for the sheep. He cares nothing for them because they are not his.

He doesn't own them. The word cares means to be concerned for them. Their welfare, their lives are not important to the higher hand.

But our Lord Jesus demonstrates his great concern for the sheep by dying in their place because he owns us.

We have been purchased with his blood. His death brought you out of the slave market of sin and death.

[17 : 16] His death. Don't you understand where you were, where you were living, and what you were destined for? His death. He paid the price that you might be his.

He's invested in you. More. What does his death accomplish? This too, the good shepherd's death for his sheep, brings us into close relationship with him.

Allow me to remind you. I am the good shepherd, verse 14. 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 think I'm going to stay on this for the rest of the moment. Christ's death, saints, brings those who believe in him into an intimate relationship with him that goes way beyond religion.

Religion involves what human beings invent in order to relate to the God of their choosing, or the cosmos. The gospel tells us what the one true God has done to relate to those he has chosen.

[18 : 35] Here's the thing. Sorry. This is... It's easy to believe that God who is omniscient and omnipresent, he's everywhere at once.

He knows everything, all things at once. It's easy to understand how Jesus can know us. Right?

I mean, that doesn't... I mean, that's beautiful. Don't get me wrong. That's beautiful. And there's deep stuff in there. For someone to know you that intimately, that perfectly, that completely.

I think it was Psalm 139. The psalmist says, God knowing him was the most wonderful thing to him. Psalm 139. Oh, Lord, you have searched me and known me.

You know when I sit down and when I rise up. You discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my plan and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.

[19 : 34] Hit it. That's not... Is that it? No. Thank you. I can look at my notes, but I got to... Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it all together.

You hem me in behind and before. You lay your hand upon me. Here you go. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high. I cannot attain it.

Do you see what he is saying? God knows me completely. And he's not frightened. Nisha.

He's not scared. He says, such knowledge is too wonderful for me. He's like, I'm so glad I'm just the dumb sheep David that God knows me.

That's not hard for me to believe. I have no problem believing that. I'm talking about God here. No problem believing that God knows me and each one of us like that.

[20 : 41] He knows about us. He knows more about us than we do ourselves. And he uses his word, actually, to help us understand who we are and what we are.

He uses his word to actually expose us. Not to him. He already knows. To expose us to ourselves. Let me show you.

Hebrews chapter 4, 12 and 13. You've seen this before. For the word of God. Listen. What is he talking about? What's he talking about here? For the word of God.

For the word of God. For the word of God. Is living and active. Sharper than any two-edged sword. Piercing to the division of soul and spirit. Of joints and of marrow.

And discerning, Psalm 139. The thoughts and intentions of the heart. No creature is hidden from his sight. But all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him.

[21 : 40] To whom we must give an account. He really knows you. And he uses his word. Which is why the word of God is so essential and so important.

And the preaching and teaching and the reading of it. I can't even tell you how important this is. I can't undermine that. It's huge. Because God uses that word to expose you.

To show you that he knows you. He can get. How many times have I been preaching? And some of you come to me and said. Pastor, you've been reading my email. Did you read my diary?

You were talking to me. Like I know. I'm just a dumb sheep. I don't know. But God knows you. And when you sit under the word of the Lord.

Not sit in judgment of it. But sit under it. Letting the word do his work. He will expose you to you. He will show you that he knows you better than you know yourself.

[22 : 44] This is better than psychology and counseling and sociology. This is better than all of that. They don't even come close to what the word of God can do for you. It's not a slam against those things.

It's just saying they are inadequate. They don't go far enough. Amen. Amen. God knowing us is not hard to believe.

Not at all. He's already shown that his sheep know his voice. You know. He knows us. But again, here's the amazing thing.

He now says our relationship goes beyond even that. His sheep know him. Not just hear his voice.

Not just know his voice. That's part of this. He goes even further. He's taking us deeper in. Jesus is always taking you deeper in. If you'll follow.

[23 : 49] If you'll listen. He'll take you deeper in. He's saying we know him. To know Christ who is God is more than to know great doctrines about him.

Though that is necessary. It is more than knowing the Bible. Though as I've been saying to you, that's essential too. Thomas Boston said it so well. The old Puritan. He says there are two ways of knowing.

One by hearing of a thing. Another by sight and feeling. One by the relation of the other. Another by experience. As one knows honey.

And all the virtues of it by report. Which he believes. Another. Another. By testing himself. What does the Bible say?

Taste and see that the Lord is good. Do you understand what he's saying to us? He's calling us into a deeper knowledge of him that doesn't go beyond the word.

[24 : 49] He's not telling us there's some special secret stuff, secret sauce out there that you can go beyond the word of God to know me. He's not saying that. He's, what he's letting us know is that the purpose of knowing the word is to know him.

It's not just knowing great doctrines. But the great doctrines are made to lead us to deeper knowledge of him.

When you talk about justification by faith. I'm going to just toss these words out. I'm not going to explain them. Or propitiation. Or the atonement. Or redemption. Those are wonderful, beautiful, biblical words right out of the text of scripture that you should know.

But just knowing what they mean is not what Jesus wants for you. He wants you to take those words and allow them on a daily basis as you read them to draw you into deeper communion with him.

Now some of us are very gifted intellectually. That's where we roll. Some of us are very gifted artistically. That's all good. That's where we roll. Few of us got both going on.

[26 : 11] I got neither one. But that's another story. And what we end up doing is we end up anathematizing each other. You just got a bunch of head knowledge.

And all you care about is how you feel. Put them both together and we might have a good sheep. Don't leave them out.

Especially the word of God. Because it would inform both. The word will inform your feelings. The word will inform your intellect and understanding. The word of God brings you into a communion and a fellowship as you walk with your shepherd.

Yes. I love Pop Boston's illustration. Now, I'm not a fan of honey.

Just so you know. Don't shoot me, please. But it's one thing for me to tell you I'm not a fan of honey and have never tasted it. It's another thing to tell you I'm not a fan of honey and I have tasted it.

[27 : 20] You know, because tasting is what tells you what honey tastes like. Don't tell me you don't like honey if you've never tasted it.

You ever seen kids would do that? Kids sometimes would come to GLAAD and Sandy when she was running in. And Paul, I know you experienced it too. If you got food, lunches, you bring out the lunches or whatever food.

And sometimes there'd be fruit in your life. I think one time they had kiwi or something. Okay, amen. Kiwi's good. And the kids would look at it and was like, I don't eat that.

And Sandy was like, do you know what it is? No, but I don't eat that. And she's like, what? You need to taste it before you make that decision.

Some of us, we can be like that. We can say, no, no. My God ain't like that. What does the word say? That's the first question. And have you gone to the word and applied it to know for sure what God is like?

[28 : 32] If you haven't done it, then you don't know. Jesus is calling his people. He says, my sheep, I know my sheep, and my sheep know me.

This is huge, y'all. That's why I'm going to stay here and end it right here. That's why Paul prays for us in Ephesians. Two prayers. Ephesians 1. It's not going to be on the screen, so listen. Ephesians 1.17.

He says, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him.

NIV says, knowledge of him, that you may know him better. He's praying. Amen. He's praying. Amen. He's praying. He's praying. He's praying for you and for me. A sheep that God, by the work of his spirit, would work in us through the word and give us such an understanding and depth of experience with God so that we would know him better and better and better and better.

Later in that same book, Ephesians 4.17-19, he prays for us. Again, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. Faith, trusting in Jesus that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend.

[29 : 59] Listen, may have strength to comprehend, to know, to understand. With all the saints, this is a communal effort. Understand what, Paul?

What is the breadth and the length and height and depth? And to know the love of Christ. Know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.

That you may be filled with all the fullness of God. How do you know something that goes beyond knowledge? You experience it.

You experience it. Jesus is way beyond our understanding fully, y'all. You can't. It's like the story is told. It's probably apocryphal.

But the story is told of Augustus, St. Augustus, the North African church father. Father, he was writing a book about God. And he was on the beach.

[30 : 59] And he saw this little boy. Little boy was on the beach. And he dug a hole in the sand. And then he had a cup. And he went out into the water.

I think it was the Mediterranean. Scoops it up. Comes back. And pours it in a hole. And then he'd go out and do it again. And he kept doing it.

And Augustus is standing there watching. What is wrong with this kid? And I've seen that before. He walks over to him and says, what are you doing? He says, I'm trying to empty the ocean into the hole.

And Augustus says, that doesn't make any sense. That hole can't hold the whole ocean. Can't do it. And the boy said, and even can you write a book about God.

Your book can't contain him. Even the Bible doesn't tell us everything about God. There's nothing that can contain.

[32 : 01] Nothing human beings can put their hands on. Can contain who God is. The love of Christ is that vast ocean that you can't fill it.

The whole of your heart can't hold it. But listen, let it plunge. Let it drown in it if you have to. He wants you to know every day how much he loves you.

How much he loves his church, his sheep. You're not in this by yourself. We're supposed to be helping each other to know more about this love.

You see, I learn more about the love of Jesus by interacting with you. Think about it. That's why we call it the body of Christ.

The family of God. We should be helping each other. As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. We should be sharpening one another into a deeper love of the Lord.

[33 : 06] To a deeper understanding and experience of God. That's why we need each other. That's why the church is not an option. Never an option. Never an option.

You are cutting yourself off from knowing more of the love of God and the person of God in Jesus. When you cut yourself off from the body of Christ. We need each other.

It's a community endeavor. Somebody say, I think. I'm almost done. I don't want to wear you out.

Alistair McGrath. And I put this. I'm reading this right now. For part of my summer reading. His book, Knowing Christ. McGrath is a genius.

Brilliant. You know him. You haven't met him, right? Carl and Karen. You haven't met Alistair? Okay. He says something very deep.

[34 : 01] This guy is a theologian. Super genius kind of guy. Hating. He said, I had amassed information about Christ without knowing him. And the warmth and intimacy of a personal relationship.

Now he was saved. He's not saying he wasn't saved. That could be true. But not in this case, I don't believe. He just said he had all this knowledge and information.

But no warmth and no intimacy with Jesus. And that's what Jesus is saying. He wants for us. Listen. Look at that. He contrasts our knowledge of him and his knowledge of us.

He contrasts that with the knowledge the Father has of him and he of the Father. He's saying that just like the Father knows me completely and I know the Father.

In other words, the Father knows what the Son thinks and feels and how he will react. And the Father knows and the Son knows the Father how he thinks and feels and how he will react. They know each other totally and completely.

[35 : 08] And then he says, this is what I want with you. Kyle. Kyle. That's amazing.

He wants you to know him like that. Completely and totally. In this life, you won't make it. But in the next, it'll be full. But this is the pursuit.

This is the hunger of the sheep. This is what it means to be a sheep. It's the hunger to know the shepherd, the good shepherd.

Because he's amazing. Listen. Don't you understand? He's the good shepherd. We're meant to hunger to know Christ more and more because he is more fascinating and exciting and the most exciting being in the universe.

He's more interesting than Beyonce or Taylor Swift or any president or politician or author or scientist or athlete. He is more interesting and more exciting than take all of them, put them in one big blob, and they are nothing compared to knowing the excitement and the depth and the glory and the majesty of the living God in Christ.

[36 : 20] Nothing. You are wasting your time. You all excited about the latest Beyonce or Jay-Z statement or the latest Taylor Swift breakup and new album.

God bless that girl. And I like some of those songs, the breakup songs. There's some good ones in there.

I got them. I call them girl power songs, man. I got a bunch of girl power songs because I got four daughters. Amen. I'd rather spend five minutes in the presence of Jesus than a whole year with any of those folk.

Thank you, Brother Mike. Everybody don't believe that. Paul understood this. Y'all, listen, I'm almost done. I'm coming in for a landing.

Paul understood this in my life verses. And God brings me back to this. Every couple years, every few years, he brings me back to this. Because life, pain, work, suffering, whatever, pulls me away from this.

[37 : 39] And he has to do this to me every few years. He does this to me and he's doing it again. It's always through the word. He brings me back to this. Knowing Jesus.

Knowing God. He brings me back to my life verses. Philippians 3. 7 to 10. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake, I have suffered the loss of all things and count them rubbish.

Excrement. That's what that means. In order that I may gain Christ. And be found in him. Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law.

Comes from, you know, doing the right thing, so to speak. But that which comes through faith in Christ. The righteousness from God that depends on faith. That I may know him.

[38 : 44] That I may know him. That I may know him. And the power of his resurrection. And may be, and may share his sufferings.

Becoming like him in his death. But that by any possible means, I may attain the resurrection from the dead. That I may know him. Paul says that I may know him.

I count everything loss. I count everything rubbish. All of my, all of my acclaim before he became a Christian. He was an incredible Pharisee. An incredible genius of a man. He had so many, he had pedigree.

He had understanding. He had a good reputation. This man was on the fast track to the Sanhedrin. I mean, he was amazing. And he says, all of that means nothing.

I count it rubbish. I count it loss. I put it on the scales. And knowing Christ tips the scales and tosses that stuff all over. He's not saying that wasn't good stuff.

[39 : 41] Some of it wasn't, but. He's not saying they're not good things. It's just that knowing Christ. And here's what we do. We settle for knowing doctrine.

Without really knowing Jesus, we settle for that. Much more needed. Knowing the Bible. Knowing good. I know where to turn for that passage. We settle for just all we settle for.

That's all good. We settle for experiences with God. We want to have an experience. We want to see miracles. We want to see God do something. We settle for knowing for experiences.

And we go off looking for experiences. But if the experiences and the doctrine, we settle for causes.

New city people. Racial reconciliation. Cause. Serving the poor and justice. Causes.

[40 : 38] Causes. But if those causes don't bring us to a deeper knowledge of Jesus, we are playing in the sandbox. Instead of heading into the game, into the ballpark with Jesus, we're playing in the sandbox.

We're not even in the minor leagues. Those things are meant to bring us to a deeper communion and understanding of him.

To know more of his love that surpasses knowledge. To count your reputation. Loss.

That's why we don't witness like we should. Cause we're afraid of losing our reputation. Get the car, Mike. We're afraid of losing.

What are they going to think of me? If you count your reputation loss. Cause you know Jesus. And walking with Jesus. Oh brother and sister. You'll be alright.

[41 : 41] You're fine. Jeremiah 9.23 and 24. Thus says the Lord. Then let the wise man boast in his wisdom.

Let the mighty man boast in his might. You work out God, you and goddess. Let not the rich man boast in his riches. But let him who boasts, boast in this.

That he understands and knows me. Come on people. That he understands and knows me. That I am Yahweh. I am Jehovah. I am the Lord. Who practices steadfast love, justice and righteousness in the earth.

For in these things I delight. What declares the Lord. Oh write that on your forehead. Write that on your heart. What are you boasting in?

And you're boasting in something. You are. We all do. We all take pride in something. In some things. Is it the Lord?

[42 : 45] Cause if you're not boasting in him. I met people who boast in your children. I try to control myself. Especially if you have grandchildren. Oh boy. Hard.

But we can find ourselves boasting in them and their accomplishments. Cause it makes us feel like we did the right thing. I parented well. Proud of me.

That can be an idolatrous trap. The Lord says don't boast in those things.

You love your kids. Amen. Encourage them in their successes. Amen. But boast in the Lord. Brad. Talk him up.

Brag about him. God says I delight in that. The Lord takes pleasure in his people.

[43 : 43] We sang that earlier. He delights in his people. In his sheep. As they rejoice. And boast. And brag. And talk about him. Now listen.

The boasting and brag is not saying I know God and you don't. I'm his child. And that's not the kind of boasting he's talking about. He's talking about speak of his greatness. Speak of his glory. Tell people about the good shepherd.

Tell them why he's so good. Testify to the goodness of Jesus. Ah, come on now. Maybe some folk will get saved. You want to... We can do intellectual arguments.

We should have a reason for the hope that we have. Amen. But listen. When it comes down to it, tell them about Jesus. Tell them about the good shepherd. Tell them about how he loves you.

It's a love that won't let you go. That he accepts you even though you are messed up sheep. Tell them about his death and resurrection. Tell them about how he is the second person of the eternal Godhead.

[44 : 42] And he became man. That he might dwell among us and save us. That he tasted death for all those who believe. Listen. Tell them about that. Tell them about how he condescended. How he loved people.

How he touched the untouchables. And he touched the unlovable. And he touched the lawless. And he touched the law abiding. Yeah. Tell them about that. Tell them about that, Jesus. Do you... But do you know him?

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. How can we sinful people like us know him who is holy, holy, holy?

How can you ever be permitted into his presence? Come on in, y'all. Be permitted into his presence. How?

[45 : 44] Why are we not destroyed? Isaiah was afraid that he was going to die when he saw the Lord. He thought he was dead. Woe is me. I am undone.

He thought he was dead. And he was right to think that way. How is it that you, unholy that you are, are allowed into the holy of holies? Because he laid down his life for the sheep.

Yeah. Father, Father, forgive us for loving and bragging about other things more than bragging about Jesus.

Would you help us to know you, to dive deeper? Lord, give us a holy dissatisfaction with where we are, with what we know of you, so that we long for more of you.

Lord, when we open your word, give us a hunger for that, because that's the voice of God. You're speaking there. When you open your word, Lord, help us to pursue you in it. Help us to draw near. Help us to let your word bring us into union, closer fellowship with who Jesus is and what he's doing.

[46 : 57] Open our eyes that we may behold wonderful things in your law, in your gospel, in your truth. Open our eyes, Lord, so that, Lord, we are drawn to Jesus. Lord, let us experience, as we walk with him this week, oh, Lord, may we be drawn into his heart, drawn into his person and presence, and recognize just who he is more and more, Father, and how much he is loved and loves us, and how holy he is.

Lord, don't let us be satisfied with just knowledge. You said knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

May we walk in the love. May the knowledge move us to love, to love Christ, to love you, the living God, and to dive into that love.

Show us how. Please, in Jesus' name. Amen.